Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.

CANTO THE SECOND.

I.

Come, blue-eyed maid of heaven! — but thou, alas!
Didst never yet one mortal song inspire —
Goddess of Wisdom! here thy temple was,
And is, despite of war and wasting fire,[1]
And years, that bade thy worship to expire:
But worse than steel, and flame, and ages slow,
Is the dread sceptre and dominion dire
Of men who never felt the sacred glow
That thoughts of thee and thine on polish'd breasts bestow.

II.

Ancient of days! august Athena[2]! where,
Where are thy men of might? thy grand in soul?
Gone — glimmering through the dream of things that were:
First in the race that led to Glory's goal,
They won, and pass'd away — is this the whole?
A schoolboy's tale, the wonder of an hour!
The warrior's weapon and the sophist's stole
Are sought in vain, and o'er each mouldering tower,
Dim with the mist of years, gray flits the shade of power.

III.

Son of the morning, rise! approach you here!
Come — but molest not yon defenceless urn:
Look on this spot — a nation's sepulchre!
Abode of gods, whose shrines no longer burn.
Even gods must yield — religions take their turn:
'Twas Jove's — 'tis Mahomet's — and other creeds
Will rise with other years, till man shall learn
Vainly his incense soars, his victim bleeds;
Poor child of Doubt and Death, whose hope is built on reeds.[3]

IV.

Bound to the earth, he lifts his eye to heaven —
Is't not enough, unhappy thing! to know
Thou art? Is this a boon so kindly given,
That being, thou would'st be again, and go,
Thou know'st not, reck'st not to what region, so
On earth no more, but mingled with the skies?
Still wilt thou dream[4] on future joy and woe?
Regard and weigh yon dust before it flies:
That little urn saith more than thousand homilies.

V.

Or burst the vanish'd Hero's lofty mound;
Far on the solitary shore he sleeps:[5]
He fell, and falling nations mourn'd around;
But now not one of saddening thousands weeps,
Nor warlike worshipper his vigil keeps
Where demi-gods appear'd, as records tell.
Remove yon skull from out the scatter'd heaps:
Is that a temple where a God may dwell?
Why ev'n the worm at last disdains her shatter'd cell!

[1] Part of the Acropolis was destroyed by the explosion of a magazine during the Venetian siege. — [On the highest part of Lycabettus, as Chandler was informed by an eye-witness, the Venetians, in 1687, placed four mortars and six pieces of cannon, when they battered the Acropolis. One of the bombs was fatal to some of the sculpture on the west front of the Parthenon. "In 1667," says Mr. Hobhouse, "every antiquity of which there is now any trace in the Acropolis, was in a tolerable state of preservation. This great temple might, at that period, be called entire; — having been previously a Christian church, it was then a mosque, the most beautiful in the world. At present, only twenty-nine of the Doric columns, some of which no longer support their entablatures, and part of the left wall of the cell, remain standing. Those of the north side, the angular ones excepted, have all fallen. The portion yet standing, cannot fail to fill the mind of the indifferent spectator with sentiments of astonishment and awe; and the same reflections arise upon the sight even of the enormous masses of marble ruins which are spread upon the area of the temple. Such scattered fragments will soon constitute the sole remains of the Temple of Minerva."]

[2] We can all feel, or imagine, the regret with which the ruins of cities, once the capitals of empires, are beheld: the reflections suggested by such objects are too trite to require recapitulation. But never did the littleness of man, and the vanity of his very best virtues, of patriotism to exalt, and of valour to defend his country, appear more conspicuous than in the record of what Athens was, and the certainty of what she now is. This theatre of contention between mighty factions, of the struggles of orators, the exaltation and deposition of tyrants, the triumph and punishment of generals, is now become a scene of petty intrigue and perpetual disturbance, between the bickering agents of certain British nobility and gentry. "The wild foxes, the owls and serpents in the ruins of Babylon," were surely less degrading than such inhabitants. The Turks have the plea of conquest for their tyranny, and the Greeks have only suffered the fortune of war, incidental to the bravest; but how are the mighty fallen, when two painters contest the privilege of plundering the Parthenon, and triumph in turn, according to the tenor of each succeeding firman! Sylla could but punish, Philip subdue, and Xerxes burn Athens; but it remained for the paltry antiquarian, and his despicable agents, to render her contemptible as himself and his pursuits. The Parthenon, before its destruction in part, by fire during the Venetian siege, had been a temple, a church, and a mosque. In each point of view it is an object of regard: it changed its worshippers; but still it was a place of worship thrice sacred to devotion: its violation is a triple sacrifice. But —

"Man, proud man,
Drest in a little brief authority,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the angels weep."

