

The Giaour ;

A FRAGMENT OF A TURKISH TALE.¹

"One fatal remembrance — one sorrow that throws
Its bleak shade alike o'er our joys and our woes —
To which Life nothing darker nor brighter can bring,
For which joy hath no balm — and affliction no sting."
MOORE.

TO

SAMUEL ROGERS, ESQ.

AS A SLIGHT BUT MOST SINCERE TOKEN OF ADMIRATION FOR HIS GENIUS,
RESPECT FOR HIS CHARACTER, AND GRATITUDE FOR HIS FRIENDSHIP,

THIS PRODUCTION IS INSCRIBED

BY HIS OBLIGED AND AFFECTIONATE SERVANT,

BYRON.

London, May, 1813.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE tale which these disjointed fragments present, is founded upon circumstances now less common in the East than formerly; either because the ladies are more circumspect than in the "olden time," or because the Christians have better fortune, or less enterprise. The story, when entire, contained the adventures of a female slave, who was thrown, in the Mussulman manner, into the sea for infidelity, and avenged by a young Venetian, her lover, at the time the Seven Islands were possessed by the Republic of Venice, and soon after the Arnauts were beaten back from the Morea, which they had ravaged for some time subsequent to the Russian invasion. The desertion of the Mainotes, on being refused the plunder of Misitra, led to the abandonment of that enterprise, and to the desolation of the Morea, during which the cruelty exercised on all sides was unparalleled even in the annals of the faithful.²

¹ [The "Giaour" was published in May 1813, and abundantly sustained the impression created by the two first cantos of Childe Harold. It is obvious that in this, the first of his romantic narratives, Lord Byron's versification reflects the admiration he always avowed for Mr. Coleridge's "Christabel," — the irregular rhythm of which had already been adopted in the "Lay of the Last Minstrel." The fragmentary style of the composition was suggested by the then new and popular "Columbus" of Mr. Rogers. As to the subject, it was not merely by recent travel that the author had familiarised himself with Turkish history. "Old Knolles," he said at Missolonghi, a few weeks before his death, "was one of the first books that gave me pleasure when a child; and I believe it had much influence on my future wishes to visit the Levant, and gave, perhaps, the oriental colouring which is observed in my poetry." In the margin of his copy of Mr. D'Israeli's Essay on the Literary Character, we find the following note: — "Knolles, Cantemir, De Tott, Lady M. W. Montague, Hawkins's translation from Mignot's History of the Turks, the Arabian Nights — all travels or histories, or books upon the East, I could meet with, I had read, as well as Ricaut, before I was ten years old."]

² [An event, in which Lord Byron was personally concerned, undoubtedly supplied the groundwork of this tale; but for the story, so circumstantially put forth, of his having himself been the lover of this female slave, there is no foundation. The girl whose life the poet saved at Athens was not,

The Giaour.

No breath of air to break the wave
That rolls below the Athenian's grave,
That tomb³ which, gleaming o'er the cliff,
First greets the homeward-veering skiff,
High o'er the land he saved in vain;
When shall such hero live again?

* * * * *

Fair clime⁴! where every season smiles
Benignant o'er those blessed isles,
Which, seen from far Colonna's height,
Make glad the heart that hails the sight,
And lend to loneliness delight.
There mildly dimpling, Ocean's cheek
Reflects the tints of many a peak
Caught by the laughing tides that lave
These Edens of the eastern wave:

we are assured by Sir John Hobhouse, an object of his Lordship's attachment, but of that of his Turkish servant. For the Marquis of Sligo's account of the affair, see Moore's Notices.]

³ A tomb above the rocks on the promontory, by some supposed the sepulchre of Themistocles. — ["There are," says Cumberland, in his Observer, "a few lines by Plato, upon the tomb of Themistocles, which have a turn of elegant and pathetic simplicity in them, that deserves a better translation than I can give: —

"By the sea's margin, on the watery strand,
Thy monument, Themistocles, shall stand:
By this directed to thy native shore,
The merchant shall convey his freighted store;
And when our fleets are summoned to the fight,
Athens shall conquer with thy tomb in sight."]

