

XXXIV.

There is a very life in our despair,
Vitality of poison,—a quick root
Which feeds these deadly branches; for it were
As nothing did we die; but Life will suit
Itself to Sorrow's most detested fruit,
Like to the apples¹ on the Dead Sea's shore,
All ashes to the taste: Did man compute
Existence by enjoyment, and count o'er
Such hours 'gainst years of life,—say, would he name
threescore?

XXXV.

The Psalmist number'd out the years of man:
They are enough; and if thy tale be *true*,
Thou, who didst grudge him even that fleeting span,
More than enough, thou fatal Waterloo!
Millions of tongues record thee, and anew
Their children's lips shall echo them, and say—
"Here, where the sword united nations drew,
Our countrymen were warring on that day!"
And this is much, and all which will not pass away.

XXXVI.

There sunk the greatest, nor the worst of men,
Whose spirit antithetically mixt
One moment of the mightiest, and again
On little objects with like firmness fixt,
Extreme in all things! hadst thou been betwixt,
Thy throne had still been thine, or never been;
For daring made thy rise as fall: thou seek'st
Even now to re-assume the imperial mien,
And shake again the world, the Thunderer of the scene!

XXXVII.

Conqueror and captive of the earth art thou!
She trembles at thee still, and thy wild name
Was ne'er more bruted in men's minds than now
That thou art nothing, save the jest of Fame,
Who woo'd thee once, thy vassal, and became
The flatterer of thy fierceness, till thou wert
A god unto thyself; nor less the same
To the astounded kingdoms all inert,
Who deem'd thee for a time whate'er thou didst assert.

XXXVIII.

Oh, more or less than man—in high or low,
Battling with nations, flying from the field;
Now making monarchs' necks thy footstool, now
More than thy meanest soldier taught to yield:
An empire thou couldst crush, command, rebuild,
But govern not thy pettiest passion, nor,
However deeply in men's spirits skill'd,
Look through thine own, nor curb the lust of war,
Nor learn that tempted Fate will leave the loftiest star.

XXXIX.

Yet well thy soul hath brook'd the turning tide
With that untaught innate philosophy,
Which, be it wisdom, coldness, or deep pride,
Is gall and wormwood to an enemy.

¹ The (fabled) apples on the brink of the lake Asphaltes were said to be fair without, and, within, ashes. Vide Tacitus, *Histor. lib. v. 7.*

² The great error of Napoleon, "if we have writ our annals true," was a continued obtrusion on mankind of his want of all community of feeling for or with them; perhaps more offensive to human vanity than the active cruelty of more

When the whole host of hatred stood hard by,
To watch and mock thee shrinking, thou hast smiled
With a sedate and all-enduring eye;—
When Fortune fled her spoil'd and favourite child,
He stood unbow'd beneath the ills upon him piled.

XL.

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

XLI.

If, like a tower upon a headlong rock,
Thou hadst been made to stand or fall alone,
Such scorn of man had help'd to brave the shock;
But men's thoughts were the steps which paved thy
throne,
Their admiration thy best weapon shone;
The part of Philip's son was thine, not then
(Unless aside thy purple had been thrown)
Like stern Diogenes to mock at men;
For sceptred cynics earth were far too wide a den.²

XLII.

But quiet to quick bosoms is a hell,
And *there* hath been thy bane; there is a fire
And motion of the soul which will not dwell
In its own narrow being, but aspire
Beyond the fitting medium of desire;
And, but once kindled, quenchless evermore,
Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire
Of aught but rest; a fever at the core,
Fatal to him who bears, to all who ever bore.

XLIII.

This makes the madmen who have made men mad
By their contagion; Conquerors and Kings,
Founders of sects and systems, to whom add
Sophists, Bards, Statesmen, all unquiet things
Which stir too strongly the soul's secret springs,
And are themselves the fools to those they fool;
Envi'd, yet how unenviable! what stings
Are theirs! One breast laid open were a school
Which would unteach mankind the lust to shine or
rule:

XLIV.

Their breath is agitation, and their life
A storm whereon they ride, to sink at last,
And yet so nursed and bigoted to strife,
That should their days, surviving perils past,
Melt to calm twilight, they feel overcast
With sorrow and supineness, and so die;
Even as a flame unfed, which runs to waste
With its own flickering, or a sword laid by,
Which eats into itself, and rusts ingloriously.

trembling and suspicious tyranny. Such were his speeches to public assemblies as well as individuals; and the single expression which he is said to have used on returning to Paris after the Russian winter had destroyed his army, rubbing his hands over a fire, "This is pleasanter than Moscow," would probably alienate more favour from his cause than the destruction and reverses which led to the remark.