[3] [In the original MS. we find the following note to this and the five following stanzas, which had been prepared for publication, but was afterwards withdrawn, "from a fear," says the poet, "that it might be considered rather as an attack, than a defence of religion:" — "In this age of bigotry, when the puritan and priest have changed places, and the wretched Catholic is visited with the 'sins of his fathers,' even unto generations far beyond the pale of the commandment, the cast of opinion in these stanzas will, doubtless, meet with many a contemptuous anathema. But let it be remembered, that the spirit they breathe is desponding, not sneering, scepticism; that he who has seen the Greek and Moslem superstitions contending for mastery over the former shrines of Polytheism — who has left in his own, 'Pharisees, thanking God that they are not like publicans and sinners,' and Spaniards in theirs, abhorring the heretics, who have holpen them in their need, — will be not a little bewildered, and begin to think, that as only one of them can be right, they may, most of them, be wrong. With regard to morals, and the effect of religion on mankind, it appears, from all historical testimony, to have had less effect in making them love their neighbours, than inducing that cordial Christian abhorrence between sectaries and schismatics. The Turks and Quakers are the most tolerant: if an Infidel pays his heratch to the former, he may pray how, when, and where he pleases; and the mild tenets, and devout demeanour of the latter, make their lives the truest commentary on the Sermon on the Mount."]

[4] ["Still wilt thou harp." — MS.]

[5] It was not always the custom of the Greeks to burn their dead; the greater Ajax, in particular, was interred entire. Almost all the chiefs became gods after their decease; and he was indeed neglected, who had not annual games near his tomb, or festivals in honour of his memory by his countrymen, as Achilles, Brasidas, &c., and at last even Antinous, whose death was as heroic as his life was infamous.

VI.

Look on its broken arch, its ruin'd wall,
Its chambers desolate, and portals foul:
Yes, this was once Ambition's airy hall,
The dome of Thought, the palace of the Soul:
Behold through each lack-lustre, eyeless hole,
The gay recess of Wisdom and of Wit
And Passion's host, that never brook'd control:
Can all saint, sage, or sophist ever writ,
People this lonely tower, this tenement refit?

VII.

Well didst thou speak, Athena's wisest son!
"All that we know is, nothing can be known."
Why should we shrink from what we cannot shun?
Each hath his pang, but feeble sufferers groan
With brain-born dreams of evil all their own.
Pursue what Chance or Fate proclaimeth best;
Peace waits us on the shores of Acheron:
There no forced banquet claims the sated guest,
But Silence spreads the couch of ever welcome rest.

VIII.

Yet if, as holiest men have deem'd, there be
A land of souls beyond that sable shore,
To shame the doctrine of the Sadducee
And sophists, madly vain of dubious lore;
How sweet it were in concert to adore
With those who made our mortal labours light!
To hear each voice we fear'd to hear no more!
Behold each mighty shade reveal'd to sight,
The Bactrian, Samian sage, and all who taught the right![1]

IX.

There, thou! — whose love and life together fled,
Have left me here to love and live in vain —
Twined with my heart, and can I deem thee dead,
When busy memory flashes on my brain?
Well — I will dream that we may meet again,
And woo the vision to my vacant breast:
If aught of young Remembrance then remain,
Be as it may Futurity's behest,
For me 't were bliss enough to know thy spirit blest![2]

X.

Here let me sit upon this massy stone,[3]
The marble column's yet unshaken base;
Here, son of Saturn! was thy fav'rite throne:[4]
Mightiest of many such! Hence let me trace
The latent grandeur of thy dwelling-place.
It may not be: nor ev'n can Fancy's eye
Restore what Time hath labour'd to deface.
Yet these proud pillars claim no passing sigh;
Unmoved the Moslem sits, the light Greek carols by.

XI.

But who, of all the plunderers of yon fane
On high, where Pallas linger'd, loth to flee
The latest relic of her ancient reign;
The last, the worst, dull spoiler, who was he?
Blush, Caledonia! such thy son could be!
England! I joy no child he was of thine:
Thy free-born men should spare what once was free;
Yet they could violate each saddening shrine,
And bear these altars o'er the long-reluctant brine.[5]

XII.

