

ISMAEL;
AN ORIENTAL TALE.

WITH

Other Poems.

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ISMAEL ;
AN ORIENTAL TALE .
WITH
Other Poems.

ISMAEL ;
AN ORIENTAL TALE .

WITH
Other Poems.

BY
EDWARD GEORGE LYTTON BULWER.

*Written between
The Age of Thirteen and Fifteen.*

“Scribimus indocti doctique poëmata passim.”
Hor. 2 Ep. 1.

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PREFACE.

To court applause by oblique dexterity, or without a due sense of respect for public opinion, impertinently to advance pretensions, is equally revolting to the feelings of an ingenuous mind. But as genius and a desire of fame are naturally allied, and, perhaps, the former never existed without the latter; will not the youthful adventurer be justified in endeavouring to stand well in the opinion of the judicious and discerning, by disseminating his works among them—under a confidence, that the more candid will be pleased with the first blossoms of poetical talent, not only as the fruits of industry, but as presages in maturer years of more elevated titles to distinction? With these impressions, the Author of the following Poems has been induced, by the advice of his friends, to offer the present Collection to the public. The praise of friends, I am aware, is not always a sufficient reason for publication;—and pieces of poetry, dictated by some local occurrence, or intended as a tribute of politeness or affection to some individual, though at first much admired, may, nevertheless scarcely deserve to be transmitted to posterity. I am well aware that the strict eye of criticism may discover imperfections, and that a nice ear may, perhaps, occasionally be hurt by a harsh line;—and, that some, from a dread of inspiring into a young mind, a taste for extra-academical fame, may be disposed to extinguish altogether such attempts—yet it would be straining delicacy beyond convenient bounds, if we did not cherish the idea, that there may be others, who may be pleased to look propitiously on the first specimens of genius at so early an age—many of them having been written when the Author had attained only his Thirteenth year, and the whole before he had completed Fifteen years of age. Their claims are not, *perhaps*, of that superior kind, which will find a place among the first orders of poetry; but the pieces breathe throughout the true spirit of virtuous sensibility, vigour of fancy, and that characteristic manner, which always accompanies strong power of invention;—they display richness of imagery, and elegance of style, while the language has an easy flow, and unaffected simplicity, free from that artificial splendor, and obscure magnificence, which modern taste seems to establish as the excellence of poetical diction. Most of the larger Poems in the Collection express in easy language, and at the same time with all the graces of genuine poetry, every sentiment fitted to the occasion on which they were written. Of this, among the lighter ones, the reader will have an agreeable specimen in the verses dedicated to Lady C L——, which though on a

trivial subject, may, perhaps, give as just and pleasing an idea of this Writer's poetical talents, as any other single piece among the more trifling ones which we can collect. The Translations of the first Chorus of *Ædipus Tyrannus*, and two Odes of Horace, exhibit no small degree of classical attainment: and, however just or otherwise the remark may be, "that the failure of preceding translators has arisen, in a great measure, from a desire to copy the variations of Horace's measures;" the present ones convey a correct and spirited explanation of the sense in general, and by observing circumstances and the little figures and turns on the words, (that *curiosa felicitas verborum*,) they have preserved the beauties, and kept alive that spirit and fire, which make the chief character of the original.

It will not, therefore, be presuming too much, to hope that these Poems may contain enough to draw from such as value the display of early talents, a favourable reception; and that the Author, under such encouragement, when his taste is more matured, will perfect the produce of his youthful industry, and by diligence add to the stores of a mind formed by nature to accumulate and decorate them—there is only left for me to say,

His saltem accumullem donis.

ΦΙΛΟΜΟΥΣΟΣ.

ADVERTISEMENT

BY THE AUTHOR.

NOTWITHSTANDING my friend has said so much and so flattering to myself, in his Preface, yet the diffidence and the anxiety which ever accompany a first attempt, particularly at so early an age, urge me to add a few words, however superfluous they may appear. An apology is indeed, perhaps, always requisite for an intrusion on the public, and I cannot, therefore, refrain from offering one for some of the Poems which are inferior to the rest. They were written when but a child—they were the first faint dawnings of poetic enthusiasm,—and that sense of integrity, which should accompany every action, prevented my now altering them, in any *material* respect. I expressly state the age at which they were written, and I think it but a duty to the public, that they should actually be written at that age. For the same reason, therefore, and not from any arrogant vanity, I have been particularly careful that no other hand should have polished, or improved them.

For the Battle of Waterloo, much ought to be said in apology, when so many far, far more adequate to the task, than myself, have written upon it; and when so many have failed in the attempt, it seems to argue vanity in the design; but such, I may assert, was far from my mind, at the time of its composition. It was begun in a moment of enthusiasm—it was continued from a deep interest in the undertaking—and it was completed from a dislike, I have always entertained, to leave any thing unfinished. But I was myself very unwilling to commit it to the press, and only did so at the express and flattering desire of some intimate friends, who were, perhaps, too partial to perceive its defects.

To the generosity of the more lenient of the public, do I now confide this first attempt for their favour; and, as they scan over the faults with the eye of Criticism, may the hand of Mercy restrain them from dragging those faults to light.

The solicitude that I feel, would induce me to indulge in a tedious prolixity; but I must remember, that none but *myself* can be interested in my *own* feelings, and I will, therefore, no longer detain my readers from the proof.

TO WHOM SHOULD A YOUNG, AND TIMID
COMPETITOR FOR PUBLIC REPUTATION,

DEDICATE HIS ATTEMPTS,
BUT TO
A BRITISH PUBLIC?
TO THAT PUBLIC, WHO HAVE ALWAYS
BEEN THE FOSTERERS OF INDUSTRY, OR GENIUS,
WHO HAVE ALWAYS LOOKED FORWARD FROM
THE IMPERFECTIONS OF YOUTH,
TO THE
FRUITS OF MATURITY.
IT IS TO THAT GENEROUS PUBLIC,
THAT HE NOW COMMITS HIS HOPES AND HIS FEARS.
IT IS TO THAT GENEROUS PUBLIC,
THAT HE NOW OFFERS HIS
JUVENILE EFFORTS,
FOR THEIR APPLAUSE!

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ERRATA.

Page 22, *line* 389, *for* is, *read* bath

—— 28, —— 391, *for* dying, *read* mortal

—— 31, —— 90, *for* t', *read* to

—— 36, —— 206,

for “Some mouths ago this arm had sav'd his life”

read “Some moons have past since Ismael sav'd his life”

Page 64, *line* 5, *for* whither, *read* whether

ADDRESS

TO WALTER SCOTT, ESQ.

Written at Thirteen Years Old.

To thee, O SCOTT, I tune my humble lyre,
Who first inflam'd me with a Poet's fire.
Well may fair Scotland glory in the fame,
That waits thy verse, and crowns thy radiant name:
The child of Nature, all thy strains impart
A charm more lasting than the works of Art.
How oft in sweet delirium past the day,
When pond'ring o'er thy richly-varied lay,
To view the page with retrospective eye,
Of deeds long done, of years long glided by.¹⁰

E'en now, methinks, I view, by Fancy's pow'r,
Th' unearthly scene of Melross' mould'ring tow'r^[1]!
Now, feel each vein, in icy horror bound;
Hark! the dire curse re-echoes o'er the ground^[2]—
The regal banquet^[3], or the mazy dance,
Alternate court the raptures of my glance!
In lasting colours all, thy pencil drew,
And held their beauties to our wond'ring view.
The first of Phœbus' vot'ries, thou, to show
How sweetly-wild the streams of Verse can flow;²⁰
Thy dazzling genius, to the future age,
Shall shine resplendent in the Muse's page:
For who, like thee, each pow'r of soul can bind,
And wake the dull strings of the folded mind?
Awful, or pensive, soften'd, wild, or gay,
Oh! who, like thee, can waft the sense away
In dreams divine?—and who so blind can be
E'er to prefer that wayward Bard[*] to thee,
Sublime in what?—in what!—Impiety!
Yes! when Oblivion o'er *his* name at last,³⁰
Her endless and impervious shroud shall cast,
Britons shall mark with proud, enraptur'd eye,
Thine are the lays that shall not, cannot die.

ISMAEL ;
AN ORIENTAL POEM.

In Two Cantos.

Written at Fifteen Years Old.

“Let those who rule on Persia’s jewell’d throne,
“Be fam’d for love, and gentlest love alone,
“Or twine, like Abbas, full of fair renown,
“The lover’s myrtle with the warrior’s crown.”

Collins’s Oriental Eclogues.

ISMAEL.

CANTO I.

I.

'Tis eve, and bright through Caymyr's fragrant trees
Spread Ismael's banners to the wanton breeze;
O'er martial camps, and trophied armour blue,
The rising moon-beams cast a silvery hue;
Lull'd is each ruder wind, so hush'd, and calm,
That not a leaf is mov'd on yonder palm,
Save by the soft, sweet breeze that now floats by,
Like the faint meltings of a lover's sigh;
And the lone bulbul^[4], on that beauteous tree,
Pours out her strains of purest melody;¹⁰
And many a flow'r, that shuns day's fervid glow,
Puts forth its modest, fragrant beauties now;
And the high heav'ns smile so sublimely fair,
The eye might think to waft the spirit there;
While yonder clouds, that o'er the mountain roll'd,
Have caught the sun's last parting glance of gold,
And seem to glory in their splendid hue,
Give to the heav'ns around a brighter blue.
But the rich beauties of that sacred still,
With war's rude mingled sounds are suited ill²⁰
With clang of arms, loud shouting, and rough swell
Of rousing trumpet, and of clashing zel^[5];
It breaks the balm divine, that breathes around,
That else might pour its healing in the wound
Of rack'd Despair, and Murder's self awhile,
Of its soul-withering agony beguile.

Yes! 'tis an eve, whose pensive, sweet control,
Thrills in soft transport through the care-worn soul,
And man would cry, "Is this a place, an hour

“For war’s dread tyrant to exert his power?³⁰
“Perchance this scene, that now, so softly mild,
“Of love and sweetness seems the heav’nly child,
“May soon, alas! where now these flowrets glow,
“Red carnage pour, and echo sounds of wo!
“This far-extended camp, this glorious train
“That spread their numbers o’er green Caymyr’s plain,
“Vast as the sand, that loads the Persian shore,
“A day shall come,—and they shall be no more.”

II.

Sees’t thou yon crescent gleaming from afar,
Like half-hid influence of some meteor star?⁴⁰
It glows on Ismael’s tent; the sentry there,
With cautious step, keeps more than common care.
But say, why (lord of all this num’rous band,
The sword of conquest flaming in his hand)
He, he alone, of all his armies yield,
Is absent now from Caymyr’s tented field;
When mark’d by royal jealousy’s keen eye,
The Sage of Ardevil^[6] was doom’d to die;
He, whose high soul e’er soar’d on sacred wings,
Above the toils of kingdoms and of kings.⁵⁰
Three sons he left; and two their danger knew,
Of age to see them, and to fly them too.
The third, young Ismael, then of infant age,
His father’s friends convey’d from Rustam’s rage.
And flying hence, to Pynchilim the Brave,
His sire’s illustrious friend, the child they gave:
And there he grew, and every virtuous grace
Enrich’d the noblest of Shich-Eidar’s race;
Talent and honour all his soul possest,
In form of scarcely human beauty drest.⁶⁰

In earliest youth, ere yet the toils of man,
Ambitious fire, and war’s alarms, began,
He lov’d a maid, the flow’r of Ava’s race;

No rose, no lily match'd that maiden's face.
 He sigh'd his love, and Selyma return'd
 The chasten'd flame with which his bosom burn'd.
 Oh! mid the beauties of those heav'nly shores,
 Where all her charms, luxuriant Nature pours;
 Not such cold charms, as, in the frozen North,
 Few, and half ripe, her niggard hand puts forth;⁷⁰
 But such, as on Love's warmest, brightest shrine
 She strews around, all glowing, all divine.
 Oh, it were sweet to mark those lovers' bliss—
 Bliss far too great for such a world as this.
 And they would sit beneath some spreading palm,
 When mellowing eve put forth her fragrant balm,
 And watch the setting sun's last dazzling sheen,
 Sink slow, as loth to quit so soft, so fair a scene.
 And *he* would cull fresh flowrets' varied glow,
 To form a wreath to deck her lovely brow,⁸⁰
 And twine his fingers in her locks of night,
 As down her breast they stray'd, as envious of its white;—
 And, as they lay, their breathing lips would meet,
 And hearts, that love first taught th' ecstatic beat.
 And oh, to part at night, the ling'ring pain,
 And oh, the happiness to meet again.
 Yes, love like their's so rapturous, yet so pure,
 Alas! could never, never long endure!

III.

When Ismael learn'd, from whom he drew his breath,
 Shich-Eidar's virtues, and Shich-Eidar's death,⁹⁰
 The rightful heir to Persia's realms; his soul
 With glory heav'd, disdaining Love's control.
 He left the maid, for Honour's trumpet blew,
 And straight to arms, and to revenge he flew.
 Wrong'd by oppression, or impell'd by fame,
 Around his standard, thousands daily came:
 His sire's old followers, joying to behold,
 From their dead sage arise a son so bold.

From their dead sage, arise a son so bold,
And many a chief, who lov'd in him to trace
A branch of Iran's ancient royal race,¹⁰⁰
And that an alien from his blood should fill
The throne of Usum Cassan, brook'd it ill.
Many, who view'd his talents and admir'd;
And more, by love of battle-spoils inspir'd;
Widen'd each day the miscellaneous band,
That swore to fight at Ismael's command.—
He fought, and conquer'd! to applauding fame
Victorious war had giv'n his youthful name.
Alvante reign'd upon the Persian throne,
In Tauris sway'd, what Ismael deem'd his own;¹¹⁰
Thither he march'd, resolv'd, at one great blow,
His hopes, his fortunes, and his life to throw.

Tir'd with their rapid march, eve found his train
Encamp'd near Tauris, on soft Caymyr's plain.

In yon tall tow'r, just peeping from the grove,
Knew Ismael there, now dwelt his ancient love:
For Ava fell in battle, and the fair
Gave to her mother Amagilda's care.
And she, for safety from the civil war,
Fled from her native halls and vallies far;¹²⁰
And with this only child, the widow'd dame,
To that tall tow'r near stately Tauris, came.
Unknown to all, high Ismael mounts his horse,
And tow'rds his Selyma directs his course.

IV.

What light is streaming through the darken'd gloom?
That radiance comes from Selyma's lone room!
She, pensive, leaning on her iv'ry arm,
Hangs o'er her lattice, to imbibe the balm
That eve imparts, while Fancy's pow'r pourtrays
The ling'ring charm, that hangs on other days.¹³⁰
From her bright eyes, where Love had fix'd his throne

FROM HER BRIGHT EYES, WHERE LOVE HAD TAKEN HIS throne,
The tears of mem'ry cours'd each other down,
And her white bosom heav'd so deep a sigh—
'Twas like a long, long strain of dying melody!
"And where art thou, companion of my youth?
"Where are thy vows of never-ceasing truth?
" 'Tis in idea alone, alas! I trace
"The well-known features of that beaming face;
"Curs'd be the fatal, the dire-omen'd day,
"That glory tore thee, from mine arms, away!¹⁴⁰
"Curs'd be that glory, which will lead thee on,
"Where ruthless Azrail's thickest dangers throng;
"Yes, thou wilt die; or, living, die to me!"
'No, Selyma, I'm here, and live for thee.'
Scarce had the virgin turn'd her wond'ring eyes,
Scarce giv'n the sound of fearful, glad surprise,
Then at her feet, reality has brought
The worshipp'd object of her ev'ry thought:
Swift o'er the senses of her ravish'd soul,
A temporary, kind oblivion stole;¹⁵⁰
But soon reviv'd, her eager eyes survey
Him, whom she thought was ever snatch'd away.
"And dost thou live, and does mine eye once more,
"View, what it deem'd was ever, ever o'er?"
'Yes, Selyma, my first, my only love,
'I still am faithful as thy kindred dove.
'The *Chieftain Ismael*, heir to Persia's throne,
'Comes, *humble Ismael's* vows of love to own;
'To lead thee forth, the fairest of the fair,
'My love, my glory, and my realms to share.¹⁶⁰
'To morrow's sun shall see my banners wave
'O'er Persia's city, and Alvante's grave.
'And thronging crowds shall hail my lovely bride,
'Rich Iran's princess, and high Ismael's pride!'

"Ah, Ismael, happier far my lot would be,
"To range our earlier scenes of love with thee!
"How would thine humble Selyma repine,
"That loathed state should keep her soul from thine.
"But why should selfish love attempt to mar

“The bright refulgence of thine happier star!¹⁷⁰
“Whatever pleases Ismael, must be,
“O soul of Selyma, most dear to thee!”
Thus, in sweet converse, the fast-flying hours
Were, like some bridegroom’s path, o’erstrew’d with flow’rs.
At length remember’d Ismael, lest the morn
Should show his absence, he must now return.
And Selyma, awak’ning from her trance,
Sent all her soul to his in one fond glance.
“Ah, dost thou leave me, still, alas! unkind,
“Must Ismael go, and I remain behind?¹⁸⁰
“Perhaps some arm, amid the bloody strife,
“May rear the blade against thy valued life;—
“Oh, let me go with thee!—thine arm, my shield,
“Oh, let me share the perils of the field!
“What though I fall, what death can be so dear,
“To cast my dying eyes around, and see thee near.”

High Ismael clasp’d the mourner to his breast,
And dried the falling torrents in his vest;
E’en though inur’d to war, to toil, to pain,
Though wont to gaze, unmoved, at heaps of slain,¹⁹⁰
Yet, as he view’d the anguish of the maid,
Adown his cheek the pitying tear-drop stray’d.
‘Farewell, another sun perchance may see,
‘Thine Ismael return to love, and thee.
‘How could that form of beauty learn to bear
‘The din of camps, the toils of blood and war!
‘Unman me not with this thy pleading wo—
‘Think, O my love, that Honour bids me go;
‘And the same law that summons me away,
‘Commands thee here, my Selyma, to stay;—²⁰⁰
‘Farewell.’—

O! who that ne’er experienc’d it can tell
What meaning hangs on that sole word—farewell—
The piercing, thrilling glance, the tender air,
That utter more than words can tell,—are there;
And the big tear that dims the sparkling eye;
And the mute language of th’ imploring sigh;

And that soft, ling'ring tone, that seems the sound
Of love himself, upon that word is found.
O ne'er, O ne'er can he, whose inmost soul
Has never felt it, tell its sweet control!²¹⁰

Selyma views him seize the snowy rein,
O'er his dark courser's widely-streaming mane
(Like streaks of light in sable clouds) that hung,
Then on the back of mighty pride he sprung;—
One parting look he casts!—with eagle speed,
Away, away, swift scours that gen'rous steed.

V.

Now pensive midnight's sable mantle falls
O'er stately Tauris' proud imbattled walls;
And there dark Desolation's fix'd his throne;
No sound is there, save sigh or plaintive groan:—²²⁰
There drops the widow's tear—there heaves the sigh
Of mourning sire—there sounds the orphan's cry—
And there dark Azrail^[7] sits, and grimly waves
His sable pinions o'er a thousand graves;
Yet e'en his rugged soul is tir'd—his hand
Would fain let drop his all-destructive brand—
Would gladly spread his deadly plumes, to fly
From such a scene of desolate misery.

For when Alvante's brother claim'd a throne,
Which none but Ismael had the right to own;²³⁰
The tyrant, wak'ning from inglorious ease,
Rush'd to the battle, like the northern breeze:—
They fought! and young Moratcham's lesser band
Fled in dismay before his brother's hand.
But wo to Tauris' chiefs!—for, there return'd,
With vengeful rage the haughty victor burn'd:
For they had help'd to place the daring brand,
Of red Rebellion, in Moratcham's hand.
And, like some roaring whirlwind's sweeping path,

That tears whole forests with its rabid wrath;²⁴⁰
Or, like some demon's all-destroying form,
That wings the blast, and rides the gath'ring storm:
So fierce Alvante saw each coming day,
The luckless chiefs of Tauris sweep away.

Whence is that piercing scream?—Oh, turn thine eye
To view that scene of more than misery!
Yon maiden lov'd yon lifeless youth; he fell
Beneath Alvante's rage,—the rest too well
That scream has told;—wide floats her streaming hair,
As if to ask compassion of the air,²⁵⁰
And her dark eye-balls' wilder'd, frenzied roll,
Tell all the pangs that rend her madd'ning soul.
She press'd her lips to his, in vain to breathe
Life into lips, where all is death beneath;—
She feels his heart, for ever cold its glow,
And its high bound of rapture, silenc'd now!
And up she springs, and laughs—she laughs—but there
Burst forth the horrid laughter of Despair.
Vain, vain is reason, life against the stroke,
Dead on her love she falls—her faithful heart is broke.²⁶⁰

VI.

See the pale tyrant in his lofty tow'rs,
In reckless revelry employ his hours;
No blood, though torrents round his dwelling roll,
Dims the forbidden^[8] sparkle of the bowl.
His form gigantic, and commanding mien,
The eye of memory ne'er could quit, once seen.
Yet there, no foulness stain'd, no beauty shone,
If each stern feature were remark'd alone;—
But all united, the tremendous whole²⁶⁹
Went, in an instant, through the awe-struck soul—
All, all appear'd t' announce—this, this must be
Almost a demon, or a deity.