⁴ ["Of the beautiful flow of Byron's fancy," says Moore, "when its sources were once opened on any subject, the Giaour affords one of the most remarkable instances: this poem having accumulated under his hand, both in printing and through successive editions, till from four hundred lines, of which it consisted in its first copy, it at present amounts to fourteen hundred. The plan, indeed, which he had adopted, of a series of fragments, — a set of 'orient pearls at random strung' — left him free to introduce, without reference to more than the general complexion of his story, whatever sen-

And if at times a transient breeze
Break the blue crystal of the seas,
Or sweep one blossom from the trees,
How welcome is each gentle air
That wakes and wafts the odours there!
For there — the Rose o'er crag or vale,
Sultana of the Nightingale,¹

The maid for whom his melody,
His thousand songs are heard on high,
Blossoms blushing to her lover's tale:
His queen, the garden queen, his Rose,
Unbent by winds, unchill'd by snows,
Far from the winters of the west,
By every breeze and season blest,
Returns the sweets by nature given
In softest incense back to heaven;
And grateful yields that smiling sky
Her fairest hue and fragrant sigh.
And many a summer flower is there,
And many a shade that love might share,
And many a grotto, meant for rest,
That holds the pirate for a guest;
Whose bark in sheltering cove below
Lurks for the passing peaceful prow,
Till the gay mariner's guitar²
Is heard, and seen the evening star;
Then stealing with the muffled oar,
Far shaded by the rocky shore,
Rush the night-prowlers on the prey,
And turn to groans his roundelay.
Strange — that where Nature loved to trace,
As if for Gods, a dwelling place,
And every charm and grace hath mix'd
Within the paradise she fix'd,
There man, enamour'd of distress,
Should mar it into wilderness,
And trample, brute-like, o'er each flower
That tasks not one laborious hour;
Nor claims the culture of his hand
To bloom along the fairy land,

timents or images his fancy, in its excursions, could collect; and, how little fettered he was by any regard to connection in these additions, appears from a note which accompanied his own copy of this paragraph, in which he says, — "I have not yet fixed the place of insertion for the following lines, but will, when I see you — as I have no copy." Even into this new passage, rich as it was at first, his fancy afterwards poured a fresh infusion." — The value of these after-touches of the master may be appreciated by comparing the following verses, from his original draft of this paragraph, with the form which they now wear: —

"Fair clime! where ceaseless summer smiles,
Benignant o'er those blessed isles,
Which, seen from far Colonna's height,
Make glad the heart that hails the sight,
And give to loneliness delight.
There shine the bright abodes ye seek,
Like dimples upon Ocean's cheek,
So smiling round the waters lave
These Edens of the eastern wave.
Or if, at times, the transient breeze
Break the smooth crystal of the seas,
Or brush one blossom from the trees,
How grateful is the gentle air
That waves and wafts the fragrance there."

The whole of this passage, from line 7, down to line 167, "Who heard it first had cause to grieve," was not in the first edition.]

¹ The attachment of the nightingale to the rose is a well-known Persian fable. If I mistake not, the "Bulbul of a thousand tales" is one of his appellations. [Thus, Meshi, as translated by Sir William Jones: —

"Come, charming maid! and hear thy poet sing,
Thyself the rose, and he the bird of spring:
Love bids him sing, and Love will be obey'd.
Be gay: too soon the flowers of spring will fade."]

But springs as to preclude his care,
And sweetly woos him — but to spare!
Strange — that where all is peace beside,
There passion riots in her pride,
And lust and rapine wildly reign
To darken o'er the fair domain.
It is as though the fiends prevail'd
Against the seraphs they assail'd
And, fix'd on heavenly thrones, should dwell
The freed inheritors of hell;
So soft the scene, so form'd for joy,
So curst the tyrants that destroy!

He who hath bent him o'er the dead³
Ere the first day of death is fled,
The first dark day of nothingness,
The last of danger and distress,
(Before Decay's effacing fingers
Have swept the lines where beauty lingers,
And mark'd the mild angelic air,
The rapture of repose that's there,⁴
The fix'd yet tender traits that streak
The langour of the placid cheek,
And — but for that sad shrouded eye,

That fires not, wins not, weeps not, now,
And but for that chill, changeless brow,
Where cold Obstruction's apathy⁵
Appals the gazing mourner's heart,
As if to him it could impart
The doom he dreads, yet dwells upon;
Yes, but for these and these alone,
Some moments, ay, one treacherous hour,
He still might doubt the tyrant's power;
So fair, so calm, so softly seal'd,
The first, last look by death reveal'd!⁶
Such is the aspect of this shore;
'Tis Greece, but living Greece no more!⁷
So coldly sweet, so deadly fair,
We start, for soul is wanting there.

