

CXXXI.

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

CXXXII.

And thou, who never yet of human wrong
Left the unbalanced scale, great Nemesis!¹
Here, where the ancient paid thee homage long —
Thou, who didst call the Furies from the abyss,
And round Orestes bade them howl and hiss
For that unnatural retribution — just,
Had it but been from hands less near — in this
Thy former realm, I call thee from the dust! [must.
Dost thou not hear my heart? — Awake! thou shalt, and

CXXXIII.

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

CXXXIV.

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

CXXXV.

That curse shall be Forgiveness. — Have I not —
Hear me, my mother Earth! behold it, Heaven! —
Have I not had to wrestle with my lot?
Have I not suffer'd things to be forgiven?
Have I not had my brain sear'd, my heart riven,
Hopes sapp'd, name blighted, Life's life lied away?
And only not to desperation driven,
Because not altogether of such clay
As rots into the souls of those whom I survey.

CXXXVI.

From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy
Have I not seen what human things could do?

¹ See Appendix, "Historical Notes," No. xxviii.

² [Between stanzas cxxxv. and cxxxvi. we find in the original MS. the following: —

"If to forgive be heaping coals of fire —
As God hath spoken — on the heads of foes,
Mine should be a volcano, and rise higher
Than, o'er the Titans crush'd, Olympus rose,
Or Athos soars, or blazing Etna glows: —
True, they who stung were creeping things; but what
Than serpents' teeth inflicts with deadlier throes?
The Lion may be goaded by the Gnat. —
Who sucks the slumberer's blood? — The Eagle? — No:
the Bat."]

From the loud roar of foaming calumny
To the small whisper of the as paltry few,
And subtler venom of the reptile crew,
The Janus glance of whose significant eye,
Learning to lie with silence, would seem true,
And without utterance, save the shrug or sigh,
Deal round to happy fools its speechless obloquy.²

CXXXVII.

But I have lived, and have not lived in vain:
My mind may lose its force, my blood its fire,
And my frame perish even in conquering pain;
But there is that within me which shall tire
Torture and Time, and breathe when I expire;
Something unearthly, which they deem not of,
Like the remember'd tone of a mute lyre,
Shall on their soften'd spirits sink, and move
In hearts all rocky now the late remorse of love.

CXXXVIII.

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

CXXXIX.

And here the buzz of eager nations ran,
In murmur'd pity, or loud-roar'd applause,
As man was slaughter'd by his fellow man.
And wherefore slaughter'd? wherefore, but because
Such were the bloody Circus' genial laws,
And the imperial pleasure. — Wherefore not?
What matters where we fall to fill the maws
Of worms — on battle-plains or listed spot?
Both are but theatres where the chief actors rot.

CXL.

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

CXLI.

He heard it, but he heeded not — his eyes
Were with his heart, and that was far away;³
He reck'd not of the life he lost nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,

³ Whether the wonderful statue which suggested this image be a laquearian gladiator, which, in spite of Winkelmann's criticism, has been stoutly maintained; or whether it be a Greek herald, as that great antiquary positively asserted*; or whether it is to be thought a Spartan or barbarian

* Either Polifontes, herald of Laius, killed by Ædipus; or Cepreas, herald of Euritheus, killed by the Athenians when he endeavoured to drag the Heraclidae from the altar of mercy, and in whose honour they instituted annual games, continued to the time of Hadrian; or Anthemoeritus, the Athenian herald, killed by the Megarenses, who never recovered the impiety. See *Storia delle Arti*, &c. tom. ii. pag. 203, 204, 205, 206, 207. lib. ix. cap. ii.

There were his young barbarians all at play,
There was their Dacian mother — he, their sire,
Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday! —
All this rush'd with his blood — Shall he expire
And unavenged? — Arise! ye Gods, and glut your ire!

CXLII.

But here, where Murder breathed her bloody steam;
And here, where buzzing nations choked the ways,
And roar'd or murmur'd like a mountain stream
Dashing or winding as its torrent strays;
Here, where the Roman million's blame or praise
Was death or life, the playthings of a crowd,²
My voice sounds much — and fall the stars' faint rays
On the arena void — seats crush'd — walls bow'd —
And galleries, where my steps seem echoes strangely
loud.

CXLIII.