But most the modern Pict's ignoble boast,
To rive what Goth, and Turk, and Time hath spared:
Cold as the crags upon his native coast,[6]
His mind as barren and his heart as hard,
Is he whose head conceived, whose hand prepared,
Aught to displace Athena's poor remains:
Her sons too weak the sacred shrine to guard,
Yet felt some portion of their mother's pains,[7]
And never knew, till then, the weight of Despot's chains.

XIII.

What! shall it e'er be said by British tongue,
Albion was happy in Athena's tears?
Though in thy name the slaves her bosom wrung,
Tell not the deed to blushing Europe's ears;
The ocean queen, the free Britannia, bears
The last poor plunder from a bleeding land:
Yes, she, whose gen'rous aid her name endears,
Tore down those remnants with a harpy's hand,
Which envious Eld forbore, and tyrants left to stand.[8]

[1] [In the original MS., for this magnificent stanza, we find what follows: —

"Frown not upon me, churlish Priest! that I
Look not for life, where life may never be;
I am no sneerer at thy phantasy;
Thou pitiest me, — alas! I envy thee,
Thou bold discoverer in an unknown sea,
Of happy isles and happier tenants there;
I ask thee not to prove a Sadducee;
Still dream of Paradise, thou know'st not where,
But lov'st too well to bid thine erring brother share."]

[2] [Lord Byron wrote this stanza at Newstead, in October, 1811, on hearing of the death of his Cambridge friend, young Eddlestone; "making," he says, "the sixth, within four months, of friends and relations that I have lost between May and the end of August." See *post*, Hours of Idleness, "The Cornelian."]

[3] ["The thought and the expression," says Professor Clarke, in a letter to Lord Byron, "are here so truly Petrarch's, that I would ask you whether you ever read, —

'Poi quando 'l vero sgombra
Quel dolce error pur li medesmo assido,
Me freddo, pietra morta in pietra viva;
In guisa d' uom chè pensi e piange e scriva;'

"Thus rendered by Wilmot, —

'But when rude truth destroys
The loved illusion of the dreamed sweets,
I sit me down on the cold rugged stone,
Less cold, less dead than I, and think and weep alone.'"]

[4] The temple of Jupiter Olympius, of which sixteen columns, entirely of marble, yet survive: originally there were one hundred and fifty. These columns, however, are by many supposed to have belonged to the Pantheon.

[5] See Appendix to this Canto [A], for a note too long to be placed here. The ship was wrecked in the Archipelago.

[6] ["Cold and accursed as his native coast." — MS.]

[7] I cannot resist availing myself of the permission of my friend Dr. Clarke, whose name requires no comment with the public, but whose sanction will add tenfold weight to my testimony, to insert the following extract from a very obliging letter of his to me, as a note to the above lines: — "When the last of the metopes was taken from the Parthenon, and, in moving of it, great part of the superstructure with one of the triglyphs was thrown down by the workmen whom Lord Elgin employed, the Disdar, who beheld the mischief done to the building, took his pipe from his mouth, dropped a tear, and, in a supplicating tone of voice, said to Lusieri, Τέλος! — I was present." The Disdar alluded to was the father of the present Disdar.

[8] [After stanza xiii. the original MS. has the following: —

"Come, then, ye classic Thanes of each degree,
Dark Hamilton and sullen Aberdeen,
Come pilfer all the Pilgrim loves to see,
All that yet consecrates the fading scene:
Oh! better were it ye had never been,
Nor ye, nor Elgin, nor that lesser wight,
The victim sad of vase-collecting spleen,
House-furnisher withal, one Thomas hight,
Than ye should bear one stone from wrong'd Athena's site.

XIV.

Where was thine Ægis, Pallas! that appall'd
Stern Alaric and Havoc on their way? [1]
Where Peleus' son? whom Hell in vain enthrall'd,
His shade from Hades upon that dread day
Bursting to light in terrible array!
What! could not Pluto spare the chief once more,
To scare a second robber from his prey?
Idly he wander'd on the Stygian shore,
Nor now preserved the walls he loved to shield before.

XV.

Cold is the heart, fair Greece! that looks on thee,
Nor feels as lovers o'er the dust they loved;
Dull is the eye that will not weep to see
Thy walls defaced, thy mouldering shrines removed
By British hands, which it had best behoved
To guard those relics ne'er to be restored.
Curst be the hour when from their isle they roved,
And once again thy hapless bosom gored,
And snatch'd thy shrinking Gods to northern climes abhorr'd!