² The guitar is the constant amusement of the Greek sailor by night: with a steady fair wind, and during a calm, it is accompanied always by the voice, and often by dancing.

³ [If once the public notice is drawn to a poet, the talents he exhibits on a nearer view, the weight his mind carries with it in his every-day intercourse, somehow or other, are reflected around on his compositions, and co-operate in giving a collateral force to their impression on the public. To this we must assign some part of the impression made by the "Giaour." The thirty-five lines beginning "He who hath bent him o'er the dead" are so beautiful, so original, and so utterly beyond the reach of any one whose poetical genius was not very decided, and very rich, that they alone, under the circumstances explained, were sufficient to secure celebrity to this poem. — SIR E. BRYDGES.]

⁴ ["And mark'd the almost dreaming air
Which speaks the sweet repose that's there." — MS.]

⁵ "Ay, but to die and go we know not where,
To lie in cold obstruction?" —
Measure for Measure, act iii. sc. 2.

⁶ I trust that few of my readers have ever had an opportunity of witnessing what is here attempted in description; but those who have will probably retain a painful remembrance of that singular beauty which pervades, with few exceptions, the features of the dead, a few hours, and but for a few hours, after "the spirit is not there." It is to be remarked in cases of violent death by gun-shot wounds, the expression is always that of langour, whatever the natural energy of the sufferer's character: but in death from a stab the countenance preserves its traits of feeling or ferocity, and the mind its bias, to the last.

⁷ [In Dallaway's Constantinople, a book which Lord Byron is not unlikely to have consulted, I find a passage quoted from Gillies's History of Greece, which contains, perhaps, the first seed of the thought thus expanded into full perfection by

Hers is the loveliness in death,
That parts not quite with parting breath;
But beauty with that fearful bloom,
That hue which haunts it to the tomb,
Expression's last receding ray,
A gilded halo hovering round decay,
The farewell beam of Feeling past away!
Spark of that flame, perchance of heavenly birth,
Which gleams, but warms no more its cherish'd earth!¹

Clime of the unforgotten brave!²
Whose land from plain to mountain-cave
Was Freedom's home or Glory's grave!
Shrine of the mighty! can it be,
That this is all remains of thee?
Approach, thou craven crouching slave:
Say, is not this Thermopylae?
These waters blue that round you lave,
Oh servile offspring of the free—
Pronounce what sea, what shore is this?
The gulf, the rock of Salamis!
These scenes, their story not unknown,
Arise, and make again your own;
Snatch from the ashes of your sires
The embers of their former fires;
And he who in the strife expires
Will add to theirs a name of fear
That Tyranny shall quake to hear,
And leave his sons a hope, a fame,
They too will rather die than shame:
For Freedom's battle once begun,
Bequeath'd by bleeding Sire to Son,
Though baffled oft is ever won.
Bear witness, Greece, thy living page,
Attest it many a deathless age!
While kings, in dusty darkness hid,
Have left a nameless pyramid,
Thy heroes, though the general doom
Hath swept the column from their tomb,
A mightier monument command,
The mountains of their native land!
There points thy Muse to stranger's eye
The graves of those that cannot die!
'T were long to tell, and sad to trace,
Each step from splendour to disgrace;
Enough—no foreign foe could quell
Thy soul, till from itself it fell;
Yes! Self-abasement paved the way
To villain-bonds and despot sway.

What can he tell who treads thy shore?
No legend of thine olden time,
No theme on which the muse might soar
High as thine own in days of yore,

genius:—"The present state of Greece compared to the ancient, is the silent obscurity of the grave contrasted with the vivid lustre of active life."—MOORE.]

¹ [There is infinite beauty and effect, though of a painful and almost oppressive character, in this extraordinary passage; in which the author has illustrated the beautiful, but still and melancholy aspect of the once busy and glorious shores of Greece, by an image more true, more mournful, and more exquisitely finished, than any that we can recollect in the whole compass of poetry.—JEFFREY.]

