

LXXXVIII.

Ye stars! which are the poetry of heaven!
If in your bright leaves we would read the fate
Of men and empires, — 't is to be forgiven,
That in our aspirations to be great,
Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,
And claim a kindred with you; for ye are
A beauty and a mystery, and create
In us such love and reverence from afar,
That fortune, fame, power, life, have named them-
selves a star.

LXXXIX.

All heaven and earth are still — though not in sleep,
But breathless, as we grow when feeling most;
And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep: —
All heaven and earth are still: From the high host
Of stars, to the lull'd lake and mountain-coast,
All is concentr'd in a life intense,
Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf is lost,
But hath a part of being, and a sense
Of that which is of all Creator and defence.

XC.

Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
In solitude, where we are *least* alone;
A truth, which through our being then doth melt,
And purifies from self: it is a tone,
The soul and source of music, which makes known
Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm,
Like to the fabled Cytherea's zone,
Binding all things with beauty; — 't would disarm
The spectre Death, had he substantial power to harm.

XCI.

Not vainly did the early Persian make
His altar the high places and the peak
Of earth-o'er-gazing mountains¹, and thus take
A fit and unwall'd temple, there to seek
The Spirit, in whose honour shrines are weak,
Upward of human hands. Come, and compare
Columns and idol-dwellings, Goth or Greek,
With Nature's realms of worship, earth and air,
Nor fix on fond abodes to circumscribe thy pray'r!

XCII.

The sky is changed! — and such a change! Oh
night,
And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
Of a dark eye in woman! Far along,

Coligny. It stands at the top of a rapidly descending vine-
yard; the windows commanding, one way, a noble view of
the lake and of Geneva; the other, up the lake. Every evening,
the poet embarked on the lake; and to the feelings
created by these excursions we owe these delightful stanzas.
Of his mode of passing a day, the following, from his Journal,
is a pleasant specimen: —

"September 18. Called. Got up at five. Stopped at
Vevay two hours. View from the churchyard superb;
within it Ludlow (the regicide's) monument — black marble
— long inscription; Latin, but simple. Near him Broughton
(who read King Charles's sentence to Charles Stuart) is buried,
with a queer and rather canting inscription. Ludlow's house
shown. Walked down to the lake side; servants, carriages,
saddle-horses, — all set off, and left us *plantés là*, by some
mistake. Hobhouse ran on before, and overtook them. Ar-
rived at Clarens. Went to Chillon through scenery worthy
of I know not whom; went over the castle again. Met an
English party in a carriage; a lady in it fast asleep — fast
asleep in the most anti-narcotic spot in the world, — excellent!
After a slight and short dinner, visited the Château de Clarens.
Saw all worth seeing, and then descended to the Bosquet de
Julie, &c. &c.: our guide full of Rousseau, whom he is eter-
nally confounding with St. Preux, and mixing the man and
the book. Went again as far as Chillon, to revisit the little

From peak to peak, the rattling crags among
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud!

XCIII.

And this is in the night: — Most glorious night!
Thou wert not sent for slumber! let me be
A sharer in thy fierce and far delight, —
A portion of the tempest and of thee!²
How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,
And the big rain comes dancing to the earth!
And now again 't is black, — and now, the glee
Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth,
As if they did rejoice o'er a young earthquake's birth.³

XCIV.

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

XCV.

Now, where the quick Rhone thus hath cleft his way,
The mightiest of the storms hath ta'en his stand:
For here, not one, but many, make their play,
And fling their thunder-bolts from hand to hand,
Flashing and cast around: of all the band,
The brightest through these parted hills hath fork'd
His lightnings, — as if he did understand,
That in such gaps as desolation work'd,
There the hot shaft should blast whatever therein
lurk'd.

XCVI.