XVI.

But where is Harold? shall I then forget
To urge the gloomy wanderer o'er the wave?
Little reck'd he of all that men regret;
No loved-one now in feign'd lament could rave;
No friend the parting hand extended gave,
Ere the cold stranger pass'd to other climes:
Hard is his heart whom charms may not enslave;
But Harold felt not as in other times,
And left without a sigh the land of war and crimes.

XVII.

He that has sail'd upon the dark blue sea
Has view'd at times, I ween, a full fair sight;
When the fresh breeze is fair as breeze may be,
The white sail set, the gallant frigate tight;
Masts, spires, and strand retiring to the right,
The glorious main expanding o'er the bow,
The convoy spread like wild swans in their flight,
The dullest sailer wearing bravely now,
So gaily curl the waves before each dashing prow.

XVIII.

And oh, the little warlike world within!
The well-reeved guns, the netted canopy, [2]
The hoarse command, the busy humming din,
When, at a word, the tops are mann'd on high:
Hark, to the Boatswain's call, the cheering cry!
While through the seaman's hand the tackle glides;
Or schoolboy Midshipman that, standing by,
Strains his shrill pipe as good or ill betides,
And well the docile crew that skilful urchin guides.

XIX.

White is the glassy deck, without a stain,
Where on the watch the staid Lieutenant walks:
Look on that part which sacred doth remain
For the lone chieftain, who majestic stalks,
Silent and fear'd by all — not oft he talks
With aught beneath him, if he would preserve
That strict restraint, which broken, ever balks
Conquest and Fame: but Britons rarely swerve
From law, however stern, which tends their strength to nerve. [3]

XX.

Blow! swiftly blow, thou keel-compelling gale!
Till the broad sun withdraws his lessening ray;
Then must the pennant-bearer slacken sail,
That lagging barks may make their lazy way.
Ah! grievance sore, and listless dull delay,
To waste on sluggish hulks the sweetest breeze!
What leagues are lost, before the dawn of day,
Thus loitering pensive on the willing seas,
The flapping sail haul'd down to halt for logs like these!

XXI.

The moon is up; by Heaven a lovely eve!
Long streams of light o'er dancing waves expand;
Now lads on shore may sigh, and maids believe:
Such be our fate when we return to land!
Meantime some rude Arion's restless hand
Wakes the brisk harmony that sailors love; [4]
A circle there of merry listeners stand,
Or to some well-known measure featly move,
Thoughtless, as if on shore they still were free to rove.

XXII.

Through Calpe's straits survey the steepy shore;
Europe and Afric on each other gaze!
Lands of the dark-eyed Maid and dusky Moor
Alike beheld beneath pale Hecate's blaze:
How softly on the Spanish shore she plays,
Disclosing rock, and slope, and forest brown,
Distinct, though darkening with her waning phase;
But Mauritania's giant-shadows frown,
From mountain-cliff to coast descending sombre down.

XXIII.

'T is night, when Meditation bids us feel
We once have loved, though love is at an end:
The heart, lone mourner of its baffled zeal,
Though friendless now, will dream it had a friend. [5]
Who with the weight of years would wish to bend,
When Youth itself survives young Love and Joy?
Alas! when mingling souls forget to blend,
Death hath but little left him to destroy! [boy? [6]
Ah! happy years! once more who would not be a

Or will the gentle Dilettanti crew
Now delegate the task to digging Gell,
That mighty limner of a birds'-eye view,
How like to Nature let his volumes tell;
Who can with him the folio's limits swell
With all the Author saw, or said he saw?
Who can topographize or delve so well?
No boaster he, nor impudent and raw,
His pencil, pen, and shade, alike without a flaw."]

[1] According to Zosimus, Minerva and Achilles frightened Alaric from the Acropolis; but others relate that the Gothic king was nearly as mischievous as the Scottish peer. — See Chandler.

[2] To prevent blocks or splinters from falling on deck during action.

[3] ["From Discipline's stern law," &c. — MS.]

[4] ["Plies the brisk instrument that sailors love." — MS.]

[5] ["Bleeds the lone heart, once boundless in its zeal,
And friendless now, yet dreams it had a friend." — MS.]

[6] ["Ah! happy years! I would I were once more a boy." — MS.]

XXIV.