² [From this line to the conclusion of the paragraph, the MS. is written in a hurried and almost illegible hand, as if these splendid lines had been poured forth in one continuous burst of poetic feeling, which would hardly allow time for the hand to follow the rapid flow of the imagination.]

³ Athens is the property of the Kislar Aga (the slave of the seraglio and guardian of the women), who appoints the Way-

When man was worthy of thy clime.
The hearts within thy valleys bred,
The fiery souls that might have led
Thy sons to deeds sublime,
Now crawl from cradle to the grave,
Slaves—nay, the bondsmen of a slave,³
And callous, save to crime;
Stain'd with each evil that pollutes
Mankind, where least above the brutes;
Without even savage virtue blest,
Without one free or valiant breast.
Still to the neighbouring ports they waft
Proverbial wiles, and ancient craft;
In this the subtle Greek is found,
For this, and this alone, renown'd.
In vain might Liberty invoke
The spirit to its bondage broke,
Or raise the neck that courts the yoke:
No more her sorrows I bewail,
Yet this will be a mournful tale,
And they who listen may believe,
Who heard it first had cause to grieve.

Far, dark, along the blue sea glancing,
The shadows of the rocks advancing
Start on the fisher's eye like boat
Of island-pirate or Mainote;
And fearful for his light caique,
He shuns the near but doubtful creek:
Though worn and weary with his toil,
And cumber'd with his scaly spoil,
Slowly, yet strongly, plies the oar,
Till Port Leone's safer shore
Receives him by the lovely light
That best becomes an Eastern night.

Who thundering comes on blackest steed,⁴
With slacken'd bit and hoof of speed?
Beneath the clattering iron's sound
The cavern'd echoes wake around
In lash for lash, and bound for bound;
The foam that streaks the courser's side
Seems gather'd from the ocean-tide:
Though weary waves are sunk to rest,
There's none within his rider's breast;
And though to-morrow's tempest lower,
'T is calmer than thy heart, young Giaour!⁵
I know thee not, I loathe thy race,
But in thy lineaments I trace
What time shall strengthen, not efface:
Though young and pale, that sallow front
Is scathed by fiery passion's brunt;

wode. A pander and eunuch—these are not polite, yet true appellations—now governs the governor of Athens!

⁴ [The reciter of the tale is a Turkish fisherman, who has been employed during the day in the gulf of Egina, and in the evening, apprehensive of the Mainote pirates who infest the coast of Attica, lands with his boat on the harbour of Port Leone, the ancient Piræus. He becomes the eye-witness of nearly all the incidents in the story, and in one of them is a principal agent. It is to his feelings, and particularly to his religious prejudices, that we are indebted for some of the most forcible and splendid parts of the poem.—GEORGE ELLIS.]

⁵ [In Dr. Clarke's Travels, this word, which means *Infidel*, is always written according to its English pronunciation, *Djaur*. Lord Byron adopted the Italian spelling usual among the Franks of the Levant.]

Though bent on earth thine evil eye,
As meteor-like thou glidest by,
Right well I view and deem thee one
Whom Othman's sons should slay or shun.

On—on he hasten'd, and he drew
My gaze of wonder as he flew:
Though like a demon of the night
He pass'd, and vanish'd from my sight,
His aspect and his air impress'd
A troubled memory on my breast,
And long upon my startled ear
Rung his dark courser's hoofs of fear.
He spurs his steed; he nears the steep,
That, jutting, shadows o'er the deep;
He winds around; he hurries by;
The rock relieves him from mine eye;
For well I ween unwelcome he
Whose glance is fix'd on those that flee;
And not a star but shines too bright
On him who takes such timeless flight.
He wound along; but ere he pass'd
One glance he snatch'd, as if his last,
A moment check'd his wheeling steed,
A moment breathed him from his speed,
A moment on his stirrup stood—
Why looks he o'er the olive wood?
The crescent glimmers on the hill,
The Mosque's high lamps are quivering still:
Though too remote for sound to wake
In echoes of the far tophaike,¹
The flashes of each joyous peal
Are seen to prove the Moslem's zeal,
To-night, set Rhamazani's sun;
To-night, the Bairam feast's begun;
To-night—but who and what art thou
Of foreign garb and fearful brow?
And what are these to thine or thee,
That thou should'st either pause or flee?