Sky, mountains, river, winds, lake, lightnings! ye!
With night, and clouds, and thunder, and a soul
To make these felt and feeling, well may be
Things that have made me watchful; the far roll
Of your departing voices, is the knoll
Of what in me is sleepless, — if I rest.⁴
But where of ye, oh tempests! is the goal?
Are ye like those within the human breast?
Or do ye find, at length, like eagles, some high nest?

torrent from the hill behind it. The corporal who showed
the wonders of Chillon was as drunk as Blucher, and (to my
mind) as great a man: he was deaf also; and, thinking every
one else so, roared out the legends of the castle so fearfully,
that Hobhouse got out of humour. However, we saw things,
from the galleys to the dungeons. Sunset reflected in the
lake. Nine o'clock — going to bed. Have to get up at five
to-morrow."

¹ See Appendix, Note [F].

² The thunder-storm to which these lines refer occurred
on the 13th of June, 1816, at midnight. I have seen, among
the Acroceraunian mountains of Chimari, several more ter-
rible, but none more beautiful.

³ ["This is one of the most beautiful passages of the poem.
The 'fierce and far delight' of a thunder-storm is here de-
scribed in verse almost as vivid as its lightnings. The live
thunder 'leaping among the rattling crags' — the voice of
mountains, as if shouting to each other — the plashing of the
big rain — the gleaming of the wide lake, lighted like a phos-
phoric sea — present a picture of sublime terror, yet of enjoy-
ment, often attempted, but never so well, certainly never
better, brought out in poetry." — SIR WALTER SCOTT.]

⁴ [The Journal of his Swiss tour, which Lord Byron kept

XCVII.

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

XCVIII.

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

XCIX.

Clarens! sweet Clarens¹, birthplace of deep Love!
Thine air is the young breath of passionate thought;
Thy trees take root in Love; the snows above
The very Glaciers have his colours caught,
And sun-set into rose-hues sees them wrought
By rays which sleep there lovingly: the rocks,
The permanent crags, tell here of Love, who sought
In them a refuge from the worldly shocks,
Which stir and sting the soul with hope that woos,
then mocks.

C.

Clarens! by heavenly feet thy paths are trod, —
Undying Love's, who here ascends a throne
To which the steps are mountains; where the god
Is a pervading life and light, — so shown
Not on those summits solely, nor alone
In the still cave and forest; o'er the flower
His eye is sparkling, and his breath hath blown
His soft and summer breath, whose tender power
Passes the strength of storms in their most desolate
hour.²

CI.

All things are here of *him*; from the black pines,
Which are his shade on high, and the loud roar
Of torrents, where he listeneth, to the vines
Which slope his green path downward to the shore,
Where the bow'd waters meet him, and adore,

for his sister, closes with the following mournful passage: —
"In the weather, for this tour, of thirteen days, I have been
very fortunate — fortunate in a companion" (Mr. Hobhouse)
— "fortunate in our prospects, and exempt from even the
little petty accidents and delays which often render journeys
in a less wild country disappointing. I was disposed to be
pleased. I am a lover of nature, and an admirer of beauty.
I can bear fatigue, and welcome privation, and have seen some
of the noblest views in the world. But in all this, — the re-
collection of bitterness, and more especially of recent and more
home desolation, which must accompany me through life, has
preyed upon me here; and neither the music of the shepherd,
the crashing of the avalanche, nor the torrent, the mountain,
the glacier, the forest, nor the cloud, have for one moment
lightened the weight upon my heart, nor enabled me to lose
my own wretched identity, in the majesty, and the power, and
the glory, around, above, and beneath me."

¹ [Stanzas XCIX. to CXV. are exquisite. They have every
thing which makes a poetical picture of local and particular

Kissing his feet with murmurs; and the wood,
The covert of old trees, with trunks all hoar,
But light leaves, young as joy, stands where it stood,
Offering to him, and his, a populous solitude,

CII.

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

CIII.

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

CIV.

'T was not for fiction chose Rousseau this spot,
Peopling it with affections; but he found
It was the scene which passion must allot
To the mind's purified beings; 't was the ground
Where early Love his Psyche's zone unbound,
And hallow'd it with loveliness: 't is lone,
And wonderful, and deep, and hath a sound,
And sense, and sight of sweetness; here the Rhone
Hath spread himself a couch, the Alps have rear'd a
throne.

CV.