XLV.

He who ascends to mountain-tops, shall find
The loftiest peaks most wrapt in clouds and snow;
He who surpasses or subdues mankind,
Must look down on the hate of those below.
Though high *above* the sun of glory glow,
And far *beneath* the earth and ocean spread,
Round him are icy rocks, and loudly flow
Contending tempests on his naked head,
And thus reward the toils which to those summits led.¹

XLVI.

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

XLVII.

And there they stand, as stands a lofty mind,
Worn, but unstooping to the baser crowd,
All tenantless, save to the crannying wind,
Or holding dark communion with the cloud.
There was a day when they were young and proud,
Banners on high, and battles pass'd below;
But they who fought are in a bloody shroud,
And those which waved are shredless dust ere now,
And the bleak battlements shall bear no future blow.

XLVIII.

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

XLIX.

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

L.

But Thou, exulting and abounding river!
Making thy waves a blessing as they flow
Through banks whose beauty would endure for ever
Could man but leave thy bright creation so,

¹ [This is certainly splendidly written, but we trust it is not true. From Macedonia's madman to the Swede—from Nimrod to Buonaparte,—the hunters of men have pursued their sport with as much gaiety, and as little remorse, as the hunters of other animals; and have lived as cheerily in their days of action, and as comfortably in their repose, as the followers of better pursuits. It would be strange, therefore, if the other active but more innocent spirits, whom Lord Byron has here placed in the same predicament, and who share all their sources of enjoyment, without the guilt and

Nor its fair promise from the surface mow
With the sharp scythe of conflict,—then to see
Thy valley of sweet waters, were to know
Earth paved like Heaven; and to seem such to me,
Even now what wants thy stream?—that it should
Lethe be.

LL.

A thousand battles have assail'd thy banks,
But these and half their fame have pass'd away,
And Slaughter heap'd on high his weltering ranks;
Their very graves are gone, and what are they?
Thy tide wash'd down the blood of yesterday,
And all was stainless, and on thy clear stream
Glass'd with its dancing light the sunny ray;
But o'er the blacken'd memory's blighting dream
Thy waves would vainly roll, all sweeping as they
seem.

LII.

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

LIII.

Nor was all love shut from him, though his days
Of passion had consumed themselves to dust.
It is in vain that we would coldly gaze
On such a smile upon us; the heart must
Leap kindly back to kindness, though disgust
Hath wean'd it from all worldlings: thus he felt,
For there was soft remembrance, and sweet trust
In one fond breast, to which his own would melt,
And in its tenderer hour on that his bosom dwelt.

LIV.

And he had learn'd to love,—I know not why,
For this in such a him seems strange of mood,—
The helpless looks of blooming infancy,
Even in its earliest nurture; what subdued,
To change like this, a mind so far imbued
With scorn of man, it little boots to know;
But thus it was; and though in solitude
Small power the nipp'd affections have to grow,
In him this glow'd when all beside had ceased to glow.

LV.

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

the hardness which they cannot fail of contracting, should be more miserable or more unfriended than those splendid curses of their kind; and it would be passing strange, and pitiful, if the most precious gifts of Providence should produce only unhappiness, and mankind regard with hostility their greatest benefactors. — JEFFREY.]

² "What wants that knave that a king should have?" was King James's question on meeting Johnny Armstrong and his followers in full accoutrements. — See the Ballad.

1.

The castled crag of Drachenfels¹
Frowns o'er the wide and winding Rhine,
Whose breast of waters broadly swells
Between the banks which bear the vine,
And hills all rich with blossom'd trees,
And fields which promise corn and wine,
And scatter'd cities crowning these,
Whose far white walls along them shine,
Have strew'd a scene, which I should see
With double joy wert *thou* with me.

2.

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

3.

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

4.

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

LVI.

By Coblenz, on a rise of gentle ground,
There is a small and simple pyramid,
Crowning the summit of the verdant mound;
Beneath its base are heroes' ashes hid,

¹ The castle of Drachenfels stands on the highest summit of "the Seven Mountains," over the Rhine banks; it is in ruins, and connected with some singular traditions: it is the first in view on the road from Bonn, but on the opposite side of the river; on this bank, nearly facing it, are the remains of another, called the Jew's Castle, and a large cross commemorative of the murder of a chief by his brother. The number of castles and cities along the course of the Rhine on both sides is very great, and their situations remarkably beautiful. [These verses were written on the banks of the Rhine, in May. The original pencilling is before us. It is needless to observe that they were addressed to his Sister.]