He stood—some dread was on his face,
Soon Hatred settled in its place:
It rose not with the reddening flush
Of transient Anger's hasty blush,²
But pale as marble o'er the tomb,
Whose ghastly whiteness aids its gloom.

¹ "Tophaike," musket.—The Bairam is announced by the cannon at sunset; the illumination of the Mosques, and the firing of all kinds of small arms, loaded with *ball*, proclaim it during the night.

² ["Hasty blush."—"For *hasty*, all the editions till the twelfth read "*darkening* blush." On the back of a copy of the eleventh, Lord Byron has written, "Why did not the printer attend to the solitary correction so repeatedly made? I have no copy of this, and desire to have none till my request is complied with."]

³ ["Then turned it swiftly to his blade,
As loud his raven charger neigh'd."—MS.]

⁴ Jerreed, or Djerrid, a blunted Turkish javelin, which is darted from horseback with great force and precision. It is a favourite exercise of the Mussulmans; but I know not if it can be called a *manly* one, since the most expert in the art are the Black Eunuchs of Constantinople. I think, next to these, a Mamlouk at Smyrna was the most skillful that came within my observation.

⁵ [Every gesture of the impetuous horseman is full of anxiety and passion. In the midst of his career, whilst in full view of the astonished spectator, he suddenly checks his steed, and rising on his stirrup, surveys, with a look of agonising impatience, the distant city illuminated for the feast of Bairam; then pale with anger, raises his arm as if in menace of an invisible enemy; but awakened from his trance of passion by the neighing of his charger, again hurries forward, and disappears.—GEORGE ELLIS.]

His brow was bent, his eye was glazed;
He raised his arm, and fiercely raised,
And sternly shook his hand on high,
As doubting to return or fly;
Impatient of his flight delay'd,
Here loud his raven charger neigh'd—
Down glanced that hand, and grasp'd his blade;³
That sound had burst his waking dream,
As Slumber starts at owl's scream.
The spur hath lanced his courser's sides;
Away, away, for life he rides:
Swift as the hurl'd on high jerreed⁴
Springs to the touch his startled steed;
The rock is doubled, and the shore
Shakes with the clattering tramp no more;
The crag is won, no more is seen
His Christian crest and haughty mien.⁵
'T was but an instant he restrain'd
That fiery barb so sternly rein'd;⁶
'T was but a moment that he stood,
Then sped as if by death pursued:
But in that instant o'er his soul
Winters of Memory seem'd to roll,
And gather in that drop of time
A life of pain, an age of crime.
O'er him who loves, or hates, or fears,
Such moment pours the grief of years:
What felt he then, at once oppress'd
By all that most distracts the breast?
That pause, which ponder'd o'er his fate,
Oh, who its dreary length shall date!
Though in Time's record nearly nought,
It was Eternity to Thought!
For infinite as boundless space
The thought that Conscience must embrace,
Which in itself can comprehend
Woe without name, or hope, or end.

The hour is past, the Giaour is gone;
And did he fly or fall alone?⁷
Woe to that hour he came or went!
The curse for Hassan's sin was sent
To turn a palace to a tomb:
He came, he went, like the Simoom,⁸
That harbinger of fate and gloom,

⁶ ["'T was but an instant, though so long
When thus dilated in my song."—MS.]

⁷ ["But neither fled nor fell alone."—MS.]

⁸ The blast of the desert, fatal to every thing living, and often alluded to in eastern poetry.—[Abyssinian Bruce gives, perhaps, the liveliest account of the appearance and effects of the suffocating blast of the Desert:—"At eleven o'clock," he says, "while we contemplated with great pleasure the rugged top of Chiggre, to which we were fast approaching, and where we were to solace ourselves with plenty of good water, Idris, our guide, cried out with a loud voice, 'Fall upon your faces, for here is the simoom.' I saw from the south-east a haze come, in colour like the purple part of the rainbow, but not so compressed or thick. It did not occupy twenty yards in breadth, and was about twelve feet high from the ground. It was a kind of bluish upon the air, and it moved very rapidly; for I scarce could turn to fall upon the ground, with my head to the northward, when I felt the heat of its current plainly upon my face. We all lay flat on the ground as if dead, till Idris told us it was blown over. The meteor, or purple haze, which I saw was, indeed, passed, but the light air, which still blew, was of a heat to threaten suffocation. For my part, I found distinctly in my breast that I had imbibed a part of it; nor was I free of an asthmatic sensation till I had been some months in Italy, at the baths of Poretta, near two years afterwards."—See Bruce's Life and Travels, p. 470. edit. 1830.]