Lausanne! and Ferney! ye have been the abodes
Of names which unto you bequeath'd a name;³
Mortals, who sought and found, by dangerous roads,
A path to perpetuity of fame:
They were gigantic minds, and their steep aim
Was, Titan-like, on daring doubts to pile
Thoughts which should call down thunder, and
the flame
Of Heaven, again assail'd, if Heaven the while
On man and man's research could deign do more
than smile.

scenery perfect. They exhibit a miraculous brilliancy and
force of fancy; but the very fidelity causes a little constraint
and labour of language. The poet seems to have been so en-
grossed by the attention to give vigour and fire to the im-
agery, that he both neglected and disdained to render himself
more harmonious by diffuser words, which, while they might
have improved the effect upon the ear, might have weakened
the impression upon the mind. This mastery over new
matter — this supply of powers equal not only to an untouched
subject, but that subject one of peculiar and unequalled gran-
deur and beauty — was sufficient to occupy the strongest
poetical faculties, young as the author was, without adding to
it all the practical skill of the artist. The stanzas, too, on Vol-
taire and Gibbon are discriminative, sagacious, and just.
They are among the proofs of that very great variety of talent
which this Canto of Lord Byron exhibits. — SIR E. BRYDGES.]

² See Appendix, Note [G].

³ Voltaire and Gibbon.

CVI.

The one was fire and fickleness, a child,
Most mutable in wishes, but in mind
A wit as various, — gay, grave, sage, or wild, —
Historian, bard, philosopher, combined;
He multiplied himself among mankind,
The Proteus of their talents: But his own
Breathed most in ridicule, — which, as the wind,
Blew where it listed, laying all things prone, —
Now to o'erthrow a fool, and now to shake a throne.

CVII.

The other, deep and slow, exhausting thought,
And hiving wisdom with each studious year,
In meditation dwelt, with learning wrought,
And shaped his weapon with an edge severe,
Sapping a solemn creed with solemn sneer;
The lord of irony, — that master-spell,
Which stung his foes to wrath, which grew from fear,
And doom'd him to the zealot's ready Hell,
Which answers to all doubts so eloquently well.

CVIII.

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

CIX.

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

CX.

Italia! too, Italia! looking on thee,
Full flashes on the soul the light of ages,
Since the fierce Carthaginian almost won thee,
To the last halo of the chiefs and sages,

¹ "If it be thus,
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind." — MACBETH.
² It is said by Rochefoucault, that "there is always something in the misfortunes of men's best friends not displeasing to them."
³ "It is not the temper and talents of the poet, but the use to which he puts them, on which his happiness or misery is grounded. A powerful and unbridled imagination is the author and architect of its own disappointments. Its fascinations, its exaggerated pictures of good and evil, and the mental distress to which they give rise, are the natural and necessary evils attending on that quick susceptibility of feeling and fancy incident to the poetical temperament. But the Giver of all talents, while he has qualified them each with its separate and peculiar alloy, has endowed the owner with the power of purifying and refining them. But, as if to moderate the arrogance of genius, it is justly and wisely made requisite, that he must regulate and tame the fire of his fancy, and descend from the heights to which she exalts him, in order to obtain ease of mind and tranquillity. The materials of happiness, that is, of such degree of happiness as is consistent with our present state, lie around us in profusion. But the man of talents must stoop to gather them, otherwise they would be beyond the reach of the mass of society, for whose benefit, as well as for his, Providence has created them. There is no

Who glorify thy consecrated pages;
Thou wert the throne and grave of empires; still,
The fount at which the panting mind assuages
Her thirst of knowledge, quaffing there her fill,
Flows from the eternal source of Rome's imperial hill.

CXI.

Thus far have I proceeded in a theme
Renew'd with no kind auspices: — to feel
We are not what we have been, and to deem
We are not what we should be, — and to steel
The heart against itself; and to conceal,
With a proud caution, love, or hate, or aught, —
Passion or feeling, purpose, grief, or zeal, —
Which is the tyrant spirit of our thought,
Is a stern task of soul: — No matter, — it is taught.

CXII.