A ruin — yet what ruin! from its mass
Walls, palaces, half-cities, have been rear'd;
Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass,
And marvel where the spoil could have appear'd.
Hath it indeed been plunder'd, or but clear'd?
Alas! developed, opens the decay,
When the colossal fabric's form is near'd:
It will not bear the brightness of the day,
Which streams too much on all years, man, have reft
away.

CXLIV.

But when the rising moon begins to climb
Its topmost arch, and gently pauses there;
When the stars twinkle through the loops of time,
And the low night-breeze waves along the air
The garland-forest, which the gray walls wear,
Like laurels on the bald first Caesar's head;³
When the light shines serene but doth not glare,
Then in this magic circle raise the dead:
Heroes have trod this spot — 'tis on their dust ye
tread.

CXLV.

"While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand;⁴
"When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall;
"And when Rome falls — the World." From our
own land
Thus spake the pilgrims o'er this mighty wall
In Saxon times, which we are wont to call
Ancient; and these three mortal things are still
On their foundations, and unalter'd all;

rian shield-bearer, according to the opinion of his Italian editor; it must assuredly seem a copy of that masterpiece of Ctesilaus which represented "a wounded man dying, who perfectly expressed what there remained of life in him." Montfaucon and Maffei thought it the identical statue; but that statue was of bronze. The Gladiator was once in the Villa Ludovici, and was bought by Clement XII. The right arm is an entire restoration of Michael Angelo.

^{1, 2} See Appendix, "Historical Notes," Nos. xxix. xxx.

³ Suetonius informs us that Julius Caesar was particularly gratified by that decree of the senate which enabled him to wear a wreath of laurel on all occasions. He was anxious, not to show that he was the conqueror of the world, but to hide that he was bald. A stranger at Rome would hardly have guessed at the motive, nor should we without the help of the historian.

⁴ This is quoted in the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," as a proof that the Coliseum was entire, when seen by the Anglo-Saxon pilgrims at the end of the seventh, or the beginning of the eighth, century. A notice on the Coliseum may be seen in the "Historical Illustrations," p. 263.

⁵ "Though plundered of all its brass, except the ring

Rome and her Ruin past Redemption's skill,
The World, the same wide den — of thieves, or what
ye will.

CXLVI.

Simple, erect, severe, austere, sublime —
Shrine of all saints and temple of all gods,
From Jove to Jesus — spared and blest by time;⁵
Looking tranquillity, while falls or nods
Arch, empire, each thing round thee, and man plods
His way through thorns to ashes — glorious dome!
Shalt thou not last? Time's scythe and tyrants'
rods
Shiver upon thee — sanctuary and home
Of art and piety — Pantheon! — pride of Rome!

CXLVII.

Relic of nobler days, and noblest arts!
Despoil'd yet perfect, with thy circle spreads
A holiness appealing to all hearts —
To art a model; and to him who treads
Rome for the sake of ages, Glory sheds
Her light through thy sole aperture; to those
Who worship, here are altars for their beads;
And they who feel for genius may repose
Their eyes on honour'd forms, whose busts around
them close.⁶

CXLVIII.

There is a dungeon, in whose dim drear light⁷
What do I gaze on? Nothing: Look again!
Two forms are slowly shadow'd on my sight —
Two insulated phantoms of the brain:
It is not so; I see them full and plain —
An old man, and a female young and fair,
Fresh as a nursing mother, in whose vein
The blood is nectar: — but what doth she there,
With her unmantled neck, and bosom white and bare?

CXLIX.

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

which was necessary to preserve the aperture above; though exposed to repeated fires; though sometimes flooded by the river, and always open to the rain, no monument of equal antiquity is so well preserved as this rotundo. It passed with little alteration from the Pagan into the present worship; and so convenient were its niches for the Christian altar, that Michael Angelo, ever studious of ancient beauty, introduced their design as a model in the Catholic church." — Forsyth's Italy, p. 137. 2d edit.

⁶ The Pantheon has been made a receptacle for the busts of modern great, or, at least, distinguished, men. The flood of light which once fell through the large orb above on the whole circle of divinities, now shines on a numerous assemblage of mortals, some one or two of whom have been almost defiled by the veneration of their countrymen. For a notice of the Pantheon, see "Historical Illustrations," p. 287.