But lo! a messenger, whose reeking steed
 Bears tacit witness to its rider's speed,
 Stops at the palace gate:—"Haste, haste, I bear
 "Important tidings to the Sultan's ear."
 Admittance granted, from his breast he drew
 A scroll, and gave it to Alvante's view:—
 The Sultan open'd it—his steady cheek
 Was little wont his inward thoughts to speak;²⁸⁰
 But, as he read, his varying hue exprest
 That Fury's tortures rack'd his raging breast;—
 Knit were his sable brows—his flashing eye
 Shone like some orbit in a clouded sky;—
 Fierce tow'rd his giant form, his hand of war
 Stretch'd down to grasp his pond'rous scymitar;—
 His sounding voice was like the thunder's roll,
 And all the hero swell'd his mighty soul:—
 " 'Tis well; the rebel boy shall rue the hour
 "When first he dar'd to tempt Alvante's pow'r:—
 "Brav'd by a stripling! where is then this arm,
 "At which whole squadrons fled with dire alarm?
 "Am *I* not king? and shall this Ismael dare
 "To seize a crown which I alone should wear?—
 "No, never no! but hence—command Reylain
 "To draw our troops before high Tauris' plain."
 He ceas'd—but still his mutt'ring tongue, the fire
 Which flash'd his eye, declar'd his inward ire.
 While deepest passions o'er his senses came,
 The monarch's musing, and the hero's flame,³⁰⁰
 Mingled with many a pang that conscience brought,
 To dampen courage, and t' embitter thought.

VII.

His fav'rite slave approach'd, the salem made,
 And some low words in whisp'ring accent said—
 " 'Tis right, them instant to our presence bring,"
 With hasty tone replied the haughty king.
 The doors of polish'd cedar open flew

The doors of polish & cedar open flew,
And gave a warrior legion to the view;
While, in the midst, fast bound in iron bands,
A warlike youth, with scorn indignant, stands:³¹⁰
The simply-splendid garments that he wore,
Some blast of battle-storm had lately tore,
And the rich gold blush'd deep in harden'd gore;
Yet his bright face and form divine, where love
And war's fierce monarch for the mastery strove,
Seem'd 'mid soil'd garb and fett'ring chains t' exclaim,
"Behold a son of Conquest and of Fame."

He that had seen his eye of azure fair,
(Tint in those darkly-glowing climes so rare,)
And the soft cygnet down, that now began³²⁰
His cheek to blossom, and to promise man,
And a sweet something o'er it spread—might trace
A woman's softness in that god-like face.
But, had he seen the almost burning flame
That o'er his eye, when rous'd by wrath or fame,
Flash'd (like the lightning hurl'd from heav'nly arm,
When hush'd each wind, on ocean's azure calm),
And, with a blaze that pierc'd the bosom's core,
Made it still fiercer from the peace before:
And, had he mark'd the form, the tow'ring crest,³³⁰
The gait, that spurn'd the vile earth which it prest,
Oh! he would cry,—“Sure Glory's charms alone
“Can call this youth of mightiness her own.”
As glares some lion on his num'rous foe;
So here and there bright flash'd his eye-ball's glow:
Upon the guards who held him, first it beam'd;
Then to the Sultan's lofty form it gleam'd:
Alvante met the fire with steady eye,
Which darted back the flame of majesty,³³⁹
Then, turning to the guards,—“Ye've speeded well,
“Where met ye this young warrior?—Sadi, tell.”—
With lowly salem, the time-serving man,
Pimp to his master's vices, thus began:—

VIII.

“Sultan of Persia, whose wide-spreading sway,
“With trembling awe an universe obey,
“List to thine humble slave!—As with this band
“I view’d afar green Caymyr’s fragrant land,
“And saw with horror, on its flow’ry plain,
“The rebel Ismael’s far-extending train,
“We met this youth; and on his breast the star,³⁵⁰
“Which marks the chiefs of Ismael’s impious war:
“We rush upon him!—in thy name command
“To yield his person to his Sultan’s band.
“No answer made he!—spurr’d his Arab horse,
“Bar’d his keen blade!—on us his driving course
“He dash’d impetuous;—we around him close,
“And pour on every side an iron show’r of blows.
“But he, his flashing sabre sweeping round,
“Roll’d four brave Moslems on the verdant ground:
“Then broke his weapon; or, perchance, his might
“Had brought him safely through th’ unequal fight.

“Then, as on some fair tree descends the storm,
“So rush’d our valiant soldiers on his form.
“But, when life hung upon that slender thread,
“I rear’d my sabre o’er his fenceless head:
“For I admir’d his courage, and I thought,
“If thus for Ismael he so bravely fought,
“His martial prowess, and his weighty hand,
“Might prove some succour to our Sultan’s band.”

He ceas’d:—Alvante, from his brows of pride,³⁷⁰
With wond’ring glance the youthful hero ey’d;
“What say’st thou, slave,” began the low’ring king;
‘Slave, in thy teeth the dastard word I fling,’
Exclaim’d the youth; ‘no crouching craven I;
‘Brave as thou art, of name perhaps as high!
‘Wert thou and I, upon some desert place,
‘Where, save our own, was never human trace,
‘This arm perchance might teach thee, to thy wo,
‘That it could deal no slave’s ignoble blow.’

In patient silence stern Alvante heard³⁸⁰
The youthful stranger's fierce defying word;
Again with darkling eye he scann'd him o'er,
And certain grew the doubts he had before;
Then beam'd his joy in that dark-glowing hue,
That instant o'er his haughty features grew;
His hand half-drew the sabre from his side;
"Now, by my faith, 'tis Ismael's self," he cried:
"Prophet, I thank thee, that this glorious hour,
"My only dread is plac'd within my pow'r.³⁸⁹
"Guards, instant bring the bow-string—he shall die;
"His dying agonies shall glut mine eye:
"No, hold—the traitor shall not yield his breath
"By pang so short, and by so mild a death:
"Convey him to the darkest dungeon!—there
"Leave him, to nurse the horrors of despair,
"Whilst we devise some torture dire and new,
"Dreadful as man e'er felt, or demon knew;
"That, ere the chariot of the sun shall roll,
"Shall rack his form, and madden all his soul."

With glance disdainful, and majestic pride,⁴⁰⁰
The tyrant's frowns high Ismael scornful ey'd.
Then calmly turn'd away, and greater far
Than when in all the pomps of prosp'rous war,
Leaving, with footsteps firm, the regal room,
The guards he follow'd to his dungeon's gloom.

END OF CANTO I.

ISMAEL.

CANTO II.

“Let those who rule on Persia’s jewell’d throne,
“Be fam’d for love, and gentlest love alone,
“Or twine, like Abbas, full of fair renown,
“The lover’s myrtle with the warrior’s crown.”
Collins’s Oriental Eclogues.

ISMAEL.

CANTO II.

I.

‘Another hour is fled;—a few, few more,
‘And life, and all its sweets, are ever o’er;
“ ’Tis hard in youth’s fair blossom to decay,
‘And, like the dreams of midnight, pass away:
‘To go—we scarce know where,—and, as the wind,
‘To leave, alas! no ling’ring trace behind!

‘This present sun upon my glory glow’d!—
‘The next shall light me to my last abode!
‘Farewell, ye scenes of youth, whose brightning hue
‘Gave hopes and joys, so empty to my view!¹⁰
‘Farewell, those hopes and joys!—thou bubble, Fame,
‘Farewell! what art thou?—nothing but a name.
‘Yet none, O none of these, once tinted high
‘From this cold breast, can wring a single sigh,
‘And never soul, save *one*, this heart of care
‘Would loath for ever from its bonds to tear;
‘But ah! that *one*, when thoughts of her arise,
‘They pour my melting spirit from mine eyes.
‘But this unmans me!—cease, thou ruthless thought,
‘With woman’s softness, woman’s feeling fraught!’²⁰

Thus Ismael sigh’d, as, on his stony bed,
In dungeon mirk, he lean’d his aching head,
And mem’ry pond’ring o’er the former day,
Recall’d dear cherished scenes, far, far away!

II.

Hark, on the ear the roughly-sullen jar
Creaks harshly hoarse, of op'ning bolt and bar;
And Ismael started up, and turn'd his eye
To gaze on black expanse of vacancy;
And thought,—“ 'Tis morn, the tyrant's abject train
'Are come to drag me to a death of pain.³⁰
'Tis well!—I am prepar'd—the fiend shall find
'That Ismael's bosom holds no vulgar mind.'
Back on its pond'rous hinge the huge door flew,
And the grim gaoler met the pris'ner's view.

High Ismael gaz'd in sullen, scornful mood,
On him (so whisper'd thought) the man of blood?
But when he saw the gaoler soft replace
The dungeon door, and then with noiseless pace
Steal where he lay; and, by the lamp he brought,
A glimm'ring glance of steely dagger caught;⁴⁰
And mark'd him draw his cloke around, and creep
Like some assassin murd'ring infant sleep,
A pang of bootless rage, of shiv'ring chill,
Cross'd his proud soul with agonising thrill:—
'What, here shall Ismael yield a life so brave,
'To death so craven, by so base a slave;
'And not a limb to move?' The bursting fire
Glar'd in his starting eye; in frantic ire,
With madd'ning rage, he shook, he gnaw'd the chain,
Dash'd, roll'd his form!—but each attempt was vain!
The last soul-piercing pang of rending life,⁵¹
Could never match that moment's harrowing strife!

With finger rais'd to lip, with voice so drown'd,
That list'ning ear could scarcely catch the sound,
“Hush, hush,” the gaoler cried; “be still, and see,
Thy servant comes to set his Sultan free.”
Scarce had he said, when Ismael's wond'ring eye
Saw at his feet the prostrate gaoler lie.
And heard, with wilder'd joy, the grateful sound
Of clinking fetters clashing on the ground;⁶⁰
And raptur'd felt each limb of might again,

Free as the air that wantons o'er the main:
'O say what means all this'—"Hush, hush, my lord,
"The life of both hangs on a single word.
"This is no time for talk!—these garments take,
"Wrap them around you close!—the salem make
"If aught accost you; but, mind, no reply,
"Your part a mute, be silent, or you die!
"But, more for safety, take this sword; 'twill be
"Of use in peril—now then, follow me."⁷⁰
All this strange scene had pass'd so swift, to seem
To Ismael like th' adventures of a dream;
But, when his hand the pond'rous sabre prest,
He felt his soul high heaving in his breast;
And courage whisper'd, 'If I fall, my fate
Shall, like my life, be gloriously great.'

Meanwhile the gaoler, cautious as before,
Roll'd on its massy hinge, and barr'd the dungeon door;
Then down a mirky passage pacing slow,
They left that scene of horror and of wo.⁸⁰

III.

The hotly-beaming orb of noon-day's sky,
Illum'd green Caymyr with his golden eye,
And cast a mellowing splendour, warm and bright,
O'er many a scene of beauty and delight.
Here the soft waters gliding, like the hours,
Through balmy banks of variegated flow'rs;
And here the camp, and here the martial train,
That, like himself, cast lustre on the plain:
And there, o'er yon wide hill, that grove of trees,
That fling their fragrance t' th' enamour'd breeze;⁹⁰
While where they leave an op'ning, give to view
Some tow'r, or temple, proudly frowning through:—
All seem'd as if in Union's silken bands,
Young Love, and glorious War, had met to join their hands.

But through that num'rous army, rude commotion
Was like the storm that ruffles o'er the ocean;
Though louder, wilder was the mingled sound
Of thousand tongues that echoed o'er the ground;
The whisper'd murder, or the bolder cry
Of stern upbraiding, or of mutiny.¹⁰⁰

And whence is this?—Their youthful chief alone
Is gone! but when—or where—to all unknown.
His tent is search'd, that night was pass'd not there,
His couch untouch'd, his absent steed, declare:
Throughout the camp, throughout the martial train,
They seek high Ismael,—but they seek in vain.

In anger stern, the chiefs together came,
Suspicion black'ning o'er their leader's name.
In speaking silence, each glanc'd round on each,
All loath alike to be the first in speech¹¹⁰
To vent his wrath.—At length, each rolling eye
Is turn'd on one, who stands indignant by:
Bold was that chief, through all that conq'ring band
Not one surpassed the prowess of his hand.
But fierce in temper, “turbulent in tongue,”
He lov'd to lead the factions of the throng:
Abbas, his name. Rage sparkling in his eyes,
He mark'd the chiefs, and thus the warrior cries;—
“Say, is it meet, that here, while squadrons stand
“To fight and conquer at a boy's command;¹²⁰
“He, he the cause, the leader of the fray,
“Is gone in secret, fled, perchance, away?
“Say, is it meet, that we, whose rank and fame,
“Would some respect from mightier chieftains claim;
“Should thus be treated with contemptuous scorn;
“By Mahomet, 'tis no longer to be borne!
“Nor shall ye bear it! rouse, and let us own
“This wretch unworthy of so great a throne.”
Thus far he said, when to the listening heav'n
A long, loud shout of “Ismael! Ismael” 's given.¹³⁰
All that wide camp re-echoed with the name,
So high in glory and so dear to fame

So high in glory, and so dear to fame.
And now towards the chieftain's ample tent,
The clanging sounds of scouring steed are bent.
And each on each the assembled leaders gaze,
Fix'd to their stations in profound amaze.

IV.

And Ismael enter'd on that busy scene,
With bearing princely, and with brow serene;
Saluting all around with regal grace,
He took his station in the vacant place.¹⁴⁰
Straight to the earth, was bent each look of shame;
Straight o'er each cheek, the tingling colour came;
So motionless was ev'ry chieftain there,
That scarce a breathing died upon the car.

High Ismael rose!—in language short and cold,
Began th' adventures of the night t' unfold.
The cause of all, alone forbears to tell,
His seeking her his bosom lov'd so well.

Nor had he finished his narration brief,
Ere the fierce rage of Abbas, haughty chief!¹⁵⁰
That rage, which scarce had been restrain'd till now,
Burst like the flamings of red Ætna's brow:—
“Go hence, thou liar! hence, thou smooth-tongued youth!
“To other ears go take thy tale of truth,
“For here 'tis not believ'd! Yet grant it true,
“What mighty aim could Ismael have in view,
“To leave his army on the very night
“Before he meant to lead it to the fight?
“Why should that gaoler too, in spite of danger
“Of his own life, free thee, to him a stranger?¹⁶⁰
“And though I grant thy courser's speed from here,
“In a few hours to Tauris' walls, might bear,
“Yet, as that steed was captur'd, or was slain
“In combat with Alvante's troops, again,
“How in so short a time did'st thou return

How in so short a time did he thus return,
“For when thou quitted thence, ’twas near the morn?”

“Think’st thou, that Persia’s mightier sons will be
“The dupes of falsehood, and the slaves of thee?
“Perish the thought; this arm shall ne’er permit
“So base a wretch on Iran’s throne to sit.¹⁷⁰
“ ’Tis my resolve!”—“And mine! and mine!” was sent
From ev’ry quarter of the crowded tent:
As up the chieftains rose, the sudden glare
Of hundred sabres glimmer’d in the air.
‘And, traitor, this is mine,’ high Ismael cries,
Death on his brow, and fury in his eyes;
As flash’d his weapon forth, and through the head
Of Abbas, down e’en to the mouth it sped.
He fell:—o’er Ismael’s eye th’ expression came
Of pitying softness, conq’ring wrathful flame:¹⁸⁰
He dropt the blade,—he sigh’d,—for he could glow
In soft compassion o’er a fallen foe.

He turn’d away—his eye-ball’s fire renew’d,
As red it roll’d where, half-repentant, stood
The low’ring chiefs amaz’d—the same wild band,
As when they first uprose, in look and stand.
The garb flung back, the haughty lips apart,
The voice just issuing from the swelling heart,
The foot advanc’d in menace, and the sword
High rear’d, to wreak the fury of its lord.¹⁹⁰
They seem’d so still, and yet that still spoke more
Than thousand voices mix’d in loud uproar.

V.

And Ismael cast on all his dark’ning eye,
That beam’d with stern and conscious dignity,
And thus he said,—‘It boots not Ismael, here
‘In length of words his slighted fame to clear.
‘But if, to prove mine honour, you are bent,
‘My brave deliverer waits without the tent.

my slave delivered waits without the tent,
'Examine him or not, as suits you best,
'For truth, like gold, is purer from the test.²⁰⁰
'To use this traitor's words, who, on the floor
'Sends out his treason on his ebbing gore,
' "Why should that gaoler too, in spite of danger
' "To his own life, free me, to him a stranger?"
' 'Tis easy answer'd:—In the hostile strife,
'Some months ago, this arm had sav'd his life,
'Albeit a valiant foe, and set him free,
'Once more to taste the sweets of liberty:
'Since then Alvante rais'd him to the pow'r,
'Chief gaoler to the royal dungeon tow'r:²¹⁰
'He knew me, and on Gratitude's fair shrine
'Repaid the life I gave—by saving mine.

'Rude Abbas ask'd again, how, with such speed
'I here return'd, unaided by my steed.
'I had began t' explain it—when the force
'Of his rash fury broke on my discourse.
'We had not long left Tauris, when the birth
'Of yonder sun began to wake the earth,
'And nature open'd all her stores of bliss,
'On hill and vale, to meet his golden kiss.²²⁰
'When, as we swift strode on, we turn'd our eye
'On two young horsemen slowly riding by;
'What should be done?—we wanted steeds—and now
'Fate in our way these travellers seem'd to throw:
'We hasten'd to them—mildly proffer'd gold
'To yield their steeds—they were not to be sold:
'We seiz'd the reins—we bar'd our blades—and swore
'That we would buy them with their master's gore:
'They heard our thraet'nings, and they mark'd our pow'rs,
'The caitiffs trembled—and the steeds were ours.²³⁰
'Scarce had we mounted, ere the distant sound
'Of clanking horse-treads rush'd along the ground.
'Away we speed—a neighbouring hill we gain—
'We look behind—we view Alvante's train
'In hot pursuance:—like the winged wind,
'Off, off we scour, and leave them far behind,

‘And noon has view’d us here arrive, t’ assuage
‘The clam’rous treason of suspicious rage.

‘But now, away; ere evening’s shadows fall,
‘Our bands shall revel in Alvante’s hall.²⁴⁰
‘This is the moment of propitious fate;
‘Alvante’s name is held in general hate:
‘At our approach the gates shall open fly,
‘And thou art all our own, O Victory!’

He ceas’d: on every chieftain’s war-worn face,
Of former fury vanish’d every trace;
On each stern brow, swart cheek, and lofty mien,
Nought but the hope of coming fame is seen.
As their dark eyes, with admiration warm,
Glanc’d on their leader’s soul-inspiring form,²⁵⁰
As high it tower’d, a something like divine,
A heav’n-born ray around it seem’d to shine;
His kindling soul flash’d glory from his eyes,
And to his voice, that gleam of enterprise
Had giv’n a tone prophetic; as it roll’d,
He seem’d a being of immortal mould.
And loud they cry, as high is rear’d each sword,
“Long live great Ismael, Persia’s mighty lord.”
Forth from the tent then rush’d the warrior-train,
And here, and there, disperse along the plain;²⁶⁰
Swift sink the tents, the bands in many a throng,
Arm,—form their deep’ning squares,—and sweep along.

VI.

Commotion hovers with her dark wide wings,
O’er Persia’s stately city; there she brings
Her sister, wild Amaze; each dweller’s soul
There, owns those kindred demons’ joint control.
On every form, on every busy mien,
Nought but one mixt expression there was seen;
But that expression told of all the train
Of throbbing passions that usurp the brain ²⁷⁰

Of throbbing passions that usurp the brain;
There, you might trace young joy, but also there
Spoke something like the reign of fear, of care,
Of wonder, of confusion: sight and speech,
Like freezing streams, seem'd half bound up in each.

As they pour'd from their houses, like the bees
That leave their hives, and throng the fragrant trees,
The only sound that fell upon the ear,
Was (faintly mutter'd) "Ismael is near!"
'Till, as the news gain'd ground, the clamours rise,
And "Ismael! Ismael!" rend the list'ning skies.²⁸⁰
Some fling the high gates open—some loud cry,
"Perish the proud Alvante;" while they fly
To seek the palace, and the court to force,
And send th' usurper on his long, last course.

The gen'ral shouts, the long and deaf'ning din,
Alvante heard, his stately halls within:
He started up in wonder and alarm;
The flashing sabre found his giant arm.
"Hark! hark! methought I heard that hated name,
"What, is it Ismael?—hark! again—the same."²⁹⁰
Then his friend Muly rush'd within that room,
Trembling his form, and pale as cygnet's plume
His vet'ran cheek:—"Fly, fly, ere yet too late,
'The clam'rous throng are at the palace gate;
'Thine head they swear'—(hark, hark, again that roar!)—
'Shall pay for all the streams of kindred gore
'Thou'st caus'd to flow; in vain we've tried t' assuag
'Their treasonous tumults, and their guilty rage.
'They cry that Ismael's bands are sweeping now,
'In swift procession, o'er yon mountain's brow.³⁰⁰
'O fly, O fly to shield thy regal form,
'Till lull'd the beating dangers of the storm,—
'Haste to Armenia, that e'er loyal land
'Will yield my sultan many a mighty band;
'Haste, haste, O haste!'—"And whither should I fly?
'Here in his courts must king Alvante die;
'King am I now, and Death will lose his sting,

“E’en ’mid his grasp, to think I die a king.”
‘And think’st thou, if thou tarriest here, thy fate
‘Will be in all the royalty of state?³¹⁰
‘That thou’lt fall nobly? No, a slave thou’lt die,
‘Brought out to grace thy victor’s victory;
‘To feast his minions with thy dying wo;
‘(Hark, hark, the rebels burst the gates below!)
‘This door will lead us hence,—away, away,
‘Lost is your life, your kingdom, if you stay!
‘But hold!—I have it!—cast these garments on,
‘Muffle your face, and mingle with the throng;
‘Then unperceiv’d escape, and haste to gain
‘The troops of conquest in Armenia’s plain;³²⁰
‘But now away.’ Though more than mortal brave,
A natural wish his life, his realms to save,
Alvante felt. If tarrying here, he knew
That he must die, and die ignobly too.
If for awhile he went, Armenia might,
By fortune aided, place him in his right.