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

CXIII.

I have not loved the world, nor the world me;
I have not flatter'd its rank breath, nor bow'd
To its idolatries a patient knee, —
Nor coin'd my cheek to smiles, — nor cried aloud
In worship of an echo; in the crowd
They could not deem me one of such; I stood
Among them, but not of them; in a shroud [could,
Of thoughts which were not their thoughts, and still
Had I not filed¹ my mind, which thus itself subdued.

CXIV.

I have not loved the world, nor the world me, —
But let us part fair foes; I do believe,
Though I have found them not, that there may be
Words which are things, — hopes which will not
deceive,
And virtues which are merciful, nor weave
Snares for the falling: I would also deem
O'er others' griefs that some sincerely grieve;²
That two, or one, are almost what they seem, —
That goodness is no name, and happiness no dream.³

royal and no poetical path to contentment and heart's-ease: that by which they are attained is open to all classes of mankind, and lies within the most limited range of intellect. To narrow our wishes and desires within the scope of our powers of attainment; to consider our misfortunes, however peculiar in their character, as our inevitable share in the patrimony of Adam; to bridle those irritable feelings, which ungoverned are sure to become governors; to shun that intensity of gall-ing and self-wounding reflection which our poet has so forcibly described in his own burning language: —

— "I have thought
Too long and darkly, till my brain became,
In its own eddy, boiling and o'erwrought,
A whirling gulf of phantasy and flame!"

— to stoop, in short, to the realities of life; repent if we have offended, and pardon if we have been trespassed against; to look on the world less as our foe than as a doubtful and capricious friend, whose applause we ought as far as possible to deserve, but neither to court nor contemn — such seem the most obvious and certain means of keeping or regaining mental tranquillity.

— "Semita certe
Tranquilla per virtutem patet unica vita." —
SIR WALTER SCOTT.]

CXV.

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

CXVI.

To aid thy mind's development, — to watch
Thy dawn of little joys, — to sit and see
Almost thy very growth, — to view thee catch
Knowledge of objects, — wonders yet to thee!
To hold thee lightly on a gentle knee,
And print on thy soft cheek a parent's kiss, —
This, it should seem, was not reserved for me;
Yet this was in my nature: — as it is,
I know not what is there, yet something like to this.

CXVII.

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

CXVIII.

The child of love, — though born in bitterness,
And nurtured in convulsion. Of thy sire
These were the elements, — and thine no less.
As yet such are around thee, — but thy fire
Shall be more temper'd, and thy hope far higher.
Sweet be thy cradled slumbers! O'er the sea,
And from the mountains where I now respire,
Fain would I waft such blessing upon thee, [me!!
As, with a sigh, I deem thou might'st have been to

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.

CANTO THE FOURTH.

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

TO JOHN HOBHOUSE, ESQ. A. M. F. R. S. &c.

Venice, January 2. 1818.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,

AFTER an interval of eight years between the composition of the first and last cantos of Childe Harold, the conclusion of the poem is about to be submitted to the public. In parting with so old a friend, it is

¹ ["Byron, July 4. 1816. Diodati." — MS.]

not extraordinary that I should recur to one still older and better, — to one who has beheld the birth and death of the other, and to whom I am far more indebted for the social advantages of an enlightened friendship, than — though not ungrateful — I can, or could be, to Childe Harold, for any public favour reflected through the poem on the poet, — to one, whom I have known long, and accompanied far, whom I have found wakeful over my sickness and kind in my sorrow, glad in my prosperity and firm in my adversity, true in counsel and trusty in peril, — to a friend often tried and never found wanting; — to yourself.

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

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

With regard to the conduct of the last canto, there will be found less of the pilgrim than in any of the preceding, and that little slightly, if at all, separated from the author speaking in his own person. The fact is, that I had become weary of drawing a line which every one seemed determined not to perceive: like the Chinese in Goldsmith's "Citizen of the World," whom nobody would believe to be a Chinese, it was in vain that I asserted, and imagined that I had drawn, a distinction between the author and the pilgrim; and the very anxiety to preserve this dif-