² The monument of the young and lamented General Marceau (killed by a rifle-ball at Altkirchen, on the last day of the fourth year of the French republic) still remains as described. The inscriptions on his monument are rather too long, and not required; his name was enough; France adored, and her enemies admired; both went over him. His funeral was attended by the generals and detachments from both armies. In the same grave General Hoche is interred, a gallant man also in every sense of the word; but though he distinguished himself greatly in battle, he had not the good fortune to die there: his death was attended by suspicions of

Our enemy's,—but let not that forbid
Honour to Marceau! o'er whose early tomb
Tears, big tears, gush'd from the rough soldier's lid,
Lamenting and yet envying such a doom,
Falling for France, whose rights he battled to resume.

LVII.

Brief, brave, and glorious was his young career,—
His mourners were two hosts, his friends and foes;
And fitly may the stranger lingering here
Pray for his gallant spirit's bright repose;
For he was Freedom's champion, one of those,
The few in number, who had not o'erstept
The charter to chastise which she bestows
On such as wield her weapons; he had kept
The whiteness of his soul, and thus men o'er him
wept.²

LVIII.

Here Ehrenbreitstein³, with her shatter'd wall
Black with the miner's blast, upon her height
Yet shows of what she was, when shell and ball
Rebounding idly on her strength did light:
A tower of victory! from whence the flight
Of baffled foes was watch'd along the plain:
But Peace destroy'd what War could never blight,
And laid those proud roofs bare to Summer's rain—
On which the iron shower for years had pour'd in vain.

LIX.

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

LX.

Adieu to thee again! a vain adieu!
There can be no farewell to scene like thine;
The mind is colour'd by thy every hue;
And if reluctantly the eyes resign
Their cherish'd gaze upon thee, lovely Rhine!⁴
'Tis with the thankful glance of parting praise;
More mighty spots may rise—more glaring shine,
But none unite in one attaching maze
The brilliant, fair, and soft,—the glories of old days,

poison. A separate monument (not over his body, which is buried by Marceau's) is raised for him near Andernach, opposite to which one of his most memorable exploits was performed, in throwing a bridge to an island on the Rhine. The shape and style are different from that of Marceau's, and the inscription more simple and pleasing:—"The Army of the Sambre and Meuse to its Commander-in-Chief Hoche." This is all, and as it should be. Hoche was esteemed among the first of France's earlier generals, before Buonaparte monopolised her triumphs. He was the destined commander of the invading army of Ireland.

³ Ehrenbreitstein, *i. e.* "the broad stone of honour," one of the strongest fortresses in Europe, was dismantled and blown up by the French at the truce of Leoben. It had been, and could only be, reduced by famine or treachery. It yielded to the former, aided by surprise. After having seen the fortifications of Gibraltar and Malta, it did not much strike by comparison; but the situation is commanding. General Marceau besieged it in vain for some time, and I slept in a room where I was shown a window at which he is said to have been standing observing the progress of the siege by moonlight, when a ball struck immediately below it.

⁴ [On taking Hockheim, the Austrians, in one part of the

LXI.

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

LXII.

But these recede. Above me are the Alps,
The palaces of Nature, whose vast walls
Have pinnacled in clouds their snowy scalps,
And thrond Eternity in icy halls
Of cold sublimity, where forms and falls
The avalanche—the thunderbolt of snow!
All that expands the spirit, yet appals,
Gather around these summits, as to show [below.
How Earth may pierce to Heaven, yet leave vain man

LXIII.

But ere these matchless heights I dare to scan,
There is a spot should not be pass'd in vain,—
Morat! the proud, the patriot field! where man
May gaze on ghastly trophies of the slain,
Nor blush for those who conquer'd on that plain;
Here Burgundy bequeath'd his tombless host,
A bony heap, through ages to remain,
Themselves their monument;—the Stygian coast
Unsepulchred they roam'd, and shriek'd each wan-
dering ghost.¹

LXIV.