He instinctively clasp’d the muffling vest
In many a fold around his face and breast,
And both are now disguis’d! one moment more,
And they have past yon gold-enamell’d door,³³⁰
And mingled with the throng—and to the sky,
Now, they have join’d the gen’ral clam’rous cry.
A leader mark’d their garb—their mien—their tone—
Again he turn’d to view them—they are gone.

VII.

By Tauris' walls, along the delving plain,
Swift drive young Ismael's far-extending train;
On yonder hill, has paus'd the setting sun,
To mark their glories ere his race be run,
And loves his splendour o'er their arms to cast,
Type of their fame, ere yet that splendour's past;³⁴⁰
Forth from the walls, like billows on the deep,
In one vast mass the joyous numbers sweep.

"Welcome, great Chief! welcome, the golden hour,
"That frees us from the tyger-tyrant's pow'r;
"Welcome, O welcome; see our gates are riv'n,
"T' admit, to welcome thee, O son of heav'n.
"O let us shout, O let us gladly sing,
"Long life to Ismael, glory to our King!"

Upon a milk-white steed, high Ismael rode,
That pranc'd exulting in his mighty load;³⁵⁰
And that great warrior, cast in Beauty's mould,
Blaz'd like a god-head in his arms of gold.
From hill, from vale, around, and from afar,
Roll'd the loud music of tremendous war;
The awful gong, the trumpet's brazen tone,
And the rough thunder of the tymbalon,
The rude, yet rousing clashings of the zel,
The hollow blast of Süankos' shell.
While, like some meteor rising here and there,
The wide, bright banners wanton'd in the air.³⁶⁰
Thus, while their welcome path, on every side,
All Tauris hails, full royally they ride;
And, 'mid the clamours of th' admiring crowd,
That hail th' auspicious march; yon palace proud
(With not a drop of blood upon his sword,)
Receives another, and a mightier lord.

VIII.

Mark'st thou yon banners waving in the gale?
Mark'st thou yon troops, that over hill and vale
Their martial numbers pour; and, spreading far,
Now thirst impatient for the coming war?³⁷⁰
And mark'st thou, fiercely, there, against them bent,
Yon wide, and long, and glorious armament?
And mark'st thou too that chief, whose brows appear
Like sable clouds, that in night's dark'ning sphere
Hang o'er two blazing stars; whose awful form,
Is as some tow'r amid the whelming storm;
Whose all-defying mien, whose stern, wild air,
Luxuriant Fancy might perhaps compare
To angel Eblis, when rebellious driv'n,
Destruction breathing, from the courts of heav'n?³⁸⁰
Who is that warrior?—who!—and can that mien
Be e'er forgotten, when once known, once seen?
It is Alvante!—Bulwark of the fight,
Whose sword is vengeance, and whose arm is might.
Who'd safe arrived, with his faithful friend,
His care-beguiler, to Armenia's land;
And with Moratcham, whom he had subdued,
His rebel brother, he his league renew'd.
'Twere strange to mark their meeting, how they came,
Souls fierce as sparkles in the rising flame.³⁹⁰
How loth to speak the first: each eye-ball's swell
Beam'd on the earth, where scarce it e'er had fell
Before; how sullen, like a wayward child,
They sooth'd, they soften'd, and they reconcil'd.
But well I ween, that spirits proud and strong
Like theirs, can never intermingle long.
And even now they half-reluctant go,
Hand link'd in hand, against a mutual foe,
To wage a mutual war.—They part awhile,
Moratcham hast'ning to Assyria's soil,⁴⁰⁰
Fresh troops to raise; while to Armenia's skies,
In warlike pride, Alvante's banners rise,
And numbers daily to those banners came,
Or led by plunder, or arous'd by fame.

Meantime young Ismael hears the dread alarms,
Of his great enemy's increasing arms.
Again his standard on the breezes burst;
Again his bands, in ancient victories nurst,
He wakes; and, as the Simoom's fiery breath,
That wafts the kiss of pestilential death;⁴¹⁰
Fate-bearing Ismael, glorying in his might,
Destruction's sabre bar'd, and rush to meet the fight.

From wide Assyria, young Moratcham led
A martial squadron to his brother's aid;
But Ismael, with his courage, mingling still
The sage's prudence and the leader's skill,
Prevents their joining; and now hastes to dare
Th' enraged Alvante to the scenes of war:
And that bold chief determines, with this band,
Cull'd from the bravest of Armenia's land,⁴²⁰
Upon the fight to set his fortunes all,
A king to conquer, or a king to fall.

But lo, the thick'ning masses move, and slow
Advance in order, 'gainst th' advancing foe.
And hark, that crash!—The mingling hosts engage,
Blood streams, and armour clangs, and all is war and rage;
Man combats man, on hero hero dies,
Glares sword on sword, and ring the battle cries.
High in the air the hov'ring vultures soar,
And scream impatient for their feast of gore.⁴³⁰
On the shock'd earth the slaughter'd numbers roll,
And glory burns in every warrior's soul;
The battle-fields, like cauldrons, fiercely boil,
And Azrail claps his iron wings and claims the soil.
Tremendous is that scene of carnage fell,
No mortal tongue its horrors e'er can tell!

As, when on some thick forest's lofty head,
From high, some fierce autumnal blast is sped,
Drives through the leafy throng its rabid way,
And shakes their thousand branches with dismay;⁴⁴⁰
The leaves, the boughs, the trees themselves around

Are swept away, and scatter'd on the ground:
So stern Alvante, with resistless might,
Cleaves his red pathway through the groves of fight.
War-loving Azrail, Death's tremendous lord,
Frowns on his crest, and hovers on his sword.
Bath'd in red streams of hostile gore, where'er
Tow'rs his proud form, confusion wild is there.

His bands scarce think him mortal, and, inspir'd
By his example, think that God has fir'd⁴⁵⁰
Their swelling breasts; and, like the billowy deep,
Fierce (led by him) against the foe they sweep.
They thin the hostile ranks, who, in dismay,
In more than fear, half-routed, yield them way.
Then, in that moment, when Alvante's eye
Saw the bright beams of coming victory;
When, in idea, his hand has grasp'd again
With raptur'd joy, the throne of Iran: then,
Then, in that moment of eventful strife,
Worth a whole age of common, passive life;⁴⁶⁰
Before Alvante's way, at headlong speed,
A youthful chief has spurr'd his snowy steed.
Each combatant has rous'd him from the fight,
Awhile to gaze on that high form of might.
But Iran's genius, as aloft she flew,
Hung back, and trembled at the dangerous view:
For, in that god-like youth, she marks too well
Her last, lone hope, her favour'd Ismael.
'Come on,' he cries, 'proud tyrant; come, and know
'That thou wilt combat with no vulgar foe;⁴⁷⁰
'Use thy whole art and strength; for I am he,
'Worthy alone, to fight—to conquer thee.
'I come arm'd in my bleeding country's might!
“ 'Tis Ismael, chief, who woos thee to the fight!’
Alvante answered not, but in the flame
That flash'd his brow, and glar'd his eye-balls, came
A dreadful something, eager to destroy,
An horrid energy, a demon joy.
So high he rear'd his blade, it seem'd that fate

Upon one blow from that dread arm would wait.⁴⁸⁰
But Ismael's courser, practis'd in the war,
Swerv'd, and the sabre cut the yielding air.
Not so did Ismael's blade, though broke its force,
Through the steel corselet it has ta'en its course,
And gash'd full sore:—and now the strokes so fast
From either arm, to either form are past,
That scarce the eye-ball's searching glance can know,
Where giv'n, where parried, or receiv'd the blow;
Save by the sparks that from their armour flash'd,
Save by the gore, that from the corselets gash'd,⁴⁹⁰
Pour'd in long streams; the drops upon the plain
Fell from their brows, like pattering of rain:
And every stroke was aim'd full strong and true,
For each great chieftain 'mid the combat knew,
That all the war was on a single hand,
That Iran's empire hung upon his brand.

A foe so dread, Alvante never yet
In conflict's thickest walks of heroes met;
And ne'er had Ismael, mid th' embattled throng,
Known eye so keen, and arm so swift and strong.⁵⁰⁰
Each stroke, that like the flash of lightning past,
Seem'd fiercer, heavier, mightier than the last;
Till Ismael felt his youthful arm at length,
Weaken its blows, and slacken in its strength;
While stern Alvante, like some massy tow'r,
Still seem'd to combat with the prime of pow'r:
But Ismael hop'd one blow, that should contain
All his remaining strength, should smite him on the plain.

He nerv'd his arm, he rear'd it high in air,
Then downwards drove the pondrous scymitar;⁵¹⁰
Alvante's sword receiv'd that dreadful stroke,—
And Ismael's treach'rous blade snapp'd short, and broke.

Over Alvante's face appear'd to play
A wild ecstatic joy, a dreadful ray;
And o'er his eye's dark field of fierceness flew
A something *Oh!* too horrible to view!

... something, so too horrible to view.

“Now, now thine hour is come,” he inly said,
And high in air, he rear’d his shining blade.

Then Persia’s Genius, as she soar’d on high,
Trembled with fear, at Ismael’s death so nigh.⁵²⁰
Among the darts, that cleave the airy tides,
She singles one, and to Alvante guides:
Then in that moment, through his bending head,
When thund’ring down his massy blade, it sped.
Th’ exulting speech has fainted from his tongue,
From his numb’d hand down dropt the sword and rung
Useless on earth; the swarthy colour flies,
The field recedes upon his glazing eyes,
And Azrail’s cold tremendous shades around him rise.
He fell! still Ismael held his stifled breath,⁵³⁰
Still waiting for the dire approach of death;
And, though he saw him fall, yet still he deem’d
’Twas not reality, but that he dream’d.
At length he thought the coming stroke of fate,
From fierce Alvante, linger’d long and late:
He lifts his eyes—he sees him not—again,
Surpris’d, he drops them on the purple plain,
And there he views him!—Oh! how chang’d his state!
That arm, so dread—how cold, inanimate!
Then, then he felt it all! then, then it came⁵⁴⁰
Swiftly upon him, like the glance of flame:
He bent his body o’er his steed, his hand
Seiz’d from the earth, his enemy’s red brand;
Then lifts his voice, and dashes mid the crowd,
‘Alla! il Alla!’ shouting, long and loud.
New strength has nerv’d his weaken’d arm; where’er
It rises, death and destiny are there.
His troops have caught his fire, and to the heav’n,
‘Alla! il Alla! and his Ismael!’ ‘s given.
On, on they drive:—in thunder-struck dismay,⁵⁵⁰
On every side Alvante’s troops give way;
They fly tumultuous, or, around the plain,
By pow’rs resistless, fall in heaps of slain.

X.

The setting sun his parting beams has shed
On many a pile of dying, and of dead;
Emblem of life! like his last dying ray,
Thousands have seen the closing of their day;
Have, when he sunk beneath yon hill, and fir'd
The plains beneath, with mellowing blaze—expired.
There, by yon palm, that waves its arms on high,⁵⁶⁰
A youthful chief has laid him down to die;
His mother's last, lone hope, her joy, her pride:
Three other sons, by war's o'erwhelming tide,
Had long been swept away: and he, now gasping here,
Was left alone, her aged breast to cheer.
And must he also die? in life's gay morn,
And leave her wretched (like a wreck forlorn):
And she now sits at home; and thinks the while,
That fate, propitious, on his arms will smile;
That glory's hand will gild his youthful name,⁵⁷⁰
With laurels gather'd in the field of fame.
How fruitless all her cares—her hopes how vain—
He ne'er will bless her widow'd sight again!
From his cold heart fast ebb the torrents red,
Down sinks his arm, he's dying!—ah! he's dead!

And there, by yonder shelt'ring hill, is laid
Expiring Seyd, the once-fam'd Renegade.
From his own country banished; all he lov'd
Were left behind, and hither he had rov'd.
Then he was young, and fate might have in store,⁵⁸⁰
To cheer the future, many a blessing more:
But, in one fatal hour, of sense bereft,
All, all was withered—for his God he left!
Black were his ringlets then, they now are grey;
Yet ne'er could mem'ry quit that dreadful day;
He rush'd to battle, glory met him there,
For in Seyd's bosom, courage was despair.
Years roll'd away, and found him still the same,
Deep sunk in guilt, yet conscious of his shame;
And now, alas! that guilt has brought him here,⁵⁹⁰

without a friend his dying hour to cheer;
Upon the past he turns his desperate eye,
A long, long scene of guilt and infamy;
Upon the future,—no!—he does not dare
To cast a look on what awaits him there;
And fain he'd lift his thoughts to heav'n, and fain
Would pray once more; to him th' attempt is vain:
He rears him up, towards his native shore
He rolls his eye;—peace,—he can gaze no more.

XI.

And Ismael dropp'd the blade, and wav'd his hand,⁶⁰⁰
From the pursuit to stay his conq'ring band.
'Hold, hold, my friends; no longer drive the blow
'Against a vanquish'd, and unworthy foe:
'Hold, and remember mercy's soft control
'Should e'er be dearest to a hero's soul.
'Cease the pursuit: and haste to search the field,
'Haste to the wounded, every help to yield;
'Nor to *our* bands *alone*, but also those
'Whom fate or chance have number'd with our foes:
'And then, to mighty Alla let us give⁶¹⁰
'The debt of gratitude, that still we live—
'That conquest's ours: while coming night shall steep
'The toils of slaughter in the sweets of sleep.
'Although to-morrow's dawning sun must see
'Us march again to war and victory;
'Must mark us go to wield the conq'ring brand
'Against Moratcham's far-inferior band,
'To place me on my glorious grandsire's throne,
'And then—O Selyma, I'm all thine own!'

NOTES
ON CANTO I.

Stanza I.

“Spread Ismael’s banners to the wanton breeze.”

For the better understanding of several passages in this Poem, I will here subjoin a short account of the claims of my hero, Ismael, to the throne of Persia, and a brief history of his life.

Usum Cassan, king of Persia, gave his daughter, Martha, in marriage to Shich-Eidar, a certain sage, famous for a new sect of religion, and for extraordinary piety and virtue.

At Usum Cassan’s death, he was succeeded by his son Jacup, but he being murdered by his wife, Julaver, a man of high rank, and a distant relation to him, seized the throne, and dying, after three years, was succeeded by Baysinger, and at his death, the crown came to a young nobleman named Rustam.

Though no one had a better (nor indeed so good a) right to the kingdom of Persia as Shich-Eidar, on account of his marriage with Usum Cassan’s daughter, yet his birth being inferior to those who had hitherto reigned, and being so entirely absorbed in the care of religion, and the sweets of retirement; during the sway of the three preceding kings, there was not even any mention of him, or his pretensions. But Rustam was alarmed at the numbers who daily flocked to Shich-Eidar, to embrace his religious principles, and he was afraid of the reverence which the Persians paid to his high virtues and brilliant talents, and of their secret attachment to the race of Usum Cassan; he therefore resolved to rid himself of so formidable an object for his fears, and employed assassins, who murdered the unfortunate sage at his residence in Ardevil. But Rustam was afterwards slain in his turn by Achmet, who is said *to have been favoured by the king’s own mother, and aided by her in the death of her son.*

The murderer seized the crown, but enjoyed it only six months, when Carabes, one of Rustam’s ancient officers, collecting a considerable body of soldiers, marched straight to Tauris, then the capital of Persia, and surprising Achmet, who was in no condition to resist, put him to death, by the most

dreadful (though almost merited) tortures.

The throne being thus vacant, Alvante, a nobleman of high rank, was chosen to fill it.

Shich-Eidar left three sons, who would have shared the same fate as their father, had they fallen into Rustam's hands. The two eldest fled, one to Asia Minor, the other to Aleppo, and the third, Ismael, then only a child, was secretly conveyed, by his father's friends, to Hyrcania or Ghilan; where he was protected by Pырchalim, a nobleman then in possession of several places on the Caspian Sea. Pырchalim caused him to be reared in the religious tenets of Shich-Eidar, and the youth perceiving that was the best way to acquire popular favour, of which he had great need to support the just pretensions he had to the throne, shewed a great zeal to observe, and to propagate, his paternal sect. As he was possessed of great personal beauty, and inherited all the splendid abilities of his father, combined with great courage and eloquence, he was soon joined, not only by the common people, but also by many of high rank.

His first success in arms, was the regaining certain lands in Armenia, which had been given his mother as her dowry, and afterwards being reinforced by many of Shich-Eidar's old disciples, he attacked the castle of Mamurlac, and after having taken and plundered it, he led his victorious army to Sumach, the capital of Mesopotamia, which he also took, and gave the spoils to his soldiers. At the noise of these first exploits, and at the immense booty acquired by those who followed his standard, numbers daily flocked to him from all parts, and he soon found himself at the head of a considerable army, with which he resolved to march immediately to Tauris, where Alvante, lately placed upon the throne, held his court. That monarch had but just recovered from the fatigues and confusion of a civil war with Moratcham, his brother (or, as some assert, his son), who disputed the crown with him, and having lost an important battle, had fled from the Persian territories.

The severe persecutions which Alvante had exercised, after his victory, upon several of the chiefs of Tauris, who had taken part with his opponent, rendered his name odious, and presented Ismael with a very fair opportunity, who no sooner came before the city, than the gates were thrown open. Alvante, who suspected nothing of this irruption into his capital, without troops, and aware of the hatred entertained against him by the whole city, was obliged to fly (and as one author relates) in disguise: and Ismael entered triumphantly into Tauris, without shedding the least blood, except of a few of Alvante's guards.

In the mean time Moratcham had reconciled himself to his brother Alvante, for the purpose of repelling their common enemy, the former hastened to Assyria

to raise forces, and the latter was already at the head of a large army in Armenia: there Ismael followed him, and (preventing Moratcham's joining his brother, which was their intention,) defeated him in a battle, in which Alvante fell, bravely fighting at the head of his troops. Moratcham, hearing of his brother's fate, carried his army towards Tauris, but Ismael intercepting him, totally routed and put him to flight.

After this, Ismael reigned gloriously for twenty-five years, and died in peaceable possession of one of the most powerful monarchies in the world, having verified the predictions of Shich-Eidar, who was a very skilful astrologer, and who had foretold,—“That this “son of his should one day by his zeal and conquests “almost equal the glory of Mahomet himself.”

Stanza III.—Line 119.

“And she for safety from the civil war.”

It must be remembered that Ismael first attacked Armenia, &c. before his successes made him so bold as to strike so adventurous a blow as attacking Alvante in his own capital. It was the custom of those who inhabited the provinces, and who were too peaceably inclined to mix in the intestine commotions that so often occur in the East, to remove their families and effects as near the capital as possible, though this scheme must appear very injudicious to one who reflects that the chief city is generally the most harrassed, ultimately.

NOTE

ON CANTO II.

Stanza VII.—Line 358.

“The hollow blast of Süankos’ shell.”

The Süankos cannot properly be called a war instrument, although in the earlier ages of Persia, and even perhaps in Ismael’s time, it was made use of for that purpose. It is at present often used as a trumpet, for sounding an alarm, or a signal. Its tones are deep and hollow.

TO
LADY C L . . . ,

Who, at the Private Races given by Lord D——, set a noble example of humanity and feeling; when a poor man being much hurt, she had him conveyed to her carriage, and interested herself most anxiously in his recovery.

Written at Fifteen.

DAUGHTER of Feeling, Queen of Love,
'Tis to thee these lines are due,
With all the beauty of the dove,
Hast thou then her nature too!

Though formed in Woman's purest mould;
Though form'd 'mid crowds and courts to shine;
Though in thy pow'r to stand enroll'd,
The boast of M 's favour'd line:

Yet has that hand which kings might prize,
Deign'd to relieve the poor man's wo,¹⁰
Yet have those all-subduing eyes,
With Pity's dew-drop deign'd to flow.

Thy guardian angel hov'ring near,
Soar'd upwards with that deed of thine,
And as he dropt the applauding tear,
Wrote down the name of C

TO LADY W . . . ,

PLAYING ON THE HARP, ACCOMPANIED BY HER VOICE.

Written Extempore, at the Age of Fifteen.

CEASE, cease, in pity cease your lay;
Would you melt the soul away?
And, while such rapture you impart,
Thrill the ear, but steal the heart?

Must every Godhead bring some grace,
To aid th' enchantment of your face?
Must Venus give the beauty warm?
Must Pallas mould the radiant form?
Must Jove his lightnings yield, and sigh
To see them melting in your eye?¹⁰
But not, alas! with these content,
To make us all your vot'ries bent,
Oh, must Apollo too inspire,
To burn our bosoms, all his fire?

AN ODE
TO THE MUSE OF VERSE.

Irregular,

Written at Fourteen.