⁷ This and the three next stanzas allude to the story of the Roman daughter, which is recalled to the traveller by the site, or pretended site, of that adventure, now shown at the church of St. Nicholas in Carcere. The difficulties attending the full belief of the tale are stated in "Historical Illustrations," p. 295.

CL.

But here youth offers to old age the food,
The milk of his own gift: — it is her sire
To whom she renders back the debt of blood
Born with her birth. No; he shall not expire
While in those warm and lovely veins the fire
Of health and holy feeling can provide
Great Nature's Nile, whose deep stream rises higher
Than Egypt's river: — from that gentle side
Drink, drink and live, old man! Heaven's realm holds
no such tide.

CLI.

The starry fable of the milky way
Has not thy story's purity; it is
A constellation of a sweeter ray,
And sacred Nature triumphs more in this
Reverse of her decree, than in the abyss
Where sparkle distant worlds: — Oh, holiest nurse!
No drop of that clear stream its way shall miss
To thy sire's heart, replenishing its source
With life, as our freed souls rejoin the universe.

CLII.

Turn to the Mole which Hadrian rear'd on high,¹
Imperial mimic of old Egypt's piles,
Colossal copyist of deformity,
Whose travell'd phantasy from the far Nile's
Enormous model, doom'd the artist's toils
To build for giants, and for his vain earth,
His shrunken ashes, raise this dome: How smiles
The gazer's eye with philosophic mirth, [birth!
To view the huge design which sprung from such a

CLIII.

But lo! the dome — the vast and wondrous dome,²
To which Diana's marvel was a cell —
Christ's mighty shrine above his martyr's tomb!
I have beheld the Ephesian's miracle —
Its columns strew the wilderness, and dwell
The hyæna and the jackal in their shade;
I have beheld Sophia's bright roofs swell
Their glittering mass i' the sun, and have survey'd
Its sanctuary the while the usurping Moslem pray'd;

CLIV.

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

¹ The castle of St. Angelo. "See Historical Illustrations."

² [This and the six next stanzas have a reference to the church of St. Peter's. For a measurement of the comparative length of this basilica and the other great churches of Europe, see the pavement of St. Peter's, and the Classical Tour through Italy, vol. ii. p. 125. et seq. ch. iv.]

³ ["I remember very well," says Sir Joshua Reynolds, "my own disappointment when I first visited the Vatican; but on confessing my feelings to a brother student, of whose ingenuousness I had a high opinion, he acknowledged that the works of Raphael had the same effect on him, or rather that they did not produce the effect which he expected. This was a great relief to my mind; and, on inquiring further of other students, I found that those persons only who, from natural imbecility, appeared to be incapable of relishing those divine performances, made pretensions to instantaneous raptures on first beholding them.—My not relishing them as I

CLV.

Enter: its grandeur overwhelms thee not;³
And why? it is not lessen'd; but thy mind,
Expanded by the genius of the spot,
Has grown colossal, and can only find
A fit abode wherein appear enshrined
Thy hopes of immortality; and thou
Shalt one day, if found worthy, so defined,
See thy God face to face, as thou dost now
His Holy of Holies, nor be blasted by his brow.

CLVI.

Thou movest — but increasing with the advance,
Like climbing some great Alp, which still doth rise,
Deceived by its gigantic elegance;
Vastness which grows — but grows to harmonise —
All musical in its immensities; [flame
Rich marbles — richer painting — shrines where
The lamps of gold — and haughty dome which vies
In air with Earth's chief structures, though their
frame [must claim.
Sits on the firm-set ground — and this the clouds

CLVII.

Thou seest not all; but piecemeal thou must break,
To separate contemplation, the great whole;
And as the ocean many bays will make,
That ask the eye — so here condense thy soul
To more immediate objects, and control
Thy thoughts until thy mind hath got by heart
Its eloquent proportions, and unroll
In mighty graduations, part by part,
The glory which at once upon thee did not dart,

CLVIII.

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

CLIX.