Beneath whose widely-wasting breath
The very cypress droops to death —
Dark tree, still sad when others' grief is fled,
The only constant mourner o'er the dead !

The steed is vanish'd from the stall ;
No serf is seen in Hassan's hall ;
The lonely Spider's thin gray pall
Waves slowly widening o'er the wall ;¹
The Bat builds in his Haram bower,
And in the fortress of his power
The Owl usurps the beacon-tower ;
The wild-dog howls o'er the fountain's brim,
With baffled thirst, and famine, grim ;²
For the stream has shrunk from its marble bed,
Where the weeds and the desolate dust are spread.
'T was sweet of yore to see it play
And chase the sultriness of day,
As springing high the silver dew
In whirls fantastically flew,
And flung luxurious coolness round
The air, and verdure o'er the ground.
'T was sweet, when cloudless stars were bright,
To view the wave of watery light,
And hear its melody by night.
And oft had Hassan's Childhood play'd
Around the verge of that cascade ;
And oft upon his mother's breast
That sound had harmonized his rest ;
And oft had Hassan's Youth along
Its bank been soothed by Beauty's song ;
And softer seem'd each melting tone
Of Music mingled with its own.
But ne'er shall Hassan's Age repose
Along the brink at twilight's close :
The stream that fill'd that font is fled —
The blood that warm'd his heart is shed !³
And here no more shall human voice
Be heard to rage, regret, rejoice.
The last sad note that swell'd the gale
Was woman's wildest funeral wail :
That quench'd in silence, all is still,
But the lattice that flaps when the wind is shrill :
Though raves the gust, and floods the rain,
No hand shall close its clasp again.⁴
On desert sands 'twere joy to scan
The rudest steps of fellow man,

¹ ["The lonely spider's thin gray pall
Is curtailed on the splendid wall."—MS.]

² ["The wild-dog howls o'er the fountain's brink,
But vainly tells his tongue to drink."—MS.]

³ ["For thirsty fox and jackal gaunt
May vainly for its waters pant."—MS.]

⁴ [This part of the narrative not only contains much brilliant and just description, but is managed with unusual taste. The fisherman has, hitherto, related nothing more than the extraordinary phenomenon which had excited his curiosity, and of which it is his immediate object to explain the cause to his hearers ; but instead of proceeding to do so, he stops to vent his execrations on the Giaour, to describe the solitude of Hassan's once luxurious haram, and to lament the untimely death of the owner, and of Leila, together with the cessation of that hospitality which they had uniformly experienced. He reveals, as if unintentionally and unconsciously, the catastrophe of his story ; but he thus prepares his appeal to the sympathy of his audience, without much diminishing their suspense.—GEORGE ELLIS.]

⁵ ["I have just recollected an alteration you may make in the proof. Among the lines on Hassan's Serai, is this—
'Unmeet for solitude to share.'

Now, to share implies more than one, and Solitude is a single gentleman ; it must be thus —

So here the very voice of Grief
Might wake an Echo like relief —
At least 't would say, "All are not gone ;
There lingers Life, though but in one" —
For many a gilded chamber's there,
Which Solitude might well forbear ;⁵
Within that dome as yet Decay
Hath slowly work'd her cankering way —
But gloom is gather'd o'er the gate,
Nor there the Fakir's self will wait ;
Nor there will wandering Dervise stay,
For bounty cheers not his delay ;
Nor there will weary stranger halt
To bless the sacred "bread and salt."⁶
Alike must Wealth and Poverty
Pass heedless and unheeded by,
For Courtesy and Pity died
With Hassan on the mountain side.
His roof, that refuge unto men,
Is Desolation's hungry den.
The guest flies the hall, and the vassal from labour,
Since his turban was cleft by the infidel's sabre !⁷

I hear the sound of coming feet,
But not a voice mine ear to greet ;
More near — each turban I can scan,
And silver-sheathed ataghan ;⁸
The foremost of the band is seen
An Emir by his garb of green :⁹
"Ho ! who art thou ?" — "This low salam"¹⁰
Replies of Moslem faith I am." —
"The burthen ye so gently bear
Seems one that claims your utmost care,
And, doubtless, holds some precious freight,
My humble bark would gladly wait."