Thus bending o'er the vessel's laving side,
To gaze on Dian's wave-reflected sphere,
The soul forgets her schemes of Hope and Pride,
And flies unconscious o'er each backward year.
None are so desolate but something dear,
Dearer than self, possesses or possess'd
A thought, and claims the homage of a tear;
A flashing pang! of which the weary breast
Would still, albeit in vain, the heavy heart divest.

XXV.

To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,
And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been;
To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,
With the wild flock that never needs a fold;
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean;
This is not solitude; 't is but to hold [unroll'd.
Converse with Nature's charms, and view her stores

XXVI.

But 'midst the crowd, the hum, the shock of men,
To hear, to see, to feel, and to possess,
And roam along, the world's tired denizen,
With none who bless us, none whom we can bless;
Minions of splendour shrinking from distress!
None that, with kindred consciousness endued,
If we were not, would seem to smile the less
Of all that flatter'd, follow'd, sought, and sued;
This is to be alone; this, this is solitude!

XXVII.

More blest the life of godly eremite,
Such as on lonely Athos may be seen, [1]
Watching at eve upon the giant height,
Which looks o'er waves so blue, skies so serene,
That he who there at such an hour hath been
Will wistful linger on that hallow'd spot;
Then slowly tear him from the 'witching scene,
Sigh forth one wish that such had been his lot,
Then turn to hate a world he had almost forgot.

XXVIII.

Pass we the long, unvarying course, the track
Oft trod, that never leaves a trace behind;
Pass we the calm, the gale, the change, the tack,
And each well known caprice of wave and wind;
Pass we the joys and sorrows sailors find,
Coop'd in their winged sea-girt citadel;
The foul, the fair, the contrary, the kind,
As breezes rise and fall and billows swell,
Till on some jocund morn — lo, land! and all is well.

XXIX.

But not in silence pass Calypso's isles, [2]
The sister tenants of the middle deep;
There for the weary still a haven smiles,
Though the fair goddess long hath ceased to weep,
And o'er her cliffs a fruitless watch to keep
For him who dared prefer a mortal bride:
Here, too, his boy essay'd the dreadful leap
Stern Mentor urged from high to yonder tide;
While thus of both bereft, the nymph-queen doubly sighed.

XXX.

Her reign is past, her gentle glories gone:
But trust not this; too easy youth, beware!
A mortal sovereign holds her dangerous throne,
And thou may'st find a new Calypso there.
Sweet Florence! could another ever share
This wayward, loveless heart, it would be thine:
But check'd by every tie, I may not dare
To cast a worthless offering at thy shrine,
Nor ask so dear a breast to feel one pang for mine.

XXXI.

Thus Harold deem'd, as on that lady's eye
He look'd, and met its beam without a thought,
Save Admiration glancing harmless by:
Love kept aloof, albeit not far remote,
Who knew his votary often lost and caught,
But knew him as his worshipper no more,
And ne'er again the boy his bosom sought:
Since now he vainly urged him to adore,
Well deem'd the little God his ancient sway was o'er.

XXXII.

Fair Florence [3] found, in sooth with some amaze,
One who, 't was said, still sigh'd to all he saw,
Withstand, unmoved, the lustre of her gaze,
Which others hail'd with real or mimic awe, [law;
Their hope, their doom, their punishment, their
All that gay Beauty from her bondsmen claims:
And much she marvell'd that a youth so raw
Nor felt, nor feign'd at least, the oft-told flames,
Which, though sometimes they frown, yet rarely anger dames.

XXXIII.

Little knew she that seeming marble heart,
Now mask'd in silence or withheld by pride,
Was not unskilful in the spoiler's art, [4]
And spread its snares licentious far and wide; [5]
Nor from the base pursuit had turn'd aside,
As long as aught was worthy to pursue:
But Harold on such arts no more relied;
And had he doted on those eyes so blue,
Yet never would he join the lover's whining crew.

[1] [One of Lord Byron's chief delights was, as he himself states in one of his journals, after bathing in some retired spot, to seat himself on a high rock above the sea, and there remain for hours, gazing upon the sky and the waters. "He led the life," says Sir Egerton Brydges, "as he wrote the strains, of a true poet. He could sleep, and very frequently did sleep, wrapped up in his rough great coat, on the hard boards of a deck, while the winds and the waves were roaring round him on every side, and could subsist on a crust and a glass of water. It would be difficult to persuade me, that he who is a coxcomb in his manners, and artificial in his habits of life, could write good poetry."]

[2] Goza is said to have been the island of Calypso. — ["The identity of the habitation assigned by poets to the nymph Calypso, has occasioned much discussion and variety of opinion. Some place it at Malta, and some at Goza." — Hoare's Classical Tour.]