O COME, thou Goddess ever fair,
Who lov'st to braid thy golden hair
With many a wreath of laurel bright,
From old Parnassus' sacred height!
Whither, beneath some time-devoted tow'r,
Thou lov'st to pass the solitary hour;
And slowly-solemn pour along the pensive verse,
Or the bright deeds of chivalry rehearse;
And view by fairy Fancy's magic sway,
Old deeds long done, and years long past away.¹⁰

Or, if beneath some spreading tree,
Thou lov'st the sounds of jollity;
And, with thy laughing song, to raise
The rural dance's sportive maze;
While, oft attracted by thy song,
Nymphs and satyrs join the throng,
And interweaving at the sound,
Lightly skim the verdant ground;
While every bird, on every tree,
Is lull'd to catch the melody:²⁰
And e'en the zephyr's wanton gale,
Moves not a leaf amid the dale,
But folds his wings, and creeping near,
Imbibes the notes with ravish'd ear;
And when is broke the silver tone,
When Rapture's fled, and thou art gone,
Still, still, he linger's o'er the scene
Where Beauty divine has been

where Poesy divine has been,
And strives again, though vainly, to rehearse
The fire of Music, and the soul of Verse.³⁰

Or by rose-embalm'd bow'r, or murmuring stream,
If Love, king of passions, inspires thy theme;
That blessing the purest, to man, from above,
They gave us all, all, in that blessing of love.
Oh still let me hov'ring nigh,
Strive to catch the heav'nly fire,
When with wildly-beaming eye,
Glancing upward to the sky,
As if to seize the spirit there,
Thy tresses streaming to the air,⁴⁰
Thou strik'st the hallow'd lyre.
Oh who can tell the heart's ecstatic play,
So sweetly pensive, so sublimely pure,
When wand'ring far from world's disgusting lure,
The Muse bewitching wafts the soul away.

In sickness, pain, or care, or strife,
In all the woes that wait on life,
Thy pow'r can soothing balm impart,
And lull to sleep the breaking heart.

Come then, Goddess, if from high,⁵⁰
E'er thou'st heard thy vot'ry sigh,
Come, and o'er my ravish'd soul
Hold thy soft, thy sweet control!
O let me soar on Fancy's wing,
Where Piërus pours his sacred spring,
And while such joys divine thy pow'r can give,
Beneath thy reign, O ever let me live!

ODE TO A POKER.

Written at Thirteen Years Old.

HAIL, blithsome wand, and bring with thee,
Dancing mirth, and airy glee!
When the laughing jest goes round,
And sparkling wit's enliv'ning sound;
By the fire, thy cheerful mien
On winter's dark'ning eve is seen.

Oft thy gladsome stirs inspire
Strains from Bard's poetic lyre;
Of winning love, or times of old;
Of courtly dames, and barons bold;¹⁰
Or some high deed of ancient knight,
Achiev'd in tournament, or fight.
Oft, when 'gainst the echoing shore,
The hail-drops beat, the tempests roar,
Shelter'd from the raging storm,
The trav'ler warms his cold-pinch'd form.
With thee in hand, derides the rain,
Beating down the glassy pane.

Oft when, at some ghostly tale,
With fear, each ruddy cheek is pale;²⁰
And half-asham'd, and half-dismay'd,
They startle at each other's shade;
And fancying, that the ghost they saw,
Around the fire they nearer draw;
Then, perhaps, some hoary sire
Stirs, with thee, the waning fire;
And every eye, now grown more bold,
Explores the curtain's mystic fold,
Where just before, by terror's aid,
They saw the spectre's gliding shade;³⁰
And laughing at each other's fears,

Again the wonted blush appears.

And oft, when talk has ebb'd apace,
And melancholy shewed her face;
Thy spirit-rousing aid once more,
Renew'd the pleasure lost before.
Friendship, love, and all that life
Yields to cheer this scene of strife,
Courting oft thy fairy pow'r,
Gaily pass the jovial hour,⁴⁰
While joy and mirth new blessings bring,
And care, awhile, forgets her sting.

TO K

THE SEAT OF MRS. ———
Written at Fifteen Years Old.

HAIL, lofty domes, hail, venerable place,
The noble dwelling of a nobler race.
High on an hill, thy stately fabric rears
Its ancient summit, mark'd by rolling years;
By woods surrounded, and by fertile fields,
Thy cultur'd soil abundant plenty yields.
Here, giant groves in sweeping grandeur rise,
There, lengthen'd prospects meet th' admiring eyes.
But thou, who gazest on yon graceful dome,
That seems to rival e'en the works of Rome,¹⁰
Where blooms life's fading emblem, yonder rose,
'Tis there, the ashes of the dead repose!

Oh pause thou there, this awful lesson learn,
"That dust thou art, to dust shalt thou return."
Now from the heav'ns, the queen of twilight grey,
Mellows each object with her silvery ray.
'Tis silence all!—'tis that lone pensive hour,
When Fancy reigns in all her magic pow'r,
When o'er the poet's lull'd, enraptur'd soul,
She holds her sweet, her undefin'd control!²⁰

K, how chang'd from those old feudal hours,
When minstrel's music echoed through thy tow'rs;
When steel-clad knights rode forth in glorious pride,
And led their troops to combat by their side.
Or at their castles tournaments proclaim,
And enter lists, to gain the wreath of fame.
From beauty's hand receive the valued meed,
While plauding shouts approve the martial deed.
And when the gath'ring shades of eve would call
Our great forefathers to the festive hall ³⁰

Our great forefathers to the festive hall,³⁰
There, in vast bowls, the grape's rich liquor pour'd,
And wholesome viands smok'd along the board;
Such as were wont an hero's hall to grace,
Ere yet, refinement reach'd our hardy race;—
Ere yet, we learn'd, from nations we subdued,
To spurn at Freedom's hospitable food.
To every lip the joyous toast went round,
And frolic laughter gambol'd o'er the ground;
While from the lofty gallery swell'd the lays,
Of some past deed of old heroic days;⁴⁰
Perhaps of Britain's sable chief, who bore
His conq'ring standard to the Gallic shore.
Perhaps of R^[9], gallant knight! who led
His country's warriors to his country's aid!
Perhaps they sung the softest, brightest fire,
That ever yet has burst from minstrel's lyre.
Almighty love, whose sigh-inflated sail
Wafts, more than bliss, on ev'ry halcyon gale.
How warlike Henry^[10] joy'd to lay aside
The glare of rank, the pageantry of pride:⁵⁰
At beauty's feet, he cast his regal pow'r,
And sought for smiles at Rosamond's lov'd bow'r:
Ah! hapless Rosamond, condemn'd to prove
The penalty, that waits on lawless love!
But now, "the bashful virgin's sidelong" glance
Delights her partner in the mazy dance.
And he, who foremost in the lists that day,
Bore the rich prize of martial fame away;—
Whose crest shone proudest of the youthful band,
With joy, receives the fairest lady's hand.⁶⁰
The old look on, and seem again to share
In each light movement of the graceful pair;
Or talk of deeds long done, of years gone by;
Of many an ancient feat of chivalry.
While each proud banner, won in glory's cause,
The spoils of conquest, seem'd to wave applause.
See, in yon nook, retir'd, the love-sick youth
Pays his fond vows of ever-lasting truth;
While the soft maiden's blushing looks reveal

While the soft maiden's blushing looks reveal
A tale so dear, that love alone can feel!⁷⁰

K, ere yet the hand of taste around,
Display'd the charms with which thy scenes are crown'd,
The drooping dryads of thy proud domain,
Of cold neglect, proclaim'd the ruin'd reign.
Thy falling fabric seem'd in vain to moan,
Its glories tarnish'd, and its beauties gone:
The weed's rank verdure overspread the hearth,
So late the scene of hospitable mirth;—
The moss's velvet, and the violet's blue,
In wild luxuriance o'er the pavements grew;—⁸⁰
Here bloom'd each flowret which the fields impart,
The charms of Nature o'er the wrecks of art.
Then, then, arose the last of all her race,
To join each pow'r, her native house to grace;—
Again to raise the beauties of thy pile,
With added lustre, make her K smile;—
Again thy halls, the graceful dance shall bear,
And heav'nly music charm the thrilling ear;—
Again thy doors shall open to receive
The lordly noble, and the poor relieve;—⁹⁰
Again shall taste and elegance impart
Each varied scene, to charm the captive heart.

Mayst thou, the lov'd possessor, find repaid,
By Friendship's smile, the works thy hand has made;
And mayst thou long live happy, to retrace
The faded honours of thy ancient race;
May virtue still her fairest flow'rs entwine,
To form a wreath to grace the line.

ON FRIENDSHIP.

Written at Fourteen Years Old.

HAIL, star of love, hail, offspring of the skies!
That gilds our day, when darken'd storms arise;—
'Tis thou that blunts affliction's bitter dart,
And turns the wound, averted from the heart.
In all the changes that await mankind,
In all the woes we here are doom'd to find,—
Thy hand, amid a world of care and strife,
Scatters fresh roses o'er the paths of life.
'Tis not the fawning flatt'rer's ready praise,
Whose word is honey, but whose word betrays.¹⁰
For, ah! while happiness yet gilds each hour,
Ere yet adversity's dark tempests low'r,
Like flies in summer, basking in the ray
Of prosp'rous sunshine, in thy golden day:
Many thy followers, who pollute the name,
With sordid lips, of hallow'd Friendship's flame:
But if thy sun, by gath'ring clouds o'erspread,
Retract its beams—those followers all are fled,—
Not one remains of that late num'rous horde,¹⁹
Who swore thee friendship, round thy genial board.
From scenes like this, with stern indignant eye,
True Friendship wings her rapid flight:—on high
She views the venal slaves of guilt and gold,
Purchas'd by int'rest, and by int'rest sold;
Whom dark Dishonour, by the Stygian shore,
An hideous progeny, to Mammon bore;
Hypocrisy receiv'd them at their birth,
And, nurs'd by her, they issued into earth.

Friendship's soft pow'r, mild as the vernal gale
That floats at eve o'er Tempè's peaceful vale;³⁰
Holds her vast rule, unbounded by control,
O'er the wide realms of the capacious soul;

And spurns the limits of the little mind,
To narrow thoughts, and mean ideas confin'd.
For he, alone, can taste her purest streams—
He, he, alone, can feel her warmest beams,
Whose breast ennobled, and whose soul refin'd,
Display the treasures of an heav'n-taught mind;
Enrich'd with every virtue, that can lend
Her pow'rful aid, to form a perfect friend;⁴⁰
Proud in the pride which dignifies the heart,
That scorns deceit, and spurns each baser art;
In whose high front, and spirit-rousing eye,
Bright honour beams in all her majesty;—
Sublimely humble, virtuously bold,
Unmov'd by flatt'ry, and unbrib'd by gold.
Vot'ries like this, can feel her pow'r sublime,
Begun by virtue, and matur'd by time;—
Vot'ries like this, once revered her laws,
And prov'd them worthy of so great a cause.⁵⁰

Oh! ye twin stars^[11], who grace the spangled sphere,
When night's dark shadows o'er the heav'ns appear;
And ye, bright patterns of her sacred reign^[12],
Who bound the tyrant in her silver chain!
And thou, O Salem's king^[13], whose heav'n-taught lyre,
In sacred strains, Jehovah deign'd t' inspire;
And all ye ancient vot'ries of her name,
Be ye the mighty witness of the same!

Ah! now how changed!—for scarce one ling'ring trace
Proves us descendants of our former race;⁶⁰
All things degen'rate! e'en the present times
Shall seem ennobled, by our future crimes.
True Friendship, now, appears but as a dream,—
Th' historian's subject, or the muse's theme.
Long might we search, and long might search in vain,
Him, who, to save his friend a *moment's pain*,
Would set the world and all its charms, at nought;
And think, e'en life was far too dearly bought.
What venal lips now utter Friendship's name,
And strive to counterfeit her heavenly flame;

And strive to counteract her heav'ny name;⁷⁰
How few the souls, o'er whom she deigns to reign;
And, ah! how few would bear her silver chain!
For her swift wing, like Love's, disdains all ties,
O'er boundless seas and trackless deserts flies;
And scorns those barriers, which th' ignoble prize.

Oh! thou soft soother of our earthly wo,
Grant, from my heart thy precious streams to flow!
For what is grief, or pain, or cank'ring care,
When ev'ry pang, another seeks to share.
And when our night of sorrow glides away,⁸⁰
And joy, returning, gilds the opening day;
Ah! what avails it, if no friendly heart
Bears, in that joy, a sympathizing part:—
For, as the laurel, (through the winter's gloom,
When all her leafy rivals cease to bloom,
And when each drooping tree, by nature bound,
No longer waves its foliage o'er the ground,)
Maintains her verdure unimpair'd, and green,
And shines conspicuous mid the icy scene:
So does true Friendship, in misfortune's hour,⁹⁰
When wint'ry storms o'er life's gay sunshine low'r;—
When false pretenders, base, and servile band,
Chill at the touch of fortune's alter'd wand;
So does she cheer the solitary scene,
Glows ever-warm, and blossoms ever-green.

IRREGULAR LINES.

Written at Fifteen Years Old.

THERE'S not a heart, whose inward shrine
Reflects one throb that rouses mine!
That when young Pleasure rises high,
Can give the smile to Friendship dear;
When Sorrow prompts the speaking sigh,
Can waft its answer,—on the tear.
And yet the world can freely share,
In boist'rous mirth, in vulgar care:—
Albeit it marvels, when the soul
Escapes its tinsell'd, vain control,¹⁰
To joy, or weep alone.
For, ah! how few, alas! can find
One dear, *one* sympathizing mind,
In un'son with their own.

I've stood in crowds, where all was gay,
Where Pleasure held her roseate sway;
And there, mid hundreds met to show'r
Fresh flowrets o'er the laughing hour;
I've stood, and felt that lonely feel,
As keen, as cold, as piercing steel,²⁰
Which whispers,—What to thee, this crowd?
The vulgar great, the reckless proud?—
On whose unvaried, smiling face,
Not one congenial thought you trace.
There, nought but pleasure seems to shine,
Like o'er the snow, the sun of spring,
There ev'ry heart seems glad;—but thine
Is cold, and sear'd, and withering.
Oh, yes! unknowing, and unknown,
Mid circling throngs—thou art alone!³⁰
But why, oh, why! should I complain?
Before me life extends her plain,

Which Hope, and Fancy lend their pow'rs,
To gild with gold, or deck with flow'rs.
What! though mid all the crowds of state,
My wayward heart is desolate;
Yet oft, I've felt the spirit's play,
That wafts from earth the soul away;
When the calm eye, or musing ear,
Gives nought of life, or motion near;⁴⁰
To gaze upon the heav'ns, so still, so fair,
(Oh, who can feel a grief, while gazing there?)
To mark, when night extends her sable reign,
Th' unnumber'd worlds of that ethereal plain,
Till snatch'd from earth, the soul appears to spring
To those high realms, on Rapture's hallow'd wing.

To change the view!—To note the spreading scene,
The mountain's grandeur, or the valley's green;
Or mark the murm'ring riv'let's wavy blue
Catch, from the skies, their own harmonious hue;⁵⁰
And (as the moonlight o'er the water throws,
The light that, like the virgin, trembling glows,)
To hear, in thought, th' aërial Sylphids sweep
Their wings of sapphire o'er the beaming deep:
While the old oak-tree, blasted by the storm,
Spreads o'er the waves its venerable form;
And the hoarse breeze, that, whisp'ring, rushes near,
Gives wild, unearthly music to the ear,
Till Fancy shews the Druids' ancient train,
Strike their bold harps, and slowly sweep the plain.
Or, if the roaring tempest courts the sight;—⁶¹
For scene or dread, or gentle, can delight
The lofty soul;—how sweet, on some sear'd rock,
To mark the warring element's rough shock;
To smile unmov'd, while bursting thunders roll,
And the red flames of lightning flash the pole;
And calm, uninjur'd, mid the blazing storm,
Like some proud tow'r, to rear the godlike form.
Then, while the conflict fierce he joys to scan,
Man well can feel the majesty of man.⁷⁰
Yet this is when all the spirits beam

yet thus, when all the spirits beam,
In loveliest, loftiest, holiest mood,
The world's vain, heartless vot'ries deem,
The cheerless gloom of solitude.
What! is it Solitude to hold
Rich commune with the soul's high pow'r?
To mark its various buds unfold,
The bloom, the beauty of the flow'r?
What! is it Solitude to trace,
The hand of heav'n in Nature's face?⁸⁰
'Tis then the rising breast can throw
Its deathless essence, far from aught
That savours of the world below;
And, with the beings rear'd by thought,
Can oft converse in Fancy's shrine,
Until it feels an heav'n-born ray,
Around in mystic beamings play,
And mix a something half-divine.
Oh! 'tis not Solitude!—'tis more
Than life—than earth—than all can give;⁹⁰
'Tis on the wings of heav'n to soar—
'Tis in the land of bliss to live.

STANZAS TO LYRA.

Written at Fifteen Years Old.

THE hour for love, in all its bliss,
In all its purity of truth,
Is, when time prints his earliest kiss
Upon the open brow of youth;—

When all the heart is on the sigh,
That love has never heav'd before;
When the soft language of the eye
Tells all the rising bosom's core.

Yes, yes, my Lyra, love like mine,
Form'd in the orient dawn of day,¹⁰
That spark of ecstasy divine,
Time never, never can decay.

Yes, I may rove from flow'r to flow'r,
Yes, I may sip the roseate dew,
But still, believe me, ev'ry hour,
The heart will turn to love, and you!

Whene'er you mark man's darken'd hue,—
Whene'er you hear him swear to prove,
For ever, to your beauties, true,
Believe him not!—he cannot love!²⁰

But, when you view the glance of shame,
But, when you catch the falt'ring tone
Of youth, first warm'd to passion's flame,
Oh! that is love,—and love alone!

GERALDINE;
OR,
THE FATAL BOON.
A ROMANTIC TALE.
Written at Fourteen.

GERALDINE.

PART I.

THE morning dawn'd serenely gay;
The feather'd warblers hail'd the day;
The sun it shone forth bright and fair;
And vernal fragrance wooed the air.

O'er the brown hill and verdant green,
A thousand joyous forms were seen;
All Nature's works were blithe and gay,—
For this was Osmond's nuptial day.

High on a rock, whose rugged brow
Frown'd sternly o'er the vales below,¹⁰
And seem'd upon their charms to low'r,
Arose young Osmond's stately tow'r.

Now up the craggy steep ascends
A train of vassals, and of friends;
Here serf in festive garb array'd,
Here hoary sire, here matron staid,
Here plumed lord, and blushing maid,
Sweep on in long, long cavalcade.

See, where his foaming courser's speed
High Osmond reins by Emma's steed;²⁰
See, how his melting eyes impart
The love-sick tale that warms his heart;
The while her blushing looks reveal
The joy her eyes would fain conceal.

Each winning charm, each female grace,
Deck'd that soft virgin's angel face;
While Cupid, thron'd in beauty warm,
Shone on her lover's manly form:

Yet there, although he striv'd to hide,
You trac'd a wayward, haughty pride,³⁰
And a fierce something went and came,
In his dark eye-ball's rapid flame.

Lo! as they wind along the green,
Sudden a female form is seen,
A veil, with thickest sable dy'd,
Around her face was closely tied;
At Emma's feet her form she flung,
And thus her hollow accents rung:—

“O lady fair, a boon I ask,
“Trust me, 'tis an easy task;⁴⁰
“No costly robe, no blazing ore,
“No gem from India's pamper'd shore,
“I wish to have!—O lady fair,
“Give me one lock of thy bright hair!”
'A golden ringlet from my bride,'
In accents gay, young Osmond cried;
'In truth, it is a strange request,
'Yet, as she has so warmly prest,
'Mine Emma, grant the rich bequest.'

Upon the stranger, Emma's eyes⁵⁰
Gaz'd for awhile in soft surprise,
While o'er her damask cheek arose
The brightness of the morning rose.

One golden lock, that from the braid
That bound her graceful curls had stray'd,
And had luxuriously fell
Adown her bosom's rising swell,
Was from its snowy mansion riv'n,
And to the suppliant stranger giv'n.

Oh! then lord Osmond, could'st thou view⁶⁰
The features 'neath that sable hue;
Could'st thou the withering sternness trace,
That darken'd o'er that once lov'd face:

That darken'd o'er that once-lov'd face,
Sooner would'st thou, with rapture part,
From vital stream that warms thy heart,
Than to that shrouded female's hold
Consign the curl of wavy gold.

Soon as the stranger seiz'd the prize,
Swift as the hunted roebuck flies,
Away, away, across the mead,⁷⁰
Scour her feet with fairy speed.
Leave we awhile the blithsome throng,
That thickly, gaily sweep along,
And to that stranger turn our song.

Deep in a vale's sequester'd shade,
Blossom'd a young and lovely maid,
Enchanting Geraldine! To thee,
Suppliant nobles bent the knee,
For never human eye might trace
A finer form, or fairer face.⁸⁰
But every ardent suit she flies,
And casts on all averted eyes,
'Till Osmond came!—What female soul
Could e'er withstand his soft control,
Could see him weep, could hear him sigh,
And mark the language of that eye,
And still unthaw'd, unmov'd remain?—
Alas! for *her*, th' attempt was vain!

Long time the pair enamour'd, prove
The blissful joys of mutual love,⁹⁰
'Till Osmond cool'd!—On weak pretence,
He, feigning matter of offence,
Deserted her, whose faithful heart
Could ne'er from Osmond's image part.
What anguish'd grief, what love by turns,
In Geraldine's rack'd bosom burns,—
Sighs, tears, and groans, consum'd the day!
Sighs, tears, and groans, wore night away!
At length the fatal news is brought,

“Lord Osmond has in spousals sought¹⁰⁰
“The high-born Emma!”—Oh, what pain
Thrill’d then across her madd’ning brain,
’Till fondness fled, and direful rage,
And vengeance stern, her thoughts engage.
But lo! her beldam nurse appears,
Well worn in vice, and bow’d with years,
A potent witch! whose dreadful spell
Had pow’r to bind the fiends of hell.