Then pause, and be enlighten'd; there is more
In such a survey than the sating gaze
Of wonder pleased, or awe which would adore
The worship of the place, or the mere praise
Of art and its great masters, who could raise
What former time, nor skill, nor thought could plan;
The fountain of sublimity displays
Its depth, and thence may draw the mind of man
Its golden sands, and learn what great conceptions can.

was conscious I ought to have done, was one of the most humiliating circumstances that ever happened to me; I found myself in the midst of works executed upon principles with which I was unacquainted: I felt my ignorance, and stood abashed. All the indigest notions of painting which I had brought with me from England, where the art was in the lowest state it had ever been in, were to be totally done away and eradicated from my mind. It was necessary, as it is expressed on a very solemn occasion, that I should become *as a little child*. Notwithstanding my disappointment, I proceeded to copy some of those excellent works. I viewed them again and again; I even affected to feel their merit and admire them more than I really did. In a short time, a new taste and a new perception began to dawn upon me, and I was convinced that I had originally formed a false opinion of the perfection of the art, and that this great painter was well entitled to the high rank which he holds in the admiration of the world."

CLX.

Or, turning to the Vatican, go see
Laocoon's torture dignifying pain —
A father's love and mortal's agony
With an immortal's patience blending: — Vain
The struggle; vain, against the coiling strain
And gripe, and deepening of the dragon's grasp,
The old man's clench; the long envenom'd chain
Rivets the living links, — the enormous asp
Enforces pang on pang, and stifles gasp on gasp.

CLXI.

Or view the Lord of the unerring bow,
The God of life, and poesy, and light —
The Sun in human limbs array'd, and brow
All radiant from his triumph in the fight;
The shaft hath just been shot — the arrow bright
With an immortal's vengeance; in his eye
And nostril beautiful disdain, and might
And majesty, flash their full lightnings by,
Developing in that one glance the Deity.

CLXII.

But in his delicate form — a dream of Love,
Shaped by some solitary nymph, whose breast
Long'd for a deathless lover from above,
And madden'd in that vision — are exprest
All that ideal beauty ever bless'd
The mind with in its most unearthly mood,
When each conception was a heavenly guest —
A ray of immortality — and stood,
Starlike, around, until they gather'd to a god!

CLXIII.

And if it be Prometheus stole from Heaven
The fire which we endure, it was repaid
By him to whom the energy was given
Which this poetic marble hath array'd
With an eternal glory — which, if made
By human hands, is not of human thought;
And Time himself hath hallow'd it, nor laid
One ringlet in the dust — nor hath it caught
A tinge of years, but breathes the flame with which
'twas wrought.

CLXIV.

But where is he, the Pilgrim of my song,
The being who upheld it through the past?
Methinks he cometh late and tarries long.
He is no more — these breathings are his last;
His wanderings done, his visions ebbing fast,
And he himself as nothing: — if he was
Aught but a phantasy, and could be class'd
With forms which live and suffer — let that pass —
His shadow fades away into Destruction's mass,

CLXV.

Which gathers shadow, substance, life, and all
That we inherit in its mortal shroud,
And spreads the dim and universal pall [cloud
Through which all things grow phantoms; and the
Between us sinks and all which ever glow'd,
Till Glory's self is twilight, and displays
A melancholy halo scarce allow'd

¹ ["The death of the Princess Charlotte has been a shock even here (Venice), and must have been an earthquake at home. The fate of this poor girl is melancholy in every respect; dying at twenty or so, in childbed — of a boy too, a

To hover on the verge of darkness; rays
Sadder than saddest night, for they distract the gaze,

CLXVI.

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

CLXVII.

Hark! forth from the abyss a voice proceeds,
A long low distant murmur of dread sound,
Such as arises when a nation bleeds
With some deep and immedicable wound;
Through storm and darkness yawns the rending
ground,
The gulf is thick with phantoms, but the chief
Seems royal still, though with her head discrown'd,
And pale, but lovely, with maternal grief
She clasps a babe, to whom her breast yields no relief.

CLXVIII.

Scion of chiefs and monarchs, where art thou?
Fond hope of many nations, art thou dead?
Could not the grave forget thee, and lay low
Some less majestic, less beloved head?
In the sad midnight, while thy heart still bled,
The mother of a moment, o'er thy boy,
Death hush'd that pang for ever: with thee fled
The present happiness and promised joy
Which fill'd the imperial isles so full it seem'd to cloy.

CLXIX.