[3] [For an account of this accomplished but eccentric lady, whose acquaintance the poet formed at Malta, see Miscellaneous Poems, September, 1809, "To Florence." "In one so imaginative as Lord Byron, who, while he infused so much of his life into his poetry, mingled also not a little of poetry with his life, it is difficult," says Moore, "in unravelling the texture of his feelings, to distinguish at all times between the fanciful and the real. His description *here*, for instance, of the unmoved and 'loveless heart,' with which he contemplated even the charms of this attractive person, is wholly at variance with the statements in many of his letters; and, above all, with one of the most graceful of his lesser poems, addressed to this same lady, during a thunder-storm on his road to Zitza."]

[4] [Against this line it is sufficient to set the poet's own declaration, in 1821: — "I am not a Joseph, nor a Scipio, but I can safely affirm, that I never in my life seduced any woman."]

[5] ["We have here another instance of his propensity to

XXXIV.

Not much he kens, I ween, of woman's breast,
Who thinks that wanton thing is won by sighs;
What careth she for hearts when once possess'd?
Do proper homage to thine idol's eyes;
But not too humbly, or she will despise
Thee and thy suit, though told in moving tropes;
Disguise ev'n tenderness, if thou art wise;
Brisk Confidence [1] still best with woman copes;
Pique her and soothe in turn, soon Passion crowns thy hopes.

XXXV.

'T is an old lesson; Time approves it true,
And those who know it best, deplore it most;
When all is won that all desire to woo,
The paltry prize is hardly worth the cost:
Youth wasted, minds degraded, honour lost,
These are thy fruits, successful Passion! these!
If, kindly cruel, early Hope is crost,
Still to the last it rankles, a disease,
Not to be cured when Love itself forgets to please.

XXXVI.

Away! nor let me loiter in my song,
For we have many a mountain-path to tread,
And many a varied shore to sail along,
By pensive Sadness, not by Fiction, led —
Climes, fair withal as ever mortal head
Imagined in its little schemes of thought;
Or e'er in new Utopias were ared,
To teach man what he might be, or he ought;
If that corrupted thing could ever such be taught.

XXXVII.

Dear Nature is the kindest mother still,
Though alway changing, in her aspect mild;
From her bare bosom let me take my fill,
Her never-wean'd, though not her favour'd child.
Oh! she is fairest in her features wild,
Where nothing polish'd dares pollute her path:
To me by day or night she ever smiled,
Though I have mark'd her when none other hath,
And sought her more and more, and loved her best in wrath.

XXXVIII.

Land of Albania! where Iskander rose,
Theme of the young, and beacon of the wise,
And he his namesake, whose oft-baffled foes
Shrunk from his deeds of chivalrous emprize:
Land of Albania [2]! let me bend mine eyes
On thee, thou rugged nurse of savage men!
The cross descends, thy minarets arise,
And the pale crescent sparkles in the glen,
Through many a cypress grove within each city's ken.

XXXIX.

Childe Harold sail'd, and pass'd the barren spot,
Where sad Penelope o'erlook'd the wave; [3]
And onward view'd the mount, not yet forgot,
The lover's refuge, and the Lesbian's grave.
Dark Sappho! could not verse immortal save
That breast imbued with such immortal fire?
Could she not live who life eternal gave?
If life eternal may await the lyre,
That only Heaven to which Earth's children may aspire.

XL.

'T was on a Grecian autumn's gentle eve
Childe Harold hail'd Leucadia's cape afar; [4]
A spot he long'd to see, nor cared to leave:
Oft did he mark the scenes of vanish'd war,
Actium, Lepanto, fatal Trafalgar; [5]
Mark them unmoved, for he would not delight
(Born beneath some remote inglorious star)
In themes of bloody fray, or gallant fight, [wight.
But loathed the bravo's trade, and laughed at martial

XLI.

But when he saw the evening star above
Leucadia's far-projecting rock of woe,
And hail'd the last resort of fruitless love,
He felt, or deem'd he felt, no common glow:
And as the stately vessel glided slow
Beneath the shadow of that ancient mount,
He watch'd the billows' melancholy flow,
And, sunk albeit in thought as he was wont,
More placid seem'd his eye, and smooth his pallid front. [6]

XLII.