To her the injur’d beauty flies,
Her soul fierce flashing in her eyes,¹¹⁰
And weeping tells her, how the youth
Had broke his vows of love and truth.
“What though, alas!” the fair one cried,
“I may not, cannot be his bride,
“Revenge is mine! may death and wo—
“Whom would I curse?—my Osmond!—no!
“*Him*, Dira, *him*, though faithless, spare,—
“Turn all thy vengeance on the fair,
“Who’s robb’d me of his valued heart,
“Stab, stab her soul with poison’s dart,—¹²⁰
“Against *her*, all thy charms employ,
“Her life, her soul, her all destroy!”
She ceas’d; but still her eye-ball’s glare
Shew’d vengeance fierce and fix’d was there,
And still that brow declares too well,
What human tongue can feebly tell.

Her Dira soothes, and hastes t’ unfold
The secrets of a heart grown old
In vice,—whose very name would thrill
And damp the soul with shudd’ring chill,¹³⁰
And to her awe-struck list’ner tells
Her hellish charms, and demon spells;
Proceeds the dreadful means to shew,
To blight young Emma’s hopes with wo.

One thing alone would still remain,
And Geraldine must that obtain

And Gertrude must that obtain,
To aid their plans,—from Emma fair,
On nuptial day, a lock of hair.

Her well-known features now to hide,
*A veil, in thickest sable dy'd,*¹⁴⁰
Around her lovely face was tied.
And she it was, upon that day,
Who met the lovers in their way,
And gain'd the prize!—for, in her hold
Bright beams the wavy lock of gold.

Mean time to Osmond's lofty halls,
The God of Love and Pleasure calls.
Hark, hark, loud clamours rend the air,
“Long live our Lord and Emma fair!”
Hark, hark, the minstrels tune their lays,¹⁵⁰
In one glad song of joy and praise;
And love and wit combine their pow'r,
To gild with bliss each halcyon hour;
And all around is blithe and gay,—
For this is Osmond's nuptial day!

END OF PART I.

GERALDINE;
OR,
THE FATAL BOON.

PART II.

GERALDINE.

PART II.

'TWAS day! and all was bright and fair!—
Tis night!—and thunders rend the air;—
The lightning's blaze illumes the shore;—
In driving hail, the torrents pour.
Oh! 'tis a night, whose dreadful shade
Seem'd but for hell's dark demons made,
And Fancy's eye might, in the storm,
Trace many a wild mysterious form.

Upon an heath, unmov'd by all,
That human nature can appal,¹⁰
Dark Dira stood!—and, by her side,
Buoy'd up by vengeful woman's pride,
Like some fair angel's slender form,
Near the dire demon of the storm,
The lightning's blaze, with lurid glare,
Shew'd Geraldine pale, standing there.
And can no fear, can no remorse,
Stop, stop thee, from thy dreadful course?—
Oh! think, in what a gulph of crime,
Thou sink'st thy soul to endless time!²⁰
Oh, think! oh, pause! oh, haste to fly
From such a gulph of misery!
On every feature of her face,
Nought but one fix'd resolve you'd trace,
And vain, alas! is human skill,
When woman once is bent on ill.

This wither'd heath, the fiends are wont,
With annual festival, to haunt;
And quaff, from many a murderer's skull,
Bowls with blood-streams bubbling full!³⁰

And where has been their blasting tread,
There never shrub can lift its head—
There never fall the dews of night—
There never beams the solar light!

On Dira's magic-shielded head
Burst, with fierce blaze, the lightnings red;
But, ere they singed one hair, they fell,
And own'd the power of her spell.
Convuls'd her looks,—her eye-balls glare,—
Her elfin locks stream to the air,—⁴⁰
Arms, neck, and breast expos'd and bare,
As if the wild wind's rage to dare.
While nature trembled at the sin,
They now th' infernal rites begin.

Within her lean and bony hand,
Dark Dira held a mystic wand;
Thrice, with that wand, she struck the ground,
And mutter'd many a mystic sound:
Then turning to the paly fair,
Who shudder'd, half-repentant, there,⁵⁰
Full on her cold and trembling hand,
She struck the hell-devoted wand;
And, strange to say, one drop of blood
(As if to mar its whiteness) stood
On that fair hand, then downwards bore,
And fell, and was perceived no more;
But where it dropp'd, there instant came,
From the seer earth, a dark-blue flame;—
When on that flame the sorceress glanc'd,
Round, and round, and round she danc'd,⁶⁰
With action wild, and gesture dread,
This rhyme uncouth she sung or said:—
“Mighty child of darkness, hear!
“Queen of the sable sons of hell,
“Hecate, now incline thy ear,
“Listen to thy Dira's spell!
“And ye dark train,
“That snort at midnight o'er th' infernal plain.

“To my charms, now witness bear,
“Charms to all your vot’ries dear.⁷⁰
“Lo! into these flames I fling
“Basilisk’s eye, and scorpion’s sting,
 “And the bat’s wing!
“Fire, subservient to my will,
“Burn fiercer, hotter, faster still!
 “To aid my charm,
“Lo! in thy flames, I cast a murderer’s arm.

“Toad, once tenant of the tomb,
 “Beetle black, and infant’s thigh,
“Screech owl’s egg, and raven’s plume,⁸⁰
“Mad dog’s foam, and viper’s skin,
 “Mandrake’s brain, and black cat’s eye,
“I throw thy mystic flames within.
“Fire, subservient to my will,
“Burn fiercer, hotter, faster still!
“Lo! again to aid my vow,
“Hemlock, and the cypress bough,
“Night-shade, yew, and all that bloom
“O’er the charnel, or the tomb;
“Each potent herb, each magic thing,⁹⁰
“To complete my spells, I bring!”

She ceas’d;—and now, with vivid rays,
Fiercely tow’rs th’ infernal blaze;
The traveller, who, on that black night,
Beheld from far, the demon light,
Paus’d for awhile!—his pray’rs he said,
Then spurr’d his steed in wond’ring dread;
The owl, who caught the distant ray,
Bore back his pinions in dismay;
The dog, who saw the blaze afar,¹⁰⁰
That seem’d to burst like meteor star,
In horror stood!—to bark, and tried,
But found his trembling tongue was tied.

Now as high the hell-flames whirl,

In Dira throws the golden curl;
Round, and round again she flings,
In hellish dance, and thus she sings:—
“Thou who rul’st the realms below,
“Receive the grateful sacrifice,
“Around thy fire-flames pacing thrice,¹¹⁰
“Thy servant offers now!
 “Cut away,
 “On nuptial day,
“Lo! into these flames, I throw
“Ringlet of a deadly foe;
“And as it now is eat by flame,
“So may the head from whence it came,—
“So may the heart,—so may the frame,
 “Of that detested enemy,
“Wither, and consume, and burn,¹²⁰
“Decay like visions of the morn,
 “In bitt’rest pangs of agony!”

Turn we again to hall and bow’r,
Where Hymen gilds each halcyon hour;—
To Osmond, and his jovial train
Of lordly friends, turn we again!
Like seamen, feasting safe on shore,
Little reck’d they of the tempest’s roar:—
Hark! the minstrels tune their lyre,
And sing of love’s celestial fire,¹³⁰
In melting music’s soothing measures,
Tell its more than earthly pleasures!
While Osmond’s eyes, with passion streaming,
Are on his lovely Emma beaming!
Hark! the minstrels change their theme,
A nobler fire illumines their dream!
Of Osmond’s deeds, of Osmond’s might,
Bulwark of the field of fight!
How, mid heaps of slaughter’d foes,
High, his laurell’d crest arose;¹⁴⁰
How, on Gallia’s hostile shore,
Mid many a stream of crimson gore,
His arm Abl whence that piercing curl

THIS ANN—*Ann*: whence that piercing cry:
What means that scream of agony?
Turn, Osmond, turn thine orbs of pride,
Behold thy pallid, fainting bride!
She gasps for breath,—she strives to speak,—
In vain her voice would silence break:
Her locks upstand, her eye-balls glare,
Her trembling form convulsions tear.¹⁵⁰
'Assistance,—help!' young Osmond cries;
'Help! or my angel Emma, dies.'
But vain was help!—he scarce had said,
Ere her pure soul had ever fled;
And she, whose sight could rapture bring,
Was now pale, cold, and withering!
In madd'ning grief, and dark despair,
Lord Osmond gaz'd, as rooted there;
So still, unheeding all, he stood,—
It seem'd the calm of fortitude!¹⁶⁰
But, sudden starting from his trance,
He cast on her one piercing glance;
Then threw himself upon her breast,
And her unconscious lips he prest;
And, torn by frenzy and dismay,
Clasp'd in his arms the lifeless clay,
And mourn'd the hopes of many a day,—
In one dire moment snatch'd away!
But lo! around the banner'd hall,
A sudden gloom appear'd to fall,¹⁷⁰
The glimmering lamps burn dark and blue,
And tinge the walls with ghostly hue;
And far more loud the tempests roar
And rage against the sounding shore.
Lo! what a forked flash is there,
Hark! what a peal bursts through the air;
The frightened earth appears to quake,
The lofty tow'rs in terror shake;
And Osmond's feasters, here and there,
Disperse in wild and wondering fear.¹⁸⁰
Then, where the madd'ning bridegroom lay,
A dark-blue flame was seen to play

A dark blue flame was seen to play,
And, like a sylph, in lightning-storm,
Amid it rose a female form!
But on her pale, majestic face,
A mix'd expression you might trace,
Of pride, of rage, triumphant joy;—
A something seeking to destroy.
One step to Osmond first she made,
And thus with deep low tone she said:—190
“Osmond, behold! arise! arise!
“On me, once more, direct thine eyes;
“She, whom with treach'ry's perjur'd part,
“Thou left'st to cure a broken heart,
“Has liv'd to blast, base traitor, know,
“Thy youth with bitterest pangs of wo.
“Gaze on—weep on—o'er that cold fair,
“Who lies, bereft of being, there;
“And know, if pleasure it may be,
“*That glorious work was done by me!*”200
She spoke;—and, as she mov'd away,
Laugh'd, like a demon o'er his prey.

Fierce flash'd in Osmond's eyes the fire
Of vengeful rage, of deepest ire.
Sprang from his place, his dirk he drew,
And swift on Geraldine he flew;
One single moment scarce was o'er,
Ere that keen dirk was red with gore.
She fell!—but, haughty e'en in death,
No groan, no sigh, consum'd her breath.210
But, though she sunk upon that ground,
Never again her corpse was found:
And, strange to say, I've heard the tale,
That, borne upon the passing gale,
Unearthly screams and voices ran,
And sounds—far from the sounds of man!

When Osmond had that death-blow giv'n,
His eyes, his hands, uprais'd to heav'n,
(To *Emma* ever true,) he cried,

'I come!—receive me, Oh! my bride!' 220
Then plung'd his dirk into his side,
Gasp'd out his Emma's name,—and died!

IMPROMPTU

ON SEEING A TEAR ON THE CHEEK OF A YOUNG LADY AT THE
RECITAL OF A TALE OF WOE.

Written at Fourteen.

Precious drop of heav'nly feeling,
Purer than the driven snows,
Down the cheek of beauty stealing,
At the tale of Mira's woes.

Is that beamy radiance melting?
Does that eye less bright appear?
Love in Pity's bosom sheltering,
Wafts his arrows on a tear!

Translations from Horace^[14].

ODE XV. BOOK I.

Written at Thirteen.

WHEN o'er the seas the treach'rous shepherd bore
His lovely hostess, to the Dardan shore;
Lull'd was each wave, and hush'd each stormy breeze,
By Nereus soften'd to ingrateful ease;
That the dire fate to Priam's race they bring,
Of mighty woes, the pitying god may sing.

“Ah! hapless Paris, in an evil day,
“Thou bear'st thy burthen from her home away.
“To break thy guilty ties, the Greeks conspire,
“And wrap thy father's ancient realms in fire.¹⁰
“What labour trickles from each warlike face,
“Alas! what carnage dyes the Dardan race;
“Pallas prepares e'en now her flying car,
“The helm, the ægis, and desire of war!
“By guardian Venus' soft assistance bold,
“In vain, you comb your flowing locks of gold;
“In vain, your finger sweeps th' unwarlike string,
“And tender measures, loved by females, sing;
“In vain, you fly the Cretan lance; in vain,
“From Ajax swift, you scour your native plain;²⁰
“Though harmless through the airy tide be sped
“The dart, so hateful to the nuptial bed,
“Yet still, though late, th' adult'rous ringlets must
“Be steep'd in blood, and scatter'd in the dust.
“See stern Ulysses, terror of thy race;
“And Pylia Nestor's venerable grace;
“Teucer, and Sthenelus, renown'd in war,
“Or skill'd to guide the coursers and the car.
“Ah! hapless Paris, dost thou also see,
“Where godlike Merion scours the plain for thee;³⁰

“Where fierce Tydides, greater than his sire,
“Searches for thee, and burns with vengeful ire?
“As when some stag perceives, with fearful eyes,
“Across the vale the tawny wolf, and flies;
“So shalt thou fly! forgetful of thy fame;—
“Not thus thou promised to the Spartan dame.
“Achilles’ angry fleet may bring delay,
“But not less sure th’ inevitable day;
“The fate-allotted time will soon expire,
“And Troy shall sink beneath the Grecian fire.”⁴⁰

ODE XVI. BOOK II.

Written at Fourteen.

WHEN shipwreckt, mid the wide Ægean seas,
The wearied sailor prays to heav'n for ease;
When the dark clouds o'er Cynthia's splendour low'r,
And glimmering stars refuse to lend their pow'r;
For ease, for ease, the warlike Thracian cries,
In vain, for ease, the quiver'd Parthian sighs:
That blessing, Grosphus, never can be sold
For blushing purple, or for blazing gold.
For neither wealth, nor regal power control
The wretched tumults of the madd'ning soul.¹⁰
And care, alas! will pour her baleful crowd
Around the vaulted mansions of the proud.
Happy the man, whose humble board is spread
With the coarse viands that his fathers fed.
Nor trembling Fear, nor Av'rice, sordid guest!
Can e'er disturb his lightly-peaceful rest.
Why do we waste, in things that ne'er may be,
The flying hours of short mortality?
Fools that we are!—Oh, wherefore do we run
To climates mellow'd by another sun?²⁰
When roves the exile from his native sky,
Say!—can he ever hope himself to fly?

Ah, no!—for care is swifter than the hind,—
For care is swifter than the eastern wind.

How blest that soul, which, moderately gay,
Unheeds the morrow, and enjoys to-day;—
Sweetens with smiles, the bitterness of strife,
For perfect bliss can ne'er be found in life!
Achilles fell, in life's primæval day;
The hand of time, Tithonus wore away.³⁰
And that long life, by Fate denied to thee,

Perhaps, indulgent, she may give to me.

A hundred herds adorn thy fertile fields,
For thee, Sicilia, hundred oxen yields;
For thee, the courser eager snuffs the plain,
Bows his proud neck, and seems to court the rein;
For thee, with long, and loosely-sweeping flow,
The Lybian dye reveals its purple glow.
To me, propitious Fate, with kindly hand,
Has giv'n some portion of paternal land,⁴⁰
And deign'd the lays of Horace to inspire,
With one bright beam of ancient Graia's fire;
And whilst in talent, and in virtue proud,
To scorn the malice of the vulgar crowd.

Translation
OF THE FIRST CHORUS
IN THE
ŒDIPUS TYRRANNUS OF SOPHOCLES.
Written at Fourteen.

STROPHE.

OH! sweet-tongued oracle of Phœbus, say,
To aid th' illustrious Thebans' ancient shore,
Dost thou from golden Delphos bend thy way,
Where thousand altars daily incense pour?
God, we invoke thee by thy three-fold name,
Rack'd with suspence, and palpitating fear,
Whate'er thou now, or henceforth shalt proclaim,
We list in silence, and with reverence hear.
Child of Hope, immortal Fame,
 Deign the dark decree to prove;¹⁰
Thy pow'r omnipotent we claim,
 Pallas! progeny of Jove!

ANTISTROPHE.

To thee, we raise our suppliant hands,
Diana, queen of forests cold,
To where the stately forum stands,
Seated on thy throne of gold.
God of the distant-wounding bow,
Apollo, hear, avert our wo.
If e'er before ye gave us aid,
When burthen'd with the monster-maid,²⁰
Averters of Misfortune's band,
Oh! now assist our suff'ring land.

Alas! to you, we suppliant call,
And, crush'd with ills unnumber'd, fall,
Whilst all our people pine away with grief,
And vain each plan to bring the wish'd relief;
Our corn is wasted in the barren earth,
Our women sink beneath th' untimely birth;
Corpse upon corpse promiscuously expire,
Flocking to gloomy Pluto's dreary reign,³⁰
As birds, who, swifter than th' unwearied fire,
Fall in vast numbers o'er the azure main.
Unnumber'd deaths, alas! exhaust our land—
Unhonour'd corpses load the burning strand.
Mothers and wives, thy sacred altars round,
Emit one sad, one darkly-mournful sound;
Perpetual Pæans lengthen on the gale,
And dismal sighs and mournful groans prevail.
Oh! haste then, golden Pallas, heav'nly maid,
Deign, in all thy might to aid,⁴⁰
And cause to fly this dreadful god,
Who smites us with his baleful rod;
And, sword and buckler laid aside,
Destroys us with o'erwhelming tide;
Drive him, banish'd, from our home,
Where th' unbounded ocean's foam—
Or where th' Ægean waters roar
Around the barb'rous Thracian's shore.
What night has spar'd awhile!—the day
Has unrelenting swept away.⁵⁰
Oh, potent Jove! thy thunders bare,
Oh, bid thy lightnings pierce the air,
And wrap beneath the blazing storm,
The murd'rous fury's raging form.
Oh, King of Lycia! now thy darts employ,
Beneath thy arms this god destroy.
Those weapons, oh, Diana? pour,
With which thou hunt'st the Lycian boar.
And thou, who lov'st the nymphs to lead,
With golden mitre round thy head,⁶⁰
Guardian God of Theban shore,

Purple Bacchus, we implore,
Oh, rear thy blazing brand on high,
Against this monster of the sky,
And banish, madd'ning with the pain,
The god, most hated of the heav'nly train.

PARNASSUS^[15];

A VISION.

Written at Fourteen Years and a Half.

LOVES not thy soul, when sated with the crowd,
And all the trifles of the great and proud;—
Loves not thy soul, its wearied pow'rs to bless,
With the rich charms of pensive loneliness?—
To turn thine eye, in mem'ry's fond survey,
To scenes and pleasures faded long away;
Till they fall on thee, like spring's grateful rain,
And, in idea, thou liv'st them o'er again?
Or, if bright Hope extends her magic wand,
To the dark future's cloud-encircled land;¹⁰
Dost thou not feel a secret wish to view
Th' entangled vale, thou hast to wander through?
While Fancy loves to deck the scene with flow'rs,
Gather'd from Glory's fields, or Pleasure's roseate bow'rs;
Till, perhaps, some passing peasant's laughter's roll,
Breaks the soft spell that binds thy wand'ring soul.
Yes, thou hast felt it, at that grateful hour,
When eve excites the Muse's heav'nly pow'r,—
When all is calm!—when nothing rude is near,
To bound the pensive eye, or wound the ear!²⁰
When Zephyr, wakened by paternal spring,
Ripples the waters with his roseate wing;
And, like a lover, woos them with a sigh,
Sweet, but soon over, as he wanders by.

'Twas such an eve as this, I lately stood
On the green banks that shade Brent's humble flood,
And mus'd o'er pleasures past, o'er scenes to be,
The cheering lights of dim futurity;
Till softly o'er my mind began to creep
Th' unearthly calm of visionary sleep.³⁰

Methought, a spacious plain before me lay,
Ting'd with that light which gilds the dawn of day;
Beauteous in every charm that can impart
Aught to delight, or captivate the heart:
Like those bright realms^[16], replete with ev'ry joy,
That Venus rear'd to please her fav'rite boy.
Far up the wide expanse, was clearly seen,
A mountain cover'd with eternal green:
There, wreath'd in flow'rs of heav'n's own splendid hue,
This hallow'd word blaz'd on the distant view,⁴⁰
“PARNASSUS!”——

By the fair bow'rs, and streams, that fill'd this plain,
Were wide-dispers'd the ancient bardic train:—
There (by a roaring cat'ract's sweeping force,
That from Parnassus took its turbid course)
Tow'rd Homer's form! in majesty sublime,
The living monument, of lasting time;
And near to him, beneath a spreading tree,
Stood thy wild Sire^[17], imperial Tragedy!
And farther on, with eye, and stroke of fire,
High Pindar woke the transports of his lyre;⁵⁰
While by a river, fann'd with Zephyr's breeze,
Lay the mild shade of melting Sophocles;
There, many a form, in awful splendour bright,
Caught the wild, wondering raptures of my sight:—
Maro and Horace, godlike sons of Fame,
And am'rous Ovid's ever-pleasing name;
While, through the air, that hush'd itself to hear,
Tibullus' sweetness thrill'd the list'ning ear;
And mighty Lucan, with illustrious strain,
Told the dread scenes of fam'd Pharsalia's plain:⁶⁰
With gather'd arms, curl'd lip, and eye severe,
Stood Juvenal—alone, calm, stern, austere.

Methought the scene was changed!—a wider plain,
Spread with a gaudy, but a trifling train,
Before me lay!——No more could I behold
The hallow'd mountain, or its fields of gold;

Till, as I strain'd mine eye, I view'd afar,
Its shrouded beams, like Herschel's distant star.
Again I turn'd my eye upon the band,
Who pour'd their numbers o'er this humbler land;⁷⁰
These were, I soon perceiv'd, the bards who smile,
In this fair era, o'er Britannia's isle.
The first, was one, whom many-tongued Renown
Has deem'd the brightest gem that decks the Muse's crown.