While Waterloo with Cannæ's carnage vies,
Morat and Marathon twin names shall stand;
They were true Glory's stainless victories,
Won by the unambitious heart and hand
Of a proud, brotherly, and civic band,
All unbought champions in no princely cause
Of vice-entail'd Corruption; they no land
Doom'd to bewail the blasphemy of laws
Making kings' rights divine, by some Draconic clause.

engagement, got to the brow of the hill, whence they had their first view of the Rhine. They instantly halted—not a gun was fired—not a voice heard: but they stood gazing on the river with those feelings which the events of the last fifteen years at once called up. Prince Schwartzberg rode up to know the cause of this sudden stop; then they gave three cheers, rushed after the enemy, and drove them into the water.]

¹ The chapel is destroyed, and the pyramid of bones diminished to a small number by the Burgundian legion in the service of France; who anxiously effaced this record of their ancestors' less successful invasions. A few still remain, notwithstanding the pains taken by the Burgundians for ages (all who passed that way removing a bone to their own country), and the less justifiable larcenies of the Swiss partisans, who carried them off to sell for knife-handles; a purpose for which the whiteness imbued by the bleaching of years had rendered them in great request. Of these relics I ventured to bring away as much as may have made a quarter of a hero, for which the sole excuse is, that if I had not, the next passer by might have perverted them to worse uses than the careful preservation which I intend for them.

² Aventicum, near Morat, was the Roman capital of Helvetia, where Avenches now stands.

³ Julia Alpinula, a young Aventian priestess, died soon after a vain endeavour to save her father, condemned to death as a traitor by Aulus Cæcina. Her epitaph was discovered many years ago;—it is thus:—"Julia Alpinula: Hic jaco.

LXV.

By a lone wall a lonelier column rears
A gray and grief-worn aspect of old days;
'Tis the last remnant of the wreck of years,
And looks as with the wild-bewilder'd gaze
Of one to stone converted by amaze,
Yet still with consciousness; and there it stands
Making a marvel that it not decays,
When the coeval pride of human hands,
Levell'd Aventicum², hath strew'd her subject lands.

LXVI.

And there—oh! sweet and sacred be the name!—
Julia—the daughter, the devoted—gave
Her youth to heaven; her heart, beneath a claim
Nearest to Heaven's, broke o'er a father's grave.
Justice is sworn 'gainst tears, and hers would crave
The life she lived in; but the judge was just,
And then she died on him she could not save.
Their tomb was simple, and without a bust,
And held within their urn one mind, one heart, one
dust.³

LXVII.

But these are deeds which should not pass away,
And names that must not wither, though the earth
Forgets her empires with a just decay, [birth;
The enslavers and the enslaved, their death and
The high, the mountain-majesty of worth
Should be, and shall, survivor of its woe,
And from its immortality look forth
In the sun's face, like yonder Alpine snow,⁴
Imperishably pure beyond all things below.

LXVIII.

Lake Lemman woos me with its crystal face,⁵
The mirror where the stars and mountains view
The stillness of their aspect in each trace
Its clear depth yields of their far height and hue:
There is too much of man here, to look through
With a fit mind the might which I behold;
But soon in me shall Loneliness renew
Thoughts hid, but not less cherish'd than of old,
Ere mingling with the herd had penn'd me in their
fold.

Infelicitas patris infelix proles. Deae Aventie Sacerdos. Exorare patris necem non potui: Male mori in fatis ille erat. Vixi annos XXII."—I know of no human composition so affecting as this, nor a history of deeper interest. These are the names and actions which ought not to perish, and to which we turn with a true and healthy tenderness, from the wretched and glittering detail of a confused mass of conquests and battles, with which the mind is roused for a time to a false and feverish sympathy, from whence it recurs at length with all the nausea consequent on such intoxication.

⁴ This is written in the eye of Mont Blanc (June 3d, 1816), which even at this distance dazzles mine.—(July 20th.) I this day observed for some time the distinct reflection of Mont Blanc and Mont Argentière in the calm of the lake, which I was crossing in my boat; the distance of these mountains from their mirror is sixty miles.

⁵ In the exquisite lines which the poet, at this time, addressed to his sister, there is the following touching stanza:—

"I did remind thee of our own dear lake,
By the old hall which may be mine no more.
Leman's is fair; but think not I forsake
The sweet remembrance of a dearer shore:
Sad havoc Time must with my memory make
Ere that or thou can fade these eyes before;
Though, like all things which I have loved, they are
Resign'd for ever, or divided far."

LXIX.

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

LXX.

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

LXXI.