Morn dawns; and with it stern Albania's hills,
Dark Suli's rocks, and Pindus' inland peak,
Robed half in mist, bedew'd with snowy rills,
Array'd in many a dun and purple streak,
Arise; and, as the clouds along them break,
Disclose the dwelling of the mountaineer:
Here roams the wolf, the eagle whets his beak,
Birds, beasts of prey, and wilder men appear, [year.
And gathering storms around convulse the closing

XLIII.

Now Harold felt himself at length alone,
And bade to Christian tongues a long adieu;
Now he adventured on a shore unknown,
Which all admire, but many dread to view:
His breast was arm'd 'gainst fate, his wants were few;
Peril he sought not, but ne'er shrank to meet:
The scene was savage, but the scene was new;
This made the ceaseless toil of travel sweet, [heat.
Beat back keen winter's blast, and welcomed summer's

self-misrepresentation. However great might have been the irregularities of his college life, such phrases as 'the spoiler's art,' and 'spreading snares,' were in no wise applicable to them." — MOORE.]

[1] ["Brisk Impudence," &c. — MS.]

[2] See Appendix to this Canto, Note [B].

[3] Ithaca. — ["Sept. 24th," says Mr. Hobhouse, "we were in the channel, with Ithaca, then in the hands of the French, to the west of us. We were close to it, and saw a few shrubs on a brown heathy land, two little towns in the hills, scattered amongst trees, and a windmill or two, with a tower on the heights. That Ithaca was not very strongly garrisoned, you will easily believe, when I tell, that a month afterwards, when the Ionian Islands were invested by a British squadron, it was surrendered into the hands of a sergeant and seven men." For a very curious account of the state of the kingdom of Ulysses in 1816, see Williams's Travels, vol. ii. p. 427.]

[4] Leucadia, now Santa Maura. From the promontory (the Lover's Leap) Sappho is said to have thrown herself. — ["Sept. 28th, we doubled the promontory of Santa Maura, and saw the precipice which the fate of Sappho, the poetry of Ovid, and the rocks so formidable to the ancient mariners, have made for ever memorable." — HOBHOUSE.]

[5] Actium and Trafalgar need no further mention. The battle of Lepanto, equally bloody and considerable, but less known, was fought in the Gulf of Patras. Here the author of Don Quixote lost his left hand.

[6] ["And roused him more from thought than he was wont,
While Pleasure almost seemed to smooth his placid front." — MS.]

XLIV.

Here the red cross, for still the cross is here,
Though sadly scoff'd at by the circumcised,
Forgets that pride to pamper'd priesthood dear;
Churchman and votary alike despised.
Foul Superstition! howsoe'er disguised,
Idol, saint, virgin, prophet, crescent, cross,
For whatsoever symbol thou art prized,
Thou sacerdotal gain, but general loss!
Who from true worship's gold can separate thy dross?

XLV.

Ambracia's gulf behold, where once was lost
A world for woman, lovely, harmless thing!
In yonder rippling bay, their naval host
Did many a Roman chief and Asian king [1]
To doubtful conflict, certain slaughter bring:
Look where the second Cæsar's trophies rose! [2]
Now, like the hands that rear'd them, withering;
Imperial anarchs, doubling human woes!
GOD! was thy globe ordain'd for such to win and lose?

XLVI.

From the dark barriers of that rugged clime,
Ev'n to the centre of Illyria's vales,
Childe Harold pass'd o'er many a mount sublime,
Through lands scarce noticed in historic tales;
Yet in famed Attica such lovely dales
Are rarely seen; nor can fair Tempe boast
A charm they know not; loved Parnassus fails,
Though classic ground and consecrated most,
To match some spots that lurk within this lowering coast.

XLVII.

He pass'd bleak Pindus, Acherusia's lake, [3]
And left the primal city of the land,
And onwards did his further journey take
To greet Albania's chief [4], whose dread command
Is lawless law; for with a bloody hand
He sways a nation, turbulent and bold:
Yet here and there some daring mountain-band
Disdain his power, and from their rocky hold
Hurl their defiance far, nor yield, unless to gold. [5]

XLVIII.

Monastic Zitza [6]! from thy shady brow,
Thou small, but favour'd spot of holy ground!
Where'er we gaze, around, above, below,
What rainbow tints, what magic charms are found!
Rock, river, forest, mountain, all abound,
And bluest skies that harmonise the whole:
Beneath, the distant torrent's rushing sound
Tells where the volumed cataract doth roll
Between those hanging rocks, that shock yet please the soul.

XLIX.