Apart from all he stood!—his burning eye
He strove to turn in rapture to the sky.
Upon his lyre he leant: and, as he sung,
His curling ringlets o'er his shoulders hung;
In ev'ry look the trifler gave, he sought
To shew how wisely, and how deep he thought;⁸⁰
And to his flowing garb, and studied pace,
He strove, but strove in vain, to give a grace.
His first, his chiefest aim, his dearest pride,
To write!—how different from the world beside;
For this he rack'd his brain!—it would not do!
For every effort, more degen'rate grew.
At length he found a method to succeed,
'Twas this!—to celebrate each impious deed,
To *Vice* the charms of *Virtue* to impart,
To thrill the senses!—but corrupt the heart!⁹⁰
While I gaz'd on this bard!—methought a sound,
Wild, sweet, but awful, swell'd along the ground;
I turn'd mine eye! and, by a mould'ring tow'r,
Espied a form of such high grace and pow'r,—
It seem'd as if Apollo from the skies
Had rov'd, and now had met my wond'ring eyes.
It was that bard, whose justly-lasting fame,
Illustrious Caledon is proud to claim!—
It was that bard, whose wild majestic lay,
The floods of time shall never sweep away!¹⁰⁰
Fast by his side, soul-moving C l stood—
C l, the wise, the noble, and the good.
These two were in the open paths that led
To green Parnassus' ever-radiant head.

Not far from them, in green, and vigorous age,
Reclin'd at ease a venerable sage;
Like some calm stream his peaceful numbers flow,
Serenely soft, dispassionately slow;
Not his the genius that can soar sublime,
On wings of Glory, o'er the wrecks of time:¹¹⁰
Yet Fame's fair pages shall record him long,
No humble vot'ry at the shrine of song.
Beneath the luxuries of a neighb'ring bow'r,
I view'd the figure of fantastic M ;
Around the poet's myrtle-wreathed head,
A train of gaudy insects hovered;
Sudden he rises! and with haste pursues
The splendid fly, that boasts the richest hues;
And long upheld the chace! until it flew¹¹⁹
Within his grasp!—and then he straight withdrew.
It griev'd me to behold so vast a mind,
Ideas so grand, and talents so refin'd,
Desert Parnassus, to pursue a fly,
And change, for trifles, Immortality!

Two well-known sons of rapture-raising song,
Now slowly swept the radiant fields along.
Heroic S, whose Parnassian lays
Richly deserve Britannia's laureate bays.
With this great vot'ry of Apollo's name,
The pensive shade of hallow'd R—— came;¹³⁰
Each melting line, that this soft poet sung,
Flow'd from the heart, its richness to the tongue;
He, who has gain'd a fame for aye to last,
By singing of the Pleasures that are past.
While I did gaze on them, across the plain,
Like summer vapours, swept a jovial train,
Issuing from these, I caught th' unmeaning note
Of senseless C's empty numbers float;
W was there, who follow'd Homer's rule,
In every line, to study Nature's school;¹⁴⁰
For as his heroes drive the waggon, so
Rustic and rude his humble verses flow.

Far to the hinder side, a mountain spread,
With shadowy clouds impervious, o'er its head,
Hiding whate'er beneath the veil might be,
With the dark mantle of futurity.
In vain, my searching eye-balls seek t' explore
The hidden secrets of that mystic shore.

From time to time, a legion would emerge
From its dark region's shade-encircled verge:¹⁵⁰
But most, ere yet a few short stops were o'er,
Fell to the earth, and were beheld no more!
A few, indeed, a farther distance past;
But, though they sunk not first, they sunk at last.
Yet, as *they* fell, from forth the sable land,
All careless of their fate, another band
In swift succession issued forth, till they
Soon, in their turn, sunk down the dangerous way.

Methought my feet with rash, unhallow'd tread,
My longing eyes, to this dark region led;¹⁶⁰
Methought my hand already seiz'd the shroud,
That o'er it hung its canopy of cloud;—
Methought, mid those just rushing on to light,
I view'd a form, with awful grandeur bright;
Upon his beaming brows, in leaves of gold,
“Britannia's greatest glory” was enroll'd!
Scarce could I snatch a momentary trace
Of these high words, when, through the darksome place,
Burst forth these accents, awful, loud, and drear,
“Hold back, hold back, rash mortal, and forbear!”

Scarce was it utter'd, ere the wondrous scene,¹⁷¹
And those who fill'd it, were no longer seen;
And, in the stead of that remember'd dream,
I view'd the waves that swell Brent's shallow stream;
And heard the tinkling from the distant fold,
Stead of the strains from many a lyre of gold,
That e'en but now, had bound the melting soul,
In thralls of heav'nly, but of vain control.

'The grateful spell is broke!—the treasur'd tone—
The hallow'd visions—yes, alas!—are flown!¹⁸⁰
And I must back to scenes of loathsome life,
Pregnant with sorrow, and profuse with strife.

Yes! though the hand of time has scarcely spread
His roseate wreath of youth around my head,
Yet I have felt, how keen the piercing dart,
That grief can give, to lacerate the heart.—
Yes, I have felt, how full of care, alas!
The thorny paths that man is doom'd to pass.
But for a bright, and oft-times cheering ray,
Athwart my dark and melancholy way;¹⁹⁰
For many a soothing, many a raptur'd hour,
I bless, my Muse, thy sweet celestial pow'r.
Oh, mayst thou still continue, o'er my soul,
To hold, for aye, thine heav'n-inspir'd control.
Oh, mayst thou still in many a dream like this,
Give thine unearthly purity of bliss!
Till snatch'd from life, from all its trammels free,
I lose its searing bitterness—in thee!

Upon the Death
OF
A LATE MAN OF QUALITY,
Well known for his Atheistical Principles.
Written at Thirteen.

BEHOLD that man by Fortune's fickle pow'r,
The gilded fav'rite of the "varying hour;"—
The gallant lord, whom noble ladies love,
Whom senates homage, and whom crowds approve.

For him, the bards attune their soften'd lays,
In mellow notes, declare their patron's praise;—
For him, soft luxury courts each distant shore,
To tempt his palate with its varied store;—
For him, the goblet flows with Gallia's wine,
And wit, and beauty, all their pow'rs combine;¹⁰
His sov'reign's smile illumines his pageant day;
And thronging courtiers servile incense pay.
Revers'd the scene!—behold him stript of all!
Though great his height, yet greater still his fall!
Ah! see him stretch'd upon his dying bed,
His vain associates, num'rous flatt'ers fled:
Dim are those eyes, once darting soul and fire—
Pallid that cheek, which ladies wont t' admire;—
Clos'd are those lips, once eloquently gay,
Whose fire of wit illum'd the festive day;—²⁰
Ah! see his wasted limbs convuls'd by death,
Painful, and hard, he draws his quivering breath.

How different far, he views the face of things!—
How poor the comfort worldly wisdom brings!—
How deep he rues the fatal time that's past,
When each new day was guiltier than the last;—
How much regrets the tale of former years,
The wide, black prospect, scarce a virtue cheers:
Tremendous mem'ry, to his mind displays,
The vice, the crimes, that stain'd his earlier days.³⁰
Lo, he starts up;—his matted ringlets stare,
Like dying lamps, his glazing eye-balls glare.
Heard ye that scream?—and see ye not the fiend,
Come hot from hell to warn him of his end?
See ye him grin?—and wide display a scroll,
The horrid records of the sable soul?

Or is it Conscience all?—Again that cry,
That mocks description in its agony.
Peace!—peace!—upon that withering sound at last,
To heav'n's high Judgement-Seat th' escaping spirit's past.⁴⁰

TO LYRA.

Written at Fifteen Years Old.

By Idalia's secret grove—
By the streams so dear to love—
By the beds, and fragrant bow'rs,
Fram'd from Flora's brightest flow'rs—
By the heart's first hope, first fear,
Tell me!—dost thou love me, dear?

By the transports of the lyre,
Bursting forth in hallow'd fire—
By thy tongue's celestial lay,
Melting all the soul away—¹⁰
By the heart's first hope, first fear,
Tell me!—dost thou love me, dear?

By the passion-breathing sigh,
When youthful rapture rises high—
By the drop of glist'ning dew,
In thine eye of violet blue—
By the heart's first hope, first fear,
Tell me!—dost thou love me, dear?

By thy bosom's heaving snow—
By thine orb's averted glow—²⁰
By this lovely hand of thine,
Trembling, thrilling, now in mine—
By the heart's first hope, first fear,
Tell me!—dost thou love me, dear?

FAREWELL TO LYRA.

Written at Fifteen.

FAREWELL, oh farewell! though distance may sever
The persons of lovers, their hearts it can never;
And mine will still, Lyra, be tending on thee,
As the bird of the night on his own fragrant tree^[18].
Can I think of the tear in thine orbit of blue,
When I falt'ringly murmur'd, "My Lyra, adieu!"—
Can I think of that hand, as it trembled in mine,
How pensive, yet sweet, was its exquisite thrill;
While my pulse woke the motion of transport in thine,⁹
Like the balm of the gale on the breast of the rill.
Can I think of the gift, when thou sigh'd, "we must part,"
That thou cast o'er my bosom to lie on my heart;
And as my keen anguish, thou sawest the while,
Thou strove to look up with a soul-soothing smile;
But when there, thou caught the wild glancing of pain,
Thou burst into tears (oh, how heartfelt!) again:—
Can I think of that scene, which remembrance will show,
As the sweetest, yet bitt'rest, it ever can know—
Can I think of that scene, and, oh! e'er can I be,
E'en in thought, for a moment unfaithful to thee?²⁰
And now, as thy gift to my bosom I'm pressing,
Oh! dost thou not think, my belov'd, it will glow,
Like the mariner's star—like the pilgrim's last blessing,
To guide and to cheer through this desert of wo.
And if ever my country should call to the field
Of Honour's thick slaughter, and Death's scenes of gore,
Oh, dost thou not think that my head it will shield,
As the magical charms of the wizards of yore.
As it rests on my heart, I shall think that thine eye
Nerves mine arm, and enkindles the flame of my soul,
It will soften that heart to the conquer'd's weak cry—
It will blend with its courage, soft Mercy's control.
Or should Fate ever guide, in the patriot's high cause,

To the senate of wisdom, oh, think'st thou this token
Will not cull to thy lover his country's applause—
Will not keep the firm ties of the patriot unbroken?
And if e'er, for a moment, his bosom should swerve
From the dictates of Honour, he's sworn to observe,
As he feels thy lov'd gift on his bosom recline,³⁹
Will not all there again straight be Virtue's and thine?

Yes, my Lyra, while life in thy lover can dwell—
While remembrance can give that endearing farewell,
He will carry this gift through life's thorn-sprouting maze;
'Twill sublimate rapture—'twill soften despair—
'Twill lead him from grief, to those bliss-beaming days,
When each step was on roses,—for Lyra was there!

Yet, ah, can my lips e'er those hated words tell,
“For ever, my Lyra, for ever farewell!”

It cannot be *ever!*—or else with the thought,
(With feelings, with throes of such agony fraught,)⁵⁰
This heart would be burst in its innermost core;—
Could it beat, and each throb of its beating not be
Thine only!—Oh, no, every pulse must be o'er,
Ere it once is forgetful of love and of thee.
If on earth our fond hopings of passion are riv'n,
Yet yonder, oh, gaze!—(where so often before
We have pour'd our full sighs) on yon balm-breathing heav'n,
There bliss will receive us—there grief be no more;
Love will pour round our heads his bright halo divine,
Sublim'd to a loftier, mellower glow,⁶⁰
All celestial, all warm, like the Magi's pure shrine,
Such as Seraphs can feel—such as heav'n can bestow.

THE CASKET;
ADDRESSED TO A LADY.

Written at Fourteen.

As Cupid was roving one morning, he found
A Casket emblazon'd in diamond and gold;
The gems of the ocean embrac'd it around,
And the handmaids of Venus had sculptured its mould.

“How transcendent must be the interior store
“Of so bright an exterior,” the mirth-lover cries,
As he hastens, in rapture, its depths to explore,
With joy in his dimples, and hope in his eyes.

But, I would ye had seen how he alter'd his air,
How he rag'd!—how to earth the gay bauble he cast,¹⁰
When the richness of splendour that promis'd so fair,
Was empty of aught—save the æther that past.

Thus the beaming of beauty may dazzle the glance,
Though void of the stores that beneath them should be;
But when the gay casket is open'd—the trance
Of hopefulness fades like the foam of the sea.

But, in thee, Queen of Loveliness, wond'ring we find,
Not merely the time-searing bloom of the skin,
But the grace of the form, and the wealth of the mind,
The Casket of Beauty, the treasure within.²⁰

THE
BATTLE OF WATERLOO;
A POEM,
In Two Cantos.
Written between Fourteen and Fifteen.

CANTO I.

“It timor, et major Martis jam apparet imago.”
Virgil.

TO

THOSE ILLUSTRIOUS HEROES,

WHOSE LAURELS ARE THE BRIGHTEST ORNAMENTS

OF THE

BRIGHTEST VICTORY

WHICH HAS EVER GRACED THE ANNALS

OF THE

BRITISH HISTORY;

WHOSE NAMES THE BARD GLORIES TO CELEBRATE,

AND FAME DELIGHTS TO IMMORTALIZE;

THIS POEM

IS DEDICATED,

BY THEIR YOUTHFUL, BUT ARDENT ADMIRER,

EDW: GEO: LYTTON BULWER

THE
BATTLE OF WATERLOO.

CANTO I.

I.

AWAKE, my Muse, and o'er my trembling lyre
Breath but one spark of that celestial fire,
But one bright beam, unconscious of decay,
Which shew'd thy bard Parnassus' flow'ry way;
Immortal Homer! for a bolder theme,
Than ever yet has rous'd my youthful dream,
The deeds of warriors, the delights of war,
And all the glories of the trophied car,
Begin Calliope!—to these belong
A more than common, more than mortal song!¹⁰

II.

Now stands brave Wellesley on the tow'ring height,
Surveys the war, and kindles at the sight;
O'er each wide rank he casts his eager eye,
Inspired by hope, to conquer, or to die.
Firm, in the midst, the British guards appear,
A band of heroes, never known to fear;
Alcides' strength on ev'ry form we trace,
Bellona's ardour, and Apollo's grace;
Lions in war, possess'd of ev'ry art,
To gain the combat, or to win the heart.²⁰
Pale Brunswick mourning for her leader slain,
Spreads her bold legions o'er the martial plain
Far on the right,—with them in numbers pour,
A race of warriors from the Belgian shore.
The haughty war-steed, glorying to bear
His noble burthen, closes up the rear.

III.

Then to the hostile hosts, who adverse stand,
The pride of France, the flow'r of all her land.
Strain'd to the left he casts his eager sight,
Where the proud eagle rears her tow'ring height;³⁰
These hardy troops, Napoléon's brother led,
While to the right Lobau's brave squadrons spread.
Erlon and Reille, in warlike tumults known,
Of vict'ry hoping, in the centre shone;
Not their's, or sportive joust, or mimic fray,—
The fate of Europe hung upon that day.
The mighty leader of each glorious band,
For the first time, in arms confronting stand;
While Vict'ry doubted which her palm might claim,
For each was equal in the lists of fame.⁴⁰

IV.

Proud Gallia's haughty eagle's rear'd on high,
And thund'ring cannon rend the vaulted sky;
Majestic Death stalks o'er the bloody plain,
And Honour's bed receives her heroes slain.
By thee, brave Picton, what great deeds were done,
What martial laurels grac'd thy setting sun!
In Fame's first page, thy glorious name returned,
What tears erabalm'd thee, and what hearts have mourn'd!
Ah! how record the mighty chiefs that fell,
While peals of cannon sound their fun'ral knell!⁵⁰

V.

Napoléon urg'd his ever-dauntless band,
Nerv'd was each arm, and bare each shining brand;
Flush'd was each cheek, joy beam'd in ev'ry eye,—
They seem'd to think it were a bliss to die.
“Forward, my comrades; forward speed your way,
Our guardian genius shall record this day!”
They wait no more!—the courser feels the rein
No longer check him from the warring plain.
Thirsting for blood, impatient for the fight,
The sabre glitters with effulgent light;
Rear'd by that arm, which knows no other laws,⁶⁰
Than courting glory, in its chieftain's cause.

VI.

On, as the waves, they roll their sweeping course,
Where stood the pride of Caledonia's force:
This legion saw the mighty hosts appear,
Nor yet it felt one dastard throb of fear;
Perhaps a sigh prolong'd the lover's breath,
As one who saw th' approach of certain death!
Perhaps the father's anxious love might know
One throb of feeling cross his manly brow;⁷⁰
Perhaps a tear the patriot's cheek might stain,
For that dear land, he ne'er might see again;—
Yet, if the drop of soften'd love would stray,
The warrior wip'd th' unbidden guest away!

VII.

Slacken'd each rein, each Scottish brand was bare,
The dancing plume kiss'd the lurid air!
Their steeds they urge—hark!—"Scotland" is the cry,
The loyal sound the echoing hills reply.
Link'd in one body, small, yet firm they go,
And charge impetuous on the yielding foe.⁸⁰
Dismay'd, confounded at the glorious sight,
In vain the Gauls would claim the equal fight;
On ev'ry side their comrades strew the plain,
And heaps arise of Gallia's mighty slain:
The useless sabre drops,—they turn,—they fly,
The serrying cannon follows through the sky.
Thus the rhinoceros, on Afric's shore,
Hears from afar the tawny lion's roar,
Cold tremblings o'er his giant members grow,
He flies affrighted from a weaker foe.⁹⁰

VIII.

Now in full speed t' avenge their comrades slain,
A Gallic column sweeps along the plain;
And Scotia, aided by an English band,
Against that column makes her glorious stand.
Oh, thou Calliope, inspire the song,
Which falters o'er thy suppliant's drooping tongue.

Each adverse warrior combats hand to hand,
No other weapon than the wounding brand;
Charger 'gainst charger, man 'gainst man engage,⁹⁹
Sword clangs 'gainst sword, and all is blood and rage,
Lo! in the thickest of the martial storm,
The Gallic eagle rears her golden form;
Symbol of conquest, ever known to bring
Dark desolation on her fatal wing;
At whose dread sight submissive nations bow'd,
Lord of the mighty, conq'ror of the proud:
Destructive Bird! whose iron pow'r was bore,
By Vict'ry's gales, to Earth's remotest shore.

IX.

But gallant Ewart, foremost of the fight,¹⁰⁹
Saw her proud form, and mark'd her glitt'ring height.
His steed he spurr'd, and, with determin'd hand,
He grasp'd her staff, and rais'd his Scottish brand:
But brave Dubois (who held the bird of Jove)
Still kept his hold, and fierce contesting strove,
While to his left hand firm the standard clung,
Keen in his right the clashing falchion rung;
He mark'd the Briton with indignant eye,
And tow'rd the breast and downwards to the thigh
Sends the sharp blade,—but Ewart's sword was there,
And turn'd the blow, averted, into air;¹²⁰
And sudden rais'd that sword with giant force,
Full on the Frenchman's crest he drove its course,
Pierc'd the strong helm, and clove the chieftain's head,
Through brain, through jaws, and e'en the neck it sped;
Then wrathful drew it lukewarm from the brain,
And seiz'd the eagle from the conquer'd slain:
But, 'gainst the victor, with revengeful speed,
An hostile lancer spurr'd his foaming steed,
And urg'd his spear; but, bending from the blow,
The wary Briton disappoints the foe;¹³⁰
And, ere the lancer could his falchion gain,
He stretch'd him lifeless on the purple plain.

Then stern De Valence, with revengeful eye,
Perceiv'd the deeds of Scottish bravery;
Stirr'd up by vengeance, and the love of fame,
He fir'd his carbine with an hasty aim,—
But miss'd the Scotsman, though not vainly sped,
It pierc'd immortal Campbell's plummy head.
And could not worth, and could not valour save
The great, the godlike Campbell from the grave?¹⁴⁰
Yet is thy death reveng'd,—for Ewart's blade
Sent thy dark murderer to appease thy shade;
And he the bird of Jove victorious bore,
Red with the streams of its defender's gore.

XI.

Here Mars, terrific, wheel'd his iron car,
And stirr'd the fight, and gloried in the war;
No modern field could ever yet behold
A fight so slaught'rous, and a war so bold.
The steel-clad Gaul derides the gath'ring storm,
Which pours in torrents o'er his warlike form;¹⁵⁰
Yet, though his *breast* the pond'rous cuirass shield,
His slaughter'd *limbs* bestrew the bloody field.
Each seem'd resolv'd the victor's prize to claim,
Each seem'd resolv'd to live, or die, in fame.
But nought could stop the firm, determin'd course
Of Scotia's strength, of Scotia's matchless force:
Then, in that hour to Caledon so dear,
Proud Gallia learnt her mighty name to fear:
She turns—she rallies—then again we view
Her numbers fly;—the gallant Scots pursue!¹⁶⁰
Yet was that victory bought by many a tear,
O'er Cameron's, Mitchell's, and o'er Holmes's bier;
And long th' historian and the muse shall tell,
How bright they triumph'd, and how great they fell.

XII.