Is it not better, then, to be alone,
And love Earth only for its earthly sake ?
By the blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone,¹
Or the pure bosom of its nursing lake,
Which feeds it as a mother who doth make
A fair but froward infant her own care,
Kissing its cries away as these awake ; —
Is it not better thus our lives to wear,
Than join the crushing crowd, doom'd to inflict or bear ?

LXXII.

I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me ; and to me
High mountains are a feeling², but the hum
Of human cities torture : I can see
Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be
A link reluctant in a fleshy chain,
Class'd among creatures, when the soul can flee,
And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain
Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in vain.

LXXIII.

And thus I am absorb'd, and this is life :
I look upon the peopled desert past,
As on a place of agony and strife,
Where, for some sin, to Sorrow I was cast,
To act and suffer, but remount at last

¹ The colour of the Rhone at Geneva is blue, to a depth of tint which I have never seen equalled in water, salt or fresh, except in the Mediterranean and Archipelago. — [See Don Juan, c. xiv. st. 87. for a beautiful comparison : —

“There was no great disparity of years,
Though much in temper ; but they never clash'd :
They moved like stars united in their spheres,
Or like the Rhone by Lemman's waters wash'd,
Where mingled and yet separate appears
The river from the lake, all bluely dash'd
Through the serene and placid glassy deep,
Which fain would lull its river child to sleep.”

² [“Mr. Hobhouse and myself are just returned from a journey of lakes and mountains. We have been to the Grindelwald, and the Jungfrau, and stood on the summit of the Wengen Alp ; and seen torrents of 900 feet in fall, and glaciers of all dimensions ; we have heard shepherds' pipes, and avalanches, and looked on the clouds foaming up from the valleys below us like the spray of the ocean of hell. Chamouni, and that which it inherits, we saw a month ago ; but, though Mont Blanc is higher, it is not equal in wildness to the Jungfrau, the Eighers, the Shreckhorn, and the Rose Glaciers.” — *B. Letters*, Sept. 1816.]

With a fresh pinion ; which I feel to spring,
Though young, yet waxing vigorous, as the blast
Which it would cope with, on delighted wing,
Spurning the clay-cold bonds which round our being
cling.

LXXIV.

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

LXXV.

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

LXXVI.

But this is not my theme ; and I return
To that which is immediate, and require
Those who find contemplation in the urn,
To look on One, whose dust was once all fire,
A native of the land where I respire
The clear air for a while — a passing guest,
Where he became a being, — whose desire
Was to be glorious ; 't was a foolish quest,
The which to gain and keep, he sacrificed all rest.

LXXVII.

Here the self-torturing sophist, wild Rousseau,³
The apostle of affliction, he who threw
Enchantment over passion, and from woe
Wrung overwhelming eloquence, first drew
The breath which made him wretched ; yet he knew
How to make madness beautiful, and cast
O'er erring deeds and thoughts a heavenly hue⁴
Of words, like sunbeams, dazzling as they past
The eyes, which o'er them shed tears feelingly and
fast.

³ [“I have traversed all Rousseau's ground with the ‘Héloïse’ before me, and am struck to a degree that I cannot express with the force and accuracy of his descriptions, and the beauty of their reality. Meillerie, Clarens, and Vevay, and the Château de Chillon, are places of which I shall say little : because all I could say must fall short of the impressions they stamp.” — *B. Letters*.]

⁴ [“It is evident that the impassioned parts of Rousseau's romance had made a deep impression upon the feelings of the noble poet. The enthusiasm expressed by Lord Byron is no small tribute to the power possessed by Jean Jacques over the passions : and, to say truth, we needed some such evidence ; for, though almost ashamed to avow the truth, — still, like the barber of Midas, we must speak or die, — we have never been able to feel the interest or discover the merit of this far-famed performance. That there is much eloquence in the letters we readily admit : there lay Rousseau's strength. But his lovers, the celebrated St. Preux and Julie, have, from the earliest moment we have heard the tale (which we well remember), down to the present hour, totally failed to interest us. There might be some constitutional hardness of heart ; but like Lance's pebble-hearted cur, Crab, we remained dry-eyed while all wept around us. And still, on resuming the

LXXVIII.

His love was passion's essence — as a tree
On fire by lightning ; with ethereal flame
Kindled he was, and blasted ; for to be
Thus, and enamour'd, were in him the same.
But his was not the love of living dame,
Nor of the dead who rise upon our dreams,
But of ideal beauty, which became
In him existence, and o'erflowing teems
Along his burning page, distemper'd though it seems.

LXXIX.