Amidst the grove that crowns yon tufted hill,
Which, were it not for many a mountain nigh
Rising in lofty ranks, and loftier still,
Might well itself be deem'd of dignity,
The convent's white walls glisten fair on high:
Here dwells the caloyer [7], nor rude is he,
Nor niggard of his cheer; the passer by
Is welcome still; nor heedless will he flee
From hence, if he delight kind Nature's sheen to see.

L.

Here in the sultriest season let him rest,
Fresh is the green beneath those aged trees;
Here winds of gentlest wing will fan his breast,
From heaven itself he may inhale the breeze:
The plain is far beneath — oh! let him seize
Pure pleasure while he can; the scorching ray
Here pierceth not, impregnate with disease:
Then let his length the loitering pilgrim lay,
And gaze, untired, the morn, the noon, the eve away.

LI.

Dusky and huge, enlarging on the sight,
Nature's volcanic amphitheatre, [8]
Chimæra's alps extend from left to right:
Beneath, a living valley seems to stir; [fir
Flocks play, trees wave, streams flow, the mountain-
Nodding above; behold black Acheron! [9]
Once consecrated to the sepulchre.
Pluto! if this be hell I look upon, [none. [10]
Close shamed Elysium's gates, my shade shall seek for

[1] It is said, that, on the day previous to the battle of Actium, Antony had thirteen kings at his levee. — ["To-day" (Nov. 12.), "I saw the remains of the town of Actium, near which Antony lost the world, in a small bay, where two frigates could hardly manœuvre: a broken wall is the sole remnant. On another part of the gulf stand the ruins of Nicopolis, built by Augustus, in honour of his victory." — *Lord Byron to his Mother*, 1809.]

[2] Nicopolis, whose ruins are most extensive, is at some distance from Actium, where the wall of the Hippodrome survives in a few fragments. These ruins are large masses of brickwork, the bricks of which are joined by interstices of mortar, as large as the bricks themselves, and equally durable.

[3] According to Pouqueville, the lake of Yanina: but Pouqueville is always out.

[4] The celebrated Ali Pacha. Of this extraordinary man there is an incorrect account in Pouqueville's Travels. — ["I left Malta in the Spider brig-of-war, on the 21st of September, and arrived in eight days at Prevesa. I thence have traversed the interior of the province of Albania, on a visit to the Pacha, as far as Tepaleen, his highness's country palace, where I stayed three days. The name of the Pacha is Ali, and he is considered a man of the first abilities: he governs the whole of Albania (the ancient Illyricum), Epirus, and part of Macedonia." — *B. to his Mother*.]

[5] Five thousand Suliotes, among the rocks and in the castle of Suli, withstood thirty thousand Albanians for eighteen years; the castle at last was taken by bribery. In this contest there were several acts performed not unworthy of the better days of Greece.

[6] The convent and village of Zitza are four hours' journey from Joannina, or Yanina, the capital of the Pachalick. In the valley the river Kalamas (once the Acheron) flows, and, not far from Zitza, forms a fine cataract. The situation is perhaps the finest in Greece, though the approach to Delvinachi and parts of Acarnania and Ætolia may contest the palm. Delphi, Parnassus, and, in Attica, even Cape Colonna and Port Raphti, are very inferior; as also every scene in Ionia, or the Troad: I am almost inclined to add the approach to Constantinople; but, from the different features of the last, a comparison can hardly be made. ["Zitza," says the poet's companion, "is a village inhabited by Greek peasants. Perhaps there is not in the world a more romantic prospect than that which is viewed from the summit of the hill. The foreground is a gentle declivity, terminating on every side in an extensive landscape of green hills and dale, enriched with vineyards, and dotted with frequent flocks."]

[7] The Greek monks are so called. — ["We went into the monastery," says Mr. Hobhouse, "after some parley with one of the monks, through a small door plated with iron, on which the marks of violence were very apparent, and which, before the country had been tranquillised under the powerful government of Ali, had been battered in vain by the troops of robbers then, by turns, infesting every district. The prior, a humble, meek-mannered man, entertained us in a warm chamber with grapes, and a pleasant white wine, not trodden out, as he told us, by the feet, but pressed from the grape by the hand; and we were so well pleased with every thing about us, that we agreed to lodge with him on our return from the Vizier."]

[8] The Chimariot mountains appear to have been volcanic.

[9] Now called Kalamas.

[10] ["Keep heaven for better souls, my shade," &c. — MS.]