Mean time, where Hougoumont conspicuous stands,
The valiant Byng draws up his Albion bauds;
And *there* the hottest of the battle rag'd,—
There Gauls and Britons fiercest warfare wag'd.
As some tall rock, the Anglian centre stood,
While Saltoun battled for the neighboring wood;¹⁷⁰
And, as the stormy waves, the Gauls roll'd on,
Led by fierce Jerome, and the sage D'Erlon.
The tubes of death sent lightning through the air;
The arm of fate, the sword of Jove, was bare.
So thick the smoke, the eye could scarce survey
What its next object in the dire affray;
Save, where the sulphur flash'd on some proud crest,
Or danc'd terrific on the steel-clad breast:
The warrior rear'd his arm,—then, sudden fell,
Nor knew who sent him to the gates of hell.¹⁸⁰
Long was the fight, and furiously severe,
For neither host e'er felt the pow'r of fear:
Here fell the flow'r of Britain! here the pride
Of Gallia's long-extended squadrons died!
Whose muse can sing, whose daring tongue can tell,
What heroes triumph'd, and what chieftains fell?
How many a youth, who ne'er had fought before,
Sent souls unnumber'd to the Stygian shore?
How Gauls and Britons pil'd the field with slain,
And, foes in death, still grappled on the plain?¹⁹⁰

XIII.

But here, while Mars and dread Bellona rag'd,
And the hot conflict Gaul and Albion wag'd,
An hostile race, from Poland's northern shore,
On Wellesley's bands their martial numbers pour;
Skill'd in the art, a piercing death they bear,
Their native arms, the far-extending spear.
Th' heroic Ponsonby perceiv'd the band,—
Forth from the scabbard leapt his beamy brand;
His heaving breast with indignation burn'd,
While to his troops the godlike warrior turn'd:
"Shall haughty Poland triumph o'er the plain,
And boast her heaps of Britain's mighty slain?
Shall Poland conquer in this glorious day,
And bear the prize from Albion's race away?
Forward, my friends! exalt your matchless name,
And seize the moment to increase your fame!"

XIV.

Thus spoke the chief;—then drove his angry course
Where Poland pour'd her unrelenting force:
Sharing his rage, exulting in his wrath,
His troops pursue his death-awakening path.²¹⁰
As, when the torrents overwhelm the plain,
And threaten ruin to the golden grain;
So, fierce with hatred and revenge, they go
And heap destruction on th' astounded foe:
Some fly; yet some with bolder courage fir'd,
Still keep their ground, by martial rage inspir'd:
And first, dark Holstein, whom Eliza bore
To fierce Kolinskorf, on Masavia's shore;
Another Hercules, whose mighty hand
Could awe the boldest of a modern band,²²⁰
With scornful eye, beheld the hostile storm,
Wav'd his bright lance, and rear'd his giant form;
Where rag'd the fiercest of the British force,
With pow'rful arm, he drove his sweeping course.

XV.

But Cecil, lov'd of Pallas, met the Pole,
And all the hero kindled in his soul.
His steed he spurr'd, on high his youthful hand
Rear'd the bright terrors of the blasting brand;
But Holstein saw th' impending danger near,
With giant strength he hurl'd his weighty spear;²³⁰
Like lightning-flash, it pierc'd the Briton's side,
And life receded on the crimson tide.
Forth from the victor's sheath the sword was bare,
Hov'ring on high, it thinn'd the ranks of war;
Ten bleeding warriors, gasping on the strand,
Proclaim'd the prowess of his mighty hand;
Terror and death attend his rabid way,
And conquest claim'd him as her own that day.

XVI.

Him Ponsonby, in arms renown'd, espies,
With raging bosom, and with vengeful eyes;²⁴⁰
His gory hand upon the holster hung,
Then, through the air the loud explosion rung:—
Why droops the arm which scatter'd death from far?
Why sinks the pride, the terror of the war?
Th' unerring ball, the winds of fate have bore,
And that proud arm shall scatter death no more:
One threat'ning glance, one vengeful look he cast
Towards the foe;—that action was his last:—
Yet still in death his lurid eye-balls glare,
The fire of hate, of fierce contempt, is there;²⁵⁰
On his curl'd lip the scornful smile yet hung,
Still in his hand the deadly falchion rung,
O'er that pale cheek, scarce bronz'd by manhood's glow,
Crimson'd by gore, the sable ringlets flow.
Weep Poland! weep! the bloody work is done,
In tears of anguish mourn thy slaughter'd son.

XVII.

And now, exulting o'er the glorious slain,
The troops of Ponsonby usurp the plain:
Where'er their leader's conq'ring claymore shone,
There, may the widow make her joyless moan;²⁶⁰
The orphan's wailing, and the mother's tear;
The maiden's anguish, and the sire's despair;
The dying warrior's last accusing breath,
And all the laurell'd pageantry of death;
Pursue the path their chieftain's bloody blade
Through the thick whirl of eddying hosts has made.
And now the Poles on ev'ry side give way,
And, routed, yield the fortunes of the day:
But, warm'd by fame, exulting in their might,
Too far the conq'rors urge the conquer'd's flight;²⁷⁰
And their dread *leader's*^[19] all-surveying eyes
Saw the rash deed of heated enterprise.
To check their unadvis'd, and hasty speed,
Across the plain, he spurr'd his foaming steed;
Fleeter than air, and swifter than the wind,
The scene of conquest soon he leaves behind.

XVIII.

A field there was, on which the lab'ring swain
Had lately sown the life-supporting grain:
Soft was the soil, by vernal showers fed,²⁷⁹
Damp, yielding moistures o'er the plain were spread.
By fate ordain'd, its baleful influence lay
Where the swift courser urg'd his flying way;
Light, o'er the bank which mark'd the treach'rous ground
Swift as a dart, his fairy footsteps bound.
Why stops his speed? why rolls his frenzied eye?
Why lost the pow'r, but not the wish to fly?
Why vainly strive to quit the fatal field?
With all the strength which agony can yield,
Why vainly nerve each mighty limb to strain?
Each effort binds him closer to the plain;²⁹⁰
The hand of fate has fix'd his master there,
And heav'n has call'd him from his bright career.

XIX.

When that dread chief perceiv'd th' inglorious doom,
Which seem'd to sink him to a living tomb,
Pale grew his cheek, his raging eye-balls glare,
And thus, to heav'n, he offers up his prayer:—
“Oh, thou dread Pow'r, whose mighty name is bore
On ev'ry tongue, to earth's remotest shore!
O God Omnipotent, whom all obey,²⁹⁹
While heav'n, and earth, and ocean, own thy sway!
Bend from thy radiant throne, incline thine ear,
Listen! oh, listen! to a suppliant's pray'r:
Not thus inglorious, claim my fleeting breath,
But let a warrior, die a warrior's death!”

Strong passions drown'd his voice, yet heav'n had heard
The pray'r by valour's votary preferr'd:
Far to the right, a moving host appears,
The sunbeams glitt'ring on their hostile spears.

As some dark mist, when wintry storms arise,
Slow, spreads its influence o'er the mirky skies;³¹⁰
So, (wrapt in dusk and smoke,) the distant train
Obscure the fields, and slowly sweep the plain.

Brightly the chieftain smil'd! a gladdening beam
Shot o'er his brow, his bloodshot eye-balls gleam;
Backwards his view, with haughty joy he cast
Towards the bounds his fiery steed had past;—
One sole, one fond, one faithful friend was there,—
A brother's love had join'd the godlike pair;
From youth to manhood, grew that love sublime,
Began by virtue, and matur'd by time.³²⁰
When peace and plenty held their golden reign,
And crown'd the efforts of the lab'ring swain,
Th' unmeasurable space they wander'd o'er
Of wisdom's paths, of learning's sacred lore:
But, when Bellona yok'd her iron car,
And honour call'd them to the paths of war,
Still, side by side, the youthful heroes led
Their hardy warriors to their country's aid;
The aim of each, amidst the bloody strife,³³⁰
To scorn his own, to guard his comrade's life.
If 'gainst the chieftain's bosom gleam'd the spear,
The other's arm would ward the danger near;
And, if th' uplifted sabre of the foe
Should rise, to lay his lov'd companion low,
The mighty Ponsonby's avenging hand,
Would smite the threat'ner lifeless on the strand.

His long-tried friend had not o'er past the bound,
Which mark'd the limits of the fatal ground;
For when he saw the sad, untimely end
Which seem'd to wait his dearer half, his friend,³⁴⁰
Beneath a weight of more than mortal care,
He stood transfix'd in motionless despair;
His falt'ring tongue, with agony of wo,
Cleav'd to his mouth! his blood forgot to flow.
The glorious leader saw his mighty grief,
And, pitying, strove to give his friend relief:
The stern contempt of death, the warrior's pride,
No more his feelings or his judgment guide;
To gentlest passions meltingly resign'd
Each harsh emotion of his mighty mind:³⁵⁰
Soft beam'd his lucid eye, the kindling flame
Melted to love, before a brother's name.
With soften'd voice, and pitying looks, began
The parting accents of the godlike man.

XXII.

“Ah! more than brother, for thy gen’rous heart
Has ever shewn a more than brother’s part;
Say, my beloved, can the sobbing breath,
The ling’ring tear, put off the stroke of death?
The hand of destiny has fix’d my doom,
By heav’n allotted to a warrior’s tomb.³⁶⁰
Yet still my words in prophecy may say,
Death shall not call my ev’ry part away:
To late posterity, recording fame
Shall tell the triumphs that adorn my name.
Check then, O chosen of my soul, the tear
Which mourns my path to Honour’s proudest bier;
Accept a short, a last farewell, ere death
Has chill’d my tongue, or claim’d my fleeting breath.”
‘Hold!’ cried the youth; but thus the chief pursued,
While with fond eyes, his dearer self he view’d:³⁷⁰
“Back to my wife, her lovely image bear,
Torn from that heart which only beats for her.
Ah! check the orphan’s tear, the widow’s sigh,
Tell them, the lot of mortals is to die!”

XXIII.

Then drew a portrait from his manly breast,
And to his lips th' unconscious image prest,
Gave it one sad, one ling'ring, last adieu,
Then to his friend the precious token threw:
"Fly, fly, my friend, ere yet it be too late,³⁷⁹
E'en now approach the vengeful troops of fate."
'Die will I first,' the faithful youth replies,
While love courageous sparkles in his eyes;
His steed he struck; his clanging arms rebound,
The charger speeds him to the fatal ground,
Close by the chieftain's side: a smile as bright
As erst o'er Krishna shot its dazzling light^[20],
Flash'd o'er that pallid cheek with brilliant glow,
Like sunshine beaming o'er an heap of snow.
'Living, or dead, no earthly hand shall part
The ties that bind thee to this constant heart.'³⁹⁰
No more he could;—he scarce could bare his brand,
When down impetuous pour'd the hostile band.
They saw the swampy marsh the chiefs that held,
Nor dar'd, incautious, leap the fatal field,
But from afar, their flying weapons pour,
A glitt'ring tempest, and an iron show'r.

XXIV.

Pierc'd by seven mortal wounds, oppress'd, at length,
Spite of his valour, struggles, and his strength,
All hurl'd upon his godlike form from far,
Sinks first the bulwark of the British war.⁴⁰⁰
Thus falls the lion in the treach'rous snare,
Which o'er the woods the Lybian youths prepare,
Sunk by a grove of darts, he strives in vain,
And falls at last, invincible, though slain.

Cold grew his comrade's cheek! for wild despair,
And frenzied wo, and agony, was there.
Sprung from his flound'ring steed, with aching breast,
The lifeless hero in his arms he prest.
'Take, O ye war-hounds! take my hateful breath,
We lov'd in life, and still we'll join in death.'⁴¹⁰
Swift through the air a fatal jav'lin prest,
Pierc'd through his scarf, and sunk within his breast.
One glance, expressive of contempt, he cast,
Then kiss'd his friend, and, smiling, breath'd his last.

END OF CANTO I.

THE
BATTLE OF WATERLOO;

A POEM,

In Two Cantos.

CANTO II.

THE
BATTLE OF WATERLOO.

CANTO II.

I.

AGAIN, Calliope, my song inspire,
And sweep the numbers from my falt'ring lyre;
Again the joys of war, and warriors, sing,
And wake to life each wild-resounding string;
Oh! give that verse which soars beyond control,
Which fires the genius, and awakes the soul.
E'en now, e'en now, impatient of delays,
Across my mind thy beamy influence plays.

II.

Bright was the noon!—for Phœbus' warmest ray
Illum'd the slaughters of the dreadful day:¹⁰
Hush'd was each ruder wind!—all nature seem'd to wait
In mute attention on a world's debate.
Far as the eye could reach, the breeze could bear,
The wand'ring sound, to rapt suspence's ear;
All was one mix'd, and one promiscuous train
Of warring heroes, scattered o'er the plain.
Thus through the glassy hive the bees we view,
Industrious race, their various tasks pursue,
Confus'd, dispers'd, to unaccustom'd eyes,—
Yet each a settled occupation plies.²⁰

III.

The frighten'd skies are red with bursting fire,
Warriors on warriors, heaps on heaps expire;
The cannon's roar, the martial music's sound;
The conq'ers' shouts, and conquer'd's groans confound.
The mighty hosts promiscuously engage,
And war terrific, burns with tenfold rage.
War! horrid war! whom Death to Pluto bore,
'Mids't the dark caverns of th' infernal shore;
A dreadful monster, at whose baleful birth,
Love, Peace, and Plenty, fled the groaning earth.³⁰
His form was horrid, ghastly, grim, and fell,
No mortal man its terrors e'er can tell!
A wreath of skulls his iron temples bound,
Where'er he trod, red carnage dy'd the ground,—
All nature wither'd at his dire advance,
And nations sunk beneath his lurid glance.
Four raging tygers, with tremendous roar,
His sweeping car (a thund'ring cannon) bore;
Confusion, Flight, and Terror's wild alarms,
Shrieking pursue his all-destroying arms.⁴⁰
But to the view, the treach'rous demon show'd
A form that bright with glorious beauty glow'd;
And held, deceitful, in his bloody hand,
Giv'n by Ambition, an enchanted wand—
And this he wav'd! and, to the wond'ring eyes,
Sceptres, and crowns, and laurell'd wreaths would rise:—
But now he gloried o'er the Gallic plain,
To feast in triumph on the mighty slain.

IV.

O thou, Calliope, the heroes tell,
Who, bright with honour and with glory, fell;⁵⁰
While Retrospection's sweetly pensive tear,
Moistens the bays that blossom round their bier.
For them no friend can soothe the quiv'ring breath,
And give the last sad offices of death;
For them no prayers of pitying love are giv'n—
No priest consoling points the road to heav'n;
Their whit'ning bones no stately urn shall hide,—
No flatt'ring bust—no monument of pride;
'Mids't piles of slaughter'd thousands lost, they lie,
By all forsaken, unregarded die.⁶⁰
Yet each seem'd gladly to resign his breath,
And hail th' approach of honourable death:
And still in death, o'er each undaunted face,
Nought but the pride of heroism you'd trace;—
Each dying warrior, welt'ring on the strand,
Still strain'd each nerve to grasp his broken brand.

As Gordon, great in arms, whose glorious name
Was ever foremost of the sons of Fame,
(With that bright warmth of love and friendly fire,
Which only godlike Wellesley can inspire;)⁷⁰
Besought his chief, who mingled with the strife,
Of danger heedless, to regard his life,
A ball, fast hissing on the airy tide,
Stretched the brave soldier by his leader's side.
And glorious Canning, ere the shades of death
Had numb'd his arm, or stopt his fleeting breath,
Rais'd up his eyes to heav'n, and faintly cried,
"Ah, bless my chief"—and in that blessing died!
The brave Delancey left his native land,⁷⁹
Young Hymen's chaplet, and Love's plighted hand—
He left them all!—for Honour's notes afar
Proclaim'd the signal of reviving war:
Destruction hover'd where his falchion prest,
And Fate's dark lightnings glitter'd round his crest.
But Death, with envy, saw his feats that day,
Another Death, he thought, had bore his pow'r away;
He rais'd his arm—he hurl'd the fatal dart,
And bad it moisten in the warrior's heart;
Urg'd by the spectre's hand, the weapon prest,⁸⁹
Pierc'd the knight's garb, and sunk within his breast,—
Adown his bosom stream'd the ebbing blood,
And life came rushing on the purple flood.

VI.

Two British heroes, of a meaner name,
That day shone proudly in the field of Fame;
Immortal Thonne, and bold Herculean Shawe,
Before whose arms, with fear and wond'ring awe,
Proud Gallia shrunk; while gasping on the strand,
Nine chieftains fell by Thonne's destructive hand.
D'Avigné fam'd throughout the Gallic race,
For warlike honours, and for martial grace,¹⁰⁰
Perceiv'd the victor glorying from afar,
And spurr'd his courser to the promis'd war:
So the fierce tyger stalks the Lybian plain,
Exulting o'er the savage nations slain,
While o'er each hill, and dark impervious wood,
They strive t' escape the ravisher of blood:
Forth from the forest, gaunt with vengeful ire,
With stiffen'd mane, and eyes of living fire,
Rushes the lion with indignant glow,
And pours his fury on the raging foe.¹¹⁰

VII.

And first D'Avigné rais'd his mighty hand,
Bright with the terrors of the wounding brand;
Full on the dauntless Briton's plummy crest
The blow descends,—then glances tow'rds the breast;
But there it stopt—the sabre's parrying care
Glean'd cautious down and turn'd the wound to air.
The Briton then his weapon rear'd on high,
And mark'd the Frenchman with a wary eye;
Then sudden swept his vengeful sword around,
And stretch'd his victim gasping on the ground;¹²⁰
But, as he lay, ere yet the damps of death
Had numb'd his arm, or stopp'd his fleeting breath,
Against the charger of his conq'ring foe,
Full on the chest, he strikes the griding blow^[21];
The noble beast, convuls'd by piercing pain,
Rear'd his proud form, and shook his flowing mane,
Then instant fell—and from the mortal wound,
The gushing life's-blood issued on the ground;
Full on his noble master, ere he rose,
On ev'ry side resound a hundred blows—¹³⁰
A hundred lances glitter at his breast—
A hundred strokes re-echo on his crest;
He strikes—retreats—advances—strives in vain,
And adds another to the heaps of slain.
Thus falls some tow'r which long has rear'd its form,
And mock'd the fury of the raging storm:
The fierce besiegers strive each art in vain,
To cast its lofty fabric on the plain;
At length the treach'rous mine, with secret care,
Beneath its strong foundations they prepare;¹⁴⁰
With horrid crash, its crackling piles resound,
And fall, a mighty ruin on the ground.

VIII.

Mean time brave Shawe usurps the martial plain,
And spreads the field with Gallic heaps of slain;
Where beams his sabre, wild confusion brings
Terror and death upon her iron wings;
A cuirass'd band of Gallic heroes saw
His martial prowess with admiring awe.
And first Bernot withdrew his wond'ring eyes,
And thus the chief with indignation cries:—150
“O friends! O soldiers, shall the Gallic name
Rest, for a moment, in disgraceful shame?
And shall you Briton, glorying from far,
Destroy our troops, and thin the ranks of war?
Frenchmen, charge forwards! and your king's applause
Awaits your efforts in his glorious cause;
For he that sends yon haughty Briton's head,
A worthy off'ring to the noble dead,
Napoléon's self shall grace his radiant name,
And age to age perpetuate his fame.”160
He ceas'd;—and, warm'd by hope, his legion broke
Through fires of sulphur, and through mists of smoke^[22]:
Onwards they roll'd, elate with warrior's pride,
Each soldier charging by his comrade's side.
To check their course, drawn up in firm array,
A gallant troop of Britons urge their way.
Those arms destructive fill their mighty hands,
The bayonet—weapon of the Anglian bands:—
They mingle!—hark! what mighty strokes resound—
What streams of slaughter dye the thirsty ground!170

IX.

De Bruyere, bending from his saddle-bow,
Aim'd first at British Eth'rington his blow.
Thirsting for blood the gleaming weapon prest,
And forceful pierc'd the Briton's sable crest:—
He sunk!—but Beauchamp, with indignant eye,
Perceived the feat of Gallic bravery,
With bayonet charg'd, full rushing on the foe,
He pierc'd his courser with a mortal blow;—
He fell!—and Bernot, riding o'er the plain,
Trode on his crackling crest and crush'd the brain.¹⁸⁰
Britons and Gauls now gath'ring clos'd around,
One war tumultuous shook th' affrighted ground:
Arm rose 'gainst arm, and man encounter'd man;
Through ev'ry breast revenge and hatred ran.
At length, so fierce the Britons' rushing force,
In vain the Gauls attempt to stop their course:
Slow they retreat!—yet, facing to the foe,
Defiance threaten, as they sternly go;
But Bernot turn'd, and wav'd his hand on high—
“Hold, cowards, hold! nor thus inglorious fly,¹⁹⁰
What, though the fury of yon rushing tide,
Our smaller numbers vain attempt to bide;
Yet still revenge is ours, yon Briton's hand^[23]
Still gives to death the heroes of our land;
That mighty warrior, whom we lately swore,
Should wreak his fury on our troops no more;
Forward with me!—for here again I swear,
That if this arm the trusty blade can bear,
To meet this dreaded conqueror I fly,
I go to conquer—or I go to die!”²⁰⁰

He spoke!—and wav'd his scymitar on air,
And rush'd impatient to the promis'd war.
Five Gallic warriors sharing in his wrath,
Eager pursue his devastating path;
And soon around the mighty Briton close,
And pour on ev'ry side a show'r of blows.
Ah! cease! the pitying Muse forbids to tell,
How great, in death, that gallant hero fell!