Peasants bring forth in safety. — Can it be,
Oh thou that wert so happy, so adored!
Those who weep not for kings shall weep for thee,
And Freedom's heart, grown heavy, cease to hoard
Her many griefs for ONE; for she had pour'd
Her orisons for thee, and o'er thy head
Beheld her Iris. — Thou, too, lonely lord,
And desolate consort — vainly wert thou wed!
The husband of a year! the father of the dead!

CLXX.

Of sackcloth was thy wedding garment made;
Thy bridal's fruit is ashes: in the dust
The fair-hair'd Daughter of the Isles is laid,
The love of millions! How we did entrust
Futurity to her! and, though it must
Darken above our bones, yet fondly deem'd
Our children should obey her child, and bless'd
Her and her hoped-for seed, whose promise seem'd
Like stars to shepherds' eyes: — 'twas but a meteor
beam'd.

CLXXI.

Woe unto us, not her!; for she sleeps well:
The fickle reek of popular breath, the tongue
Of hollow counsel, the false oracle,
Which from the birth of monarchy hath rung

present princess and future queen, and just as she began to be happy, and to enjoy herself, and the hopes which she inspired. I feel sorry in every respect." — *Byron Letters*.]

Its knell in princely ears, till the o'erstung
Nations have arm'd in madness, the strange fate!¹
Which tumbles mightiest sovereigns, and hath flung
Against their blind omnipotence a weight
Within the opposing scale, which crushes soon or
late, —

CLXXXII.

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

CLXXXIII.

Lo, Nemi!² navell'd in the woody hills
So far, that the uprooting wind which tears
The oak from his foundation, and which spills
The ocean o'er its boundary, and bears
Its foam against the skies, reluctant spares
The oval mirror of thy glassy lake;
And, calm as cherish'd hate, its surface wears
A deep cold settled aspect nought can shake,
All coil'd into itself and round, as sleeps the snake.

CLXXXIV.

And near Albano's scarce divided waves
Shine from a sister valley; — and afar
The Tiber winds, and the broad ocean laves
The Latian coast where sprung the Epic war,
"Arms and the Man," whose re-ascending star
Rose o'er an empire: — but beneath thy right
Tully reposed from Rome; — and where yon bar
Of girdling mountains intercepts the sight
The Sabine farm was till'd, the weary bard's delight.³

CLXXXV.

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

CLXXXVI.

Upon the blue Symplegades: long years —
Long, though not very many, since have done
Their work on both; some suffering and some tears
Have left us nearly where we had begun:
Yet not in vain our mortal race hath run,
We have had our reward — and it is here;
That we can yet feel gladden'd by the sun,

¹ Mary died on the scaffold: Elizabeth of a broken heart; Charles V. a hermit; Louis XIV. a bankrupt in means and glory; Cromwell of anxiety; and "the greatest is behind," Napoleon lives a prisoner. To these sovereigns a long but superfluous list might be added of names equally illustrious and unhappy.

² The village of Nemi was near the Arician retreat of Egeria, and, from the shades which embosomed the temple of Diana, has preserved to this day its distinctive appellation

And reap from earth, sea, joy almost as dear
As if there were no man to trouble what is clear.

CLXXXVII.

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

CLXXXVIII.

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

CLXXXIX.

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

CLXXX.

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

CLXXXI.

The armaments which thunderstrike the walls
Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake,
And monarchs tremble in their capitals,
The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make
Their clay creator the vain title take
Of lord of thee, and arbiter of war;
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,
They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar
Alike the Armada's pride, or spoils of Trafalgar.

of *The Grove*. Nemi is but an evening's ride from the comfortable inn of Albano.

³ The whole declivity of the Alban hill is of unrivalled beauty, and from the convent on the highest point, which has succeeded to the temple of the Latian Jupiter, the prospect embraces all the objects alluded to in this stanza; the Mediterranean; the whole scene of the latter half of the *Æneid*, and the coast from beyond the mouth of the Tiber to the headland of Circaum and the Cape of Terracina. — See Appendix, "Historical Notes," No. xxxi.

CLXXXII.

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee —
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they?¹
Thy waters wasted them while they were free,
And many a tyrant since; their shores obey
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay
Has dried up realms to deserts: — not so thou,
Unchangeable save to thy wild waves' play —
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow —
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

CLXXXIII.