This breathed itself to life in Julie, this
Invested her with all that's wild and sweet ;
This hallow'd, too, the memorable kiss¹
Which every morn his fever'd lip would greet,
From hers, who but with friendship his would meet ;
But to that gentle touch, through brain and breast
Flash'd the thrill'd spirit's love-devouring heat ;
In that absorbing sigh perchance more blest
Than vulgar minds may be with all they seek possess.²

LXXX.

His life was one long war with self-sought foes,
Or friends by him self-banish'd ; for his mind
Had grown Suspicion's sanctuary, and chose
For its own cruel sacrifice the kind,
'Gainst whom he raged with fury strange and blind.
But he was phrensied, — wherefore, who may know ?
Since cause might be which skill could never find ;
But he was phrensied by disease or woe
To that worst pitch of all, which wears a reasoning
show.

LXXXI.

For then he was inspired, and from him came,
As from the Pythian's mystic cave of yore,
Those oracles which set the world in flame,
Nor ceased to burn till kingdoms were no more :
Did he not this for France ? which lay before
Bow'd to the inborn tyranny of years ?
Broken and trembling to the yoke she bore,
Till by the voice of him and his compeers,
Roused up to too much wrath, which follows o'er-
grown fears ?

LXXXII.

They made themselves a fearful monument !
The wreck of old opinions — things which grew,
Breathed from the birth of time : the veil they rent,
And what behind it lay, all earth shall view.
But good with ill they also overthrew,
Leaving but ruins, wherewith to rebuild
Upon the same foundation, and renew
Dungeons and thrones, which the same hour re-fill'd,
As heretofore, because ambition was self-will'd.

volume, even now, we can see little in the loves of these two tiresome pedants to interest our feelings for either of them. To state our opinion in language (see Burke's Reflections) much better than our own, we are unfortunate enough to regard this far-famed history of philosophical gallantry as an ‘unfashioned, indelicate, sour, gloomy, ferocious mediocrity of pedantry and lewdness ; of metaphysical speculations, blended with the coarsest sensuality.’ — *SIR WALTER SCOTT*.]

¹ This refers to the account in his ‘Confessions’ of his passion for the Comtesse d'Houdetot (the mistress of St. Lambert), and his long walk every morning, for the sake of the single kiss which was the common salutation of French acquaintance. Rousseau's description of his feelings on this occasion may be considered as the most passionate, yet not impure, description and expression of love that ever kindled into words ; which, after all, must be felt, from their very

LXXXIII.

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

LXXXIV.

What deep wounds ever closed without a scar ?
The heart's bleed longest, and but heal to wear
That which disfigures it ; and they who war
With their own hopes, and have been vanquish'd,
bear
Silence, but not submission : in his lair
Fix'd Passion holds his breath, until the hour
Which shall atone for years ; none need despair :
It came, it cometh, and will come, — the power
To punish or forgive — in *one* we shall be slower.

LXXXV.

Clear, placid Lemman ! thy contrasted lake,
With the wild world I dwell in, is a thing
Which warns me, with its stillness, to forsake
Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring.
This quiet sail is as a noiseless wing
To waft me from distraction ; once I loved
Torn ocean's roar, but thy soft murmuring
Sounds sweet as if a Sister's voice reproved,
That I with stern delights should e'er have been so
moved.

LXXXVI.

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

LXXXVII.

He is an evening reveller, who makes
His life an infancy, and sings his fill ;
At intervals, some bird from out the brakes
Starts into voice a moment, then is still.
There seems a floating whisper on the hill,
But that is fancy, for the starlight dews
All silently their tears of love instil,
Weeping themselves away, till they infuse
Deep into Nature's breast the spirit of her hues.³

force, to be inadequate to the delineation : a painting can give no sufficient idea of the ocean.

² [“Lord Byron's character of Rousseau is drawn with great force, great power of discrimination, and great eloquence. I know not that he says any thing which has not been said before ; — but what he says issues, apparently, from the recesses of his own mind. It is a little laboured, which, possibly, may be caused by the form of the stanza into which it was necessary to throw it ; but it cannot be doubted that the poet felt a sympathy for the enthusiastic tenderness of Rousseau's genius, which he could not have recognised with such extreme fervour, except from a consciousness of having at least occasionally experienced similar emotions.” — *SIR E. BRYDGES*.]

³ [During Lord Byron's stay in Switzerland, he took up his residence at the Campagne-Diodati, in the village of
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