Still, undiminish'd, Gaul her numbers pours,
Vast as the sand that loads the sea-girt shores.²¹⁰
E'en by their vict'ries tir'd, in heaps of slain,
Fast fall the Britons on the groaning plain.
Yet view the various fortunes of that hour,
The Anglians' weakness, and the Frenchmen's pow'r,
You'd find each British form, that loads the ground,
Pierc'd by *no backward, no inglorious* wound.
And still no murmurs waste their panting breath,
When all around they see the works of death;
Still with fresh courage they demand to go,
And in their turn to charge th' exulting foe:²²⁰
“On! let us on!” impetuous they cry,
“Not thus inglorious,—scarce opposing,—die.”
Chief of the Island sons, how great thy praise!—
How bright thy honour!—and how green thy bays!
“Wait yet, my friends,” the pitying chief would say,
“And conquest still shall be our own this day,—
Wait yet till come the long-expected force,
Till valiant Blücher speeds his driving horse.”

XI.

Yet though his words can animate the heart,
And lively courage to each breast impart,²³⁰
Still anxious doubt, though kept in wise control,
Chill'd his own cheek, and damp't his mighty soul.
If Blücher come not in *one* passing hour,
Full well he knew how weak was all his pow'r.
With eagle-eye the squadrons he survey'd,
And, where they faint'd, sent the timely aid;—
His person, counsel, and his chiefest care,
Where most the dreadful dangers of the war,
And where, disdain'g self, his form he threw,
To guard that form, invincible they grew.²⁴⁰
Though less thy skill, not less thy daring might,
Uxbridge! thou pride, thou bulwark of the fight!
Shew me, ye Muses of Parnassian shades,
A chief more glorious for the horse brigades—
A chief more skill'd to please th' unconstant fair,
Or shine the first, and foremost of the war.
But by thy fire of valour led away,
A shot, at close of that tremendous day,
Mangled thy form, and drove thee from the fray.

XII.

Lo! where Hibernia pours her gen'rous train,²⁵⁰
Dread of her foes, and foremost of the plain;
Bright honour, and the em'rald isle, their cry,
To fall is glory—infamy to fly.
Mean time, brave Orange, mightiest of his name,
Spreads desolation o'er the field of Fame.
Great Prince! who, midst the thickest of the strife,
Led on by native ardour, risk'd his life.
Encompass'd round, amidst the hostile lines,
Th' heroic youth his liberty resigns:
A Belgian troop rush timely in, to save²⁶⁰
The gallant chieftain from an early grave.
The brilliant gem, th' insignia's regal pride,
That matchless hero from his form untied,
With grateful ardour, midst the martial crew,
The signs of birth and royalty he threw.
“Long live our Prince! long live our martial Lord!”
Shout Belgia's hardy sons, with one accord;
“Come life, come death, this token we will shield,
Through all the dangers of the dreadful field.”²⁶⁹
Then where their ranks the tow'ring standard grac'd,
With pride exulting, the rich ensign plac'd;
Along the plain, as driving bail, they pour,
And flood the field with many a stream of gore.

XIII.

But, lo! where yonder, what approaching train,
Wrapt in a cloud of smoke, obscure the plain?—
'Tis they!—'tis they!—the long-expected force,
'Tis godlike Blücher rolls his sweeping course;—
'Tis Bulow, dreadful thunderbolt of war,
Leads Prussia's injur'd warriors from afar;
And, as they wound along the mountain's brow,²⁸⁰
They hurl'd their cannon on the Gauls below;
While the red sulphur, seem'd in pride to dance,
On the broad blade, steel crest, and gleaming lance;
And, as their bright and lengthen'd squadrons roll'd on high,
They seem'd like shadowy legions, gliding through the sky.

Monarch of Gaul, what pangs of hopeless wo
Dim thy bright eye, and cross thy thoughtful brow,
Where all around thee heaps of death arise,
And Prussia's cannon seem to rend the skies;
And where the warlike bands of Cossacks fly,²⁹⁰
Resolv'd to conquer, or sublimely die;—
Where Briton's Genius rears her tow'ring head,
No longer weeping o'er the glorious dead.

XIV.

Lo! o'er the Monarch's cheek, a gladd'ning ray
Danc'd in his eye, and bad the smile to play,
Where on the right his fav'rite legion stands,
The imperial guards, those ever-dauntless bands;
Swift in the midst his arm he wav'd on high,
"On, soldiers on, to conquer, or to die!"
Then, where the bravest of the British force,³⁰⁰
He leads the way, and points their angry course;
As when the stormy waves are o'er the deep,
With hope of glory on that legion sweep.
E'en their brave enemies hung back, and saw
Their stern battalions with admiring awe.
That man, to whom contending nations bow'd,
Whose iron sceptre half a world allow'd—
Whose rapid fortunes urg'd the wheels of Fate—
Whose prosp'rous victories seem'd of endless date,
Now shapes his way, and fires his daring band,³¹⁰
With Vengeance' torch terrific in his hand;
That band, in mighty deeds of arms renown'd,
With valour arm'd, as yet with victory crown'd,—
The sons of conquest, and the flow'r of France,
Who fill'd all Europe with alarms, advance.

XV.

Beneath a friendly vale the warriors pause,
And thus began the chieftain of their cause:—
"Friends, countrymen! the battle's dubious fate,
The fate of Europe, on your arms await;
Should victory crown our efforts, then no more³²⁰
Shall war destructive waste our native shore.
The hostile league, which now appears so fast,
Will break asunder, ere a day be past;
And Wellesley, weaken'd in the dire affray,
To Gallic brav'ry, falls an easy prey.
Think of your ancient deeds! beneath your arms,
Prussia, and Austria, fled with dire alarms;

Dejected Spain, a Gallic Monarch own'd,
 And soft Italia mourn'd her Sire dethron'd;
 The winds of Fame your conq'ring eagles bore,³³⁰
 To climes ne'er fann'd by Victory's wing before.
 These were your former deeds!—disgrace, or shame,
 Ne'er yet have soil'd your laurels, or your name.
 But now has envious Jealousy arose,
 To blight those laurels with unnumber'd foes;
 And yet they say, 'tis me!—'tis me alone!
 Your king, they wish to conquer, to dethrone!
 Yes!—were I dead,—proud Prussia's ruthless hand
 Would hurl destruction on your fated land;
 They say, they ask not to decide your choice,³⁴⁰
 But me depos'd, to leave it to your voice.
 Yes!—were I dead,—their haughty pow'r would place
 Upon your throne th' accursed Bourbon race.
 Say, will you have the idiot-line again,
 The mock of Europe, o'er your realms to reign?
 No! I can see in each indignant face,
 Your scorn, your hatred of the lawless race.
 A people's voice, the voice of half a world,
 Rais'd me from whence that tyrant race was hurl'd;
 And since that time, my reign or ill, or well,³⁵⁰
 Let Gallia's wealth—let Gallia's conquest tell.
 But on the features of each ardent face,
 Your fire impetuous for the war I trace,—
 Go then, my countrymen! no more restrain
 Your native ardour from the glorious plain—
 Go with fresh laurels still to gild your name,
 To track the path of Honour and of Fame!—
 Go, let your ancient conquests be surpast,
 By this brave deed, the mightiest and the last.”

XVI.

The hero ceas'd!—but loud applauding cries,³⁶⁰
 “Long live our Emperor!” rend the list'ning skies;
 From hill to hill, the deaf'ning shouts rebound

From hill to hill, the deafening shouts rebound,
And Britain's Genius trembled at the sound!
E'en vengeful Prussia, thund'ring from afar,
Dropt the red brand, and, wond'ring, ceas'd the war.
Those notes so loudly, and so sternly rung,
That ev'ry warring rank in mute attention hung!
Now slowly winding o'er the devious path,
The pride of France, direct their ardent wrath!
Not one warm bosom, felt a pang of fear—370
No colder throbbing, check their bold career!
So gladly stern, they bend their awful way,
They seem'd to think their conquest sure that day.

Sudden a band of Brunswick's sons appear,
High in the air, their scathing swords they rear;
And dare to extend the death-arousing hand,
'Gainst Europe's dread—Napoléon's favour'd band:
Vain are their force!—the eye can scarce survey
What heaps the Gauls, exulting, swept away!
Again, in that dread hour, proud Victory spread³⁸⁰
Her ample pinions o'er Napoléon's head;
In cold anxiety, he views from far,
Screen'd by the vale, th' achievements of the war.

Hark! what a peal re-echoes through the skies;
What sudden clouds of lurid smoke arise?
'Tis the hoarse sound, so fatal to the brave,
Red Death's loud herald—patron of the grave!
Lo! what a troop of Gallia's flow'r, who late,
Exulted wide, and scorn'd the rod of Fate,
Stretch'd upon earth, depriv'd of life and breath,³⁹⁰
Still sternly frowning, seem to spurn at Death!
But as *one* fell, *another* quick supplied
The vacant place, with fierce, undaunted pride;—
That pride which scorns all ties, that seem to part
The idol Glory from the warrior's heart!
E'en if a brother, son, or father die,
They view his slaughter with unalter'd eye;
Each earthly passion from their souls had flow'n,
Or rather seem'd absorb'd in one alone,³⁹⁹

To grace their much-lov'd Sov'reign's honour'd name,
To live in glory, or to die in fame!

XVII.

A band of Britons, 'neath an hollow lay,
Where Europe's terror urg'd their rolling way,
When, close behind, great Wellesley sudden threw
His form rever'd, amid the warlike crew,
And thus indignant cries, "Till British force
Has backward drove the Gauls' destructive course,
E'en should the hostile sabre, rear'd on high,
Destruction threaten, ne'er from hence I'll fly."
Of self regardless, and unknown to fear,⁴¹⁰
Thus rush'd the hero—thus the foe's career
To stop he sought; while, round his form belov'd,
His martial band, a matchless phalanx prov'd;
Hid in the shelving depth, a kindling flame,
Play'd round their hearts and lit the road to Fame.
Mean time th' imperial guard, with dauntless might,
Still roll impetuous o'er the paths of fight,—
Unconscious where the fatal ambush lay,
Within its verge, they bend their destin'd way.
When, lo! a sudden voice amaz'd they hear,⁴²⁰
"Up, guards, attack! your ready guns uprear."
Instant the Britons rose; the Gauls, in mute surprise,
Thought they perceiv'd the sons of earth arise;
But for surprise, or thought, not long had they,
Ere the loud volley swept their troops away.
Heaps upon heaps, that fire destructive made,
Drove rank on rank, and back'd the whole brigade;
And, whilst the wounded make attempt to rise,
Another volley echoes through the skies.

XVIII.

Where now is Gallia's boast?—far, far around,⁴³⁰
Their mangled corpses welter on the ground;
Save, where a few of that tremendous band,
In stern amaze, still make their wonted stand.
But see, the Britons, with exulting joy,
Bare their bright sabres, eager to destroy;
And, breathing vengeance, sword in hand they go,
To end the conquest of the wilder'd foe;
They, lost to reason, and the mind's control,
Sunk in despair each energy of soul:
Some instinctively fly—some idly stand,⁴⁴⁰
Yet drop the useless weapon from the hand.
So fell, in one promiscuous pile of dead,
Proud Gallia's glory, and all Europe's dread!

Napoléon view'd, with piercing pangs, afar,
The adverse fortunes of the fatal war;
E'en his bright talents, and gigantic soul,
Which soar'd 'bove mortals, and beyond control,
Sunk in that hour—in that eventful day,
When his lov'd troops by fate were swept away;
Fain would he rush his raging form to throw⁴⁵⁰
Before the progress of his conq'ring foe;
But Bertrand, Drouët, on the Monarch hung,
Melted to tears, and bath'd the knees they clung—
“Whither, great Sire, oh, whither would'st thou fly?
And dost thou think that thou alone would'st die?
Upon *thy* life, unnumber'd lives await—
On thee, depends thy native Gallia's fate.
Think of thy safety, and if not thy own,
That of thy country, and thy infant son.
What, though to-day opposing Fortune low'rs,⁴⁶⁰
To-morrow's sun may yet behold her ours!”
With words like these, they strive to soothe the chief,
Soften his anger, and allay his grief.
Mov'd by their prayers, that glorious chief resign'd
The dreadful purpose of his mighty mind.
Backwards one long, one lingering look he cast
Tow'rd the red place his band had breath'd their last,
Then pass'd his hand across his madd'ning brow—

then pass a his hand across his maid's brow—
“I follow, Bertrand, where you lead me now.”

XIX.

Mean time fierce Blücher, with impetuous might,⁴⁷⁰
Supports the war, and claims the equal fight;
Hill's conq'ring banners, midst the thickest war,
Dripping red carnage, glitter'd from afar;
His ruthless Prussians, dreadful Bulow roll'd,
While Uxbridge shone the boldest of the bold;
Exulting Fame, in shouting clamours calls,
And Britain's vengeance on Napoléon falls.
But now the Gauls are mass'd in one vast throng,
And Albion's troops, collected, sweep along.
On each vast squadron rush, each mighty band,⁴⁸⁰
Now charge, collected, scymitar in hand.
So from some rock the gushing torrents pour,
Burst the weak banks, and overwhelm the shore:
Their mighty streams in ev'ry quarter roll,
And sweep away, whate'er their force control.
What pen can tell each hero's deathless name,
Who spread destruction o'er the field of Fame.
Let some sublimer bard's illustrious verse,
Their laurel's number, and their deeds rehearse;⁴⁸⁹
How Cooke, how Maitland, Packe, and Ferrier shone;
How Ellis, Somerset, and Cairnes were known;—
How brave Fitzgerald, through the bloody fray,
Spread ruin dark, and wond'ring wild dismay.
With many a chief, whose ever-living name
No voice can tell!—except the voice of Fame!
Nor yet shalt thou, with well-earn'd laurels bright,
Be sunk, O, Ct! in oblivious night,
In that dread day thy crest refulgent shone,
A youth in years, a vet'ran in renown;
Sprung from a sire, who rear'd our nobler youth⁵⁰⁰
To wisdom, virtue, learning, sense, and truth.
Nor less thy brother's fame, where Ganges pours
His sacred waters through the Indian shores.

But, lo! what daring Frenchman's desperate force
Dare strive t' oppose Britannia's conq'ring course?
Alone, scarce arm'd, from ev'ry limb, and pore,
Dripping, a long and ghastly stream of crimson gore?
'Tis Shawe's fierce murd'rer, by his sable crest,
And ruby crosslet glitt'ring at his breast—
'Tis dark Bernot!—the hero's thirst of fame,⁵¹⁰
Led his *last* act, to consecrate his name:
See! in the thickest of the hostile band,
Wave his dark plumes, and gleam his gory brand.
Five chiefs he strikes—and rears to strike again—
Why drops his arm?—why useless on the plain
Falls the red blade?—why sinks his plumy crest?
The streams of life no longer warm his breast!
By drop, by drop, from many a gashing wound,
As he rode on, they trickled on the ground;
Till the last streams had floated from his side,⁵²⁰
And life and strength had issued on the tide.

XXI.

Hark! hark! what means that deep and frantic yell,
That seems to burst the iron gates of hell?
'Tis Gallia's Genius mourns her slaughter'd host!
Her Empire, Sov'reign, and her Glory lost!
Her car triumphant, now has stopp'd its course,
And yields reluctant to Britannia's force!
Her darling hero makes his glorious stand,
Her fav'rite son, the flow'r of Anglia's band!
Hark! hark!—again the sounds of victory rise,⁵³⁰
In strains of triumph to the list'ning skies!
'Tis Britain conquers—Britain gives the blow—
'Tis Britain glories o'er an humbled foe!

Now all is still!—save, where the breezes bear
The groans of ling'ring nature to the ear.
Peaceful at length, extended, side by side,
Lay Britain's boast, and humbled Gallia's pride;
While victory all her brightest honours shed,
On Anglia's warriors, and on Wellesley's head.
To that great chieftain is the glory due,⁵⁴⁰
That first the haughty monarch learn'd to sue:
Though great *his* might, though deathless is *his* name,
Yet thou surpass'd him in the field of Fame.
And long, as Albion's laurel-mantled isle
Shall o'er old Ocean's conquer'd waters smile;
And long, as through a Briton's veins shall roll
The mighty blood, that nerves a Briton's soul;
That blood shall boil! that heaving soul shall rise!
And glory's rapture bright the sparkling eyes!
When the high name of Wellesley gives to view,⁵⁵⁰
Thy deathless plains, imperial Waterloo!
And the glad son of him, who fought and bled
In that dire fray, shall rear his tow'ring head,
And cry, in honest pride's exulting swell,—
“ 'Twas there my father fought, my father fell!”

END OF CANTO II.

NOTES

ON CANTO I.

As so many excellent works have been published, giving a full and accurate account of the transactions of the battle, and as they are so recent in the memory of all who may honour this Poem with their perusal, I shall be very brief and select in my Notes.

Stanza III.

“These hardy troops Napoléon’s brother led.”

Jerome Buonaparte.

“For the first time in arms confronting stand.”

The Duke of Wellington had won twenty-seven battles over Napoléon’s generals, and was at last personally confronted with their master. Napoléon observed at Paris,—“that he was at last going to “measure swords with this Wellington, of whom he should certainly give a good account.”

Stanza VI.

“Where stood the pride of Caledonia’s force.”

The Scotch Greys.

Stanza VII.

“And Scotia, aided by an English band.”

The Bays.

Stanza XI.

*“No modern field could ever yet behold
“A fight so slaught’rous, and a war so bold.”*

This was perhaps the severest engagement of cavalry ever fought on a modern field, and though the Greys eventually conquered by miracles of valour, they might well exclaim with Pyrrhus,—“Another such victory would ruin us.”

Stanza XII.

“The gallant Byng.”—General Byng.

“While Saltoun.”—Lord Saltoun.

Stanza XIII.

“Th’ heroic Ponsonby.”—Sir William Ponsonby.

As Sir William Ponsonby was galloping after his impetuous regiments, he had to cross a field lately ploughed, and of a very soft soil, and being badly mounted, his horse sunk in it. At that very moment he perceived a troop of lancers coming at full speed, and seeing all was over, took the picture of his wife from his bosom, and was giving the melancholy token to his aid-de-camp, to bear to his family, when the lancers coming up, killed both of them. To make the story more poetically affecting, I have taken the almost unpardonable licence of altering the facts.

Stanza XXI.

“Melted to love before a brother’s name.”

Not so by the ties of love, but friendship.

Stanza XXIV.

“Spite of his valour, struggles, and his strength.”

This line is borrowed from the following one in Rokeby:—

“Spite of his struggles and his strength.”

NOTES
ON CANTO II.

Stanza V.

“As Gordon.”—Sir Alexander Gordon.

“And glorious Canning.”—Lieut. Canning.

“The brave Delancey.”—Sir W. Delancey.

Stanza XXI.

“Moved by their prayers, the glorious chief.”

I have endeavoured throughout the whole of this Poem, to observe a strict impartiality between the British and French, and their commanders; not following the practice of some, who seem scarcely disposed to allow Buonaparte the character of a general; but these should consider, that the braver the troops, and the more experienced and skilful their leader, so much more is the glory of conquering them.

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FOOTNOTES:

[1] See The Lay of the Last Minstrel.

[2] See Roderick Dhu's Sacrifice in The Lady of the Lake.

[3] See the Banquet at Holyrood Palace in Marmion, &c.

[4] Bulbul, is the Persian nightingale.

[5] Zel, is an Eastern instrument of martial music.

[6] Shich-Eidar, see Note the First.

[7] Azrail, is the Angel of Death.

[8] Wine is forbidden by the Mahometan religion.

[9] Sir R—— —, an ancestor of Mrs. ——, was Lord Lieutenant of the county of —— in the

reign of Elizabeth, and commanded the forces of that county at the time of the Spanish Armada.

[10] Henry II.

[11] Castor and Pollux.

[12] Damon and Pythias.

[13] David, whose friendship with Jonathan is so beautifully described in the Scriptures.

[14] I am conscious that the metre of the following Translations is very different from that of the original; but it is my humble opinion, that it is utterly impossible to imitate the Version, and, at the same time, to preserve the spirit of the expression, and dignity of the idea; and it is really surprising that so many men of deep learning and judgment have attempted what was certain of failure: even Francis, who has done Horace more justice than any other translator, frequently, even in some of the sublimest odes, degenerates to a mere ballad singer. Were we, indeed, to make use of an irregular metre, it might, perhaps, be easy to translate *the beauty*, as well as *the meaning*; but, of all regular metres, I think our heroic is by far the best adapted for the grander odes.

[15] For this poem the Author must crave peculiar indulgence; it was written at the desire of a lady, who asked him for his opinion of our living poets in verse, and was completed in a *very short* space of time, so that there are necessarily many faults in it: it would not, however, have been inserted, were it not for the particular wish of the lady for whom it was written.

[16] The gardens of Adonis.

[17] Æschylus, who may, I think, be called the Father of Tragedy, although Thespis was the first inventor of it.

Ignotum Tragicæ genus invenisse Camænæ,
Dicitur, et plaustris vexisse poemata Thespis,
Quæ canerent agerentque peruncti fæcibus ora.
Post hunc, personæ pallæque repertor honestæ
Æschylus, et modicis instravit pulpita tignis,
Et docuit magnumque loqui, nitique cothurno.”—*Hor.*

[18] The nightingale is said to be particularly and faithfully attached to the rose tree.

[19] Ponsonby is generally called the chieftain, or leader, throughout the whole battle.

[20] Chrishna, is the Apollo of the Hindoo Mythology, and his smile is supposed to have been so bright as to have diffused an halo around his whole face.

[21]

“The *griding* sword with discontinuous wound
“Pass’d through him:——”

Milton.

[22]

“Through flames of sulphur and a night of smoke.”

Addison’s Campaign.

[23] Shawe.

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