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time,
Calm or convulsed — in breeze, or gale, or storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark-heaving; — boundless, endless, and sublime —
The image of Eternity — the throne
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made; each zone
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

CLXXXIV.

And I have loved thee, Ocean!² and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne, like thy bubbles, onward: from a boy
I wanton'd with thy breakers — they to me

¹ [When Lord Byron wrote this stanza, he had, no doubt, the following passage in Boswell's Johnson floating on his mind: — "Dining one day with General Paoli, and talking of his projected journey to Italy, — 'A man,' said Johnson, 'who has not been in Italy, is always conscious of an inferiority, from his not having seen what it is expected a man should see. The grand object of all travelling is to see the shores of the Mediterranean. On those shores were the four great empires of the world; the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman. All our religion, almost all our law, almost all our arts, almost all that sets us above savages, has come to us from the shores of the Mediterranean.' The General observed, that 'The Mediterranean' would be a noble subject for a poem." — *Life of Johnson*, vol. v. p. 145, ed. 1835.]

² ["This passage would, perhaps, be read without emotion, if we did not know that Lord Byron was here describing his actual feelings and habits, and that this was an unaffected picture of his propensities and amusements even from childhood, — when he listened to the roar, and watched the bursts of the northern ocean on the tempestuous shores of Aberdeenshire. It was a fearful and violent change at the age of ten years to be separated from this congenial solitude, — this independence so suited to his haughty and contemplative spirit, — this rude grandeur of nature, — and thrown among the mere worldly-minded and selfish ferocity, the affected polish and repelling coxcomby, of a great public school. How many thousand times did the moody, sullen, and indignant boy wish himself back to the keen air and boisterous billows that broke lonely upon the simple and soul-invigorating haunts of his childhood. How did he prefer some ghost-story; some tale of second-sight; some relation of Robin Hood's feats; some harrowing narrative of buccaneer-exploits, to all of Horace, and Virgil, and Homer, that was dinned into his repulsive spirit! To the shock of this change

Were a delight; and if the freshening sea
Made them a terror — 't was a pleasing fear,
For I was as it were a child of thee,
And trusted to thy billows far and near,
And laid my hand upon thy mane — as I do here.

CLXXXV.

My task is done³ — my song hath ceased — my
theme
Has died into an echo; it is fit
The spell should break of this protracted dream.
The torch shall be extinguish'd which hath lit
My midnight lamp — and what is writ, is writ, —
Would it were worthier! but I am not now
That which I have been — and my visions fit
Less palpably before me — and the glow
Which in my spirit dwelt is fluttering, faint, and low.

CLXXXVI.

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

is, I suspect, to be traced much of the eccentricity of Lord Byron's future life. This fourth Canto is the fruit of a mind which had stored itself with great care and toil, and had digested with profound reflection and intense vigour what it had learned: the sentiments are not such as lie on the surface, but could only be awakened by long meditation. Whoever reads it, and is not impressed with the many grand virtues as well as gigantic powers of the mind that wrote it, seems to me to afford a proof both of insensibility of heart, and great stupidity of intellect." — *SIR E. BAYDAGES*.]

³ ["It was a thought worthy of the great spirit of Byron, after exhibiting to us his Pilgrim amidst all the most striking scenes of earthly grandeur and earthly decay, — after teaching us, like him, to sicken over the mutability, and vanity, and emptiness of human greatness, to conduct him and us at last to the borders of "the Great Deep." It is there that we may perceive an image of the awful and unchangeable abyss of eternity, into whose bosom so much has sunk, and all shall one day sink, — of that eternity wherein the scorn and the contempt of man, and the melancholy of great, and the fretting of little minds, shall be at rest for ever. No one, but a true poet of man and of nature, would have dared to frame such a termination for such a Pilgrimage. The image of the wanderer may well be associated, for a time, with the rock of Calpe, the shattered temples of Athens, or the gigantic fragments of Rome; but when we wish to think of this dark personification as of a thing which is, where can we so well imagine him to have his daily haunt as by the roaring of the waves? It was thus that Homer represented Achilles in his moments of ungovernable and inconsolable grief for the loss of Patroclus. It was thus he chose to depict the paternal despair of Chriseus —

Βῆ δ' ἀκίῳ παρὰ Διῶ πολυφρόνῳοο θαλάσσης."
— WILSON.]