"Thou speakest sooth ; thy skiff unmoor,
And waft us from the silent shore ;
Nay, leave the sail still fur'd, and ply
The nearest oar that's scatter'd by,
And midway to those rocks where sleep
The channel'd waters dark and deep.
Rest from your task — so — bravely done,
Our course has been right swiftly run ;
Yet 't is the longest voyage, I trow,
That one of —

⁵ For many a gilded chamber's there,
Which solitude might well forbear ;
and so on. Will you adopt this correction ? and pray accept a Stilton cheese from me for your trouble. — P. S. I leave this to your discretion : if any body thinks the old line a good one, or the cheese a bad one, don't accept of either."—Byron Letters, Stilton, Oct. 3. 1813.]

⁶ To partake of food, to break bread and salt with your host, ensures the safety of the guest ; even though an enemy, his person from that moment is sacred.

⁷ I need hardly observe, that Charity and Hospitality are the first duties enjoined by Mahomet ; and to say truth, very generally practised by his disciples. The first praise that can be bestowed on a chief, is a panegyric on his bounty ; the next, on his valour.

⁸ The ataghan, a long dagger worn with pistols in the belt, in a metal scabbard, generally of silver ; and, among the wealthier, gilt, or of gold.

⁹ Green is the privileged colour of the prophet's numerous pretended descendants ; with them, as here, faith (the family inheritance) is supposed to supersede the necessity of good works : they are the worst of a very indifferent brood.

¹⁰ "Salam aleikoum ! aleikoum salam !" peace be with you ; be with you peace — the salutation reserved for the faithful : — to a Christian, "Ularula," a good journey ; or "saban hiresem, saban serula ;" good morn, good even ; and sometimes, "may your end be happy ;" are the usual salutes.

Sullen it plunged, and slowly sank,
The calm wave rippled to the bank ;
I watch'd it as it sank, methought
Some motion from the current caught
Bestirr'd it more, — 't was but the beam
That checker'd o'er the living stream :
I gazed, till vanishing from view,
Like lessening pebble it withdrew ;
Still less and less, a speck of white
That gemm'd the tide, then mock'd the sight ;
And all its hidden secrets sleep,
Known but to Genii of the deep,
Which, trembling in their coral caves,
They dare not whisper to the waves.

As rising on its purple wing
The insect-queen¹ of eastern spring,
O'er emerald meadows of Kashmeer
Invites the young pursuer near,
And leads him on from flower to flower
A weary chase and wasted hour,
Then leaves him, as it soars on high,
With panting heart and tearful eye :
So Beauty lures the full-grown child,
With hue as bright, and wing as wild ;
A chase of idle hopes and fears,
Begun in folly, closed in tears.
If won, to equal ills betray'd,²
Woe waits the insect and the maid ;
A life of pain, the loss of peace,
From infant's play, and man's caprice :
The lovely toy so fiercely sought
Hath lost its charm by being caught,
For every touch that woo'd its stay
Hath brush'd its brightest hues away,
Till charm, and hue, and beauty gone,
'T is left to fly or fall alone.
With wounded wing, or bleeding breast,
Ah ! where shall either victim rest ?
Can this with faded pinion soar
From rose to tulip as before ?
Or Beauty, blighted in an hour,
Find joy within her broken bower ?
No : gayer insects fluttering by
Ne'er droop the wing o'er those that die,
And lovelier things have mercy shown
To every failing but their own,
And every woe a tear can claim
Except an erring sister's shame.

The Mind, that broods o'er guilty woes,
Is like the Scorpion girt by fire,³
In circle narrowing as it glows,⁴
The flames around their captive close,

¹ The blue-winged butterfly of Kashmeer, the most rare and beautiful of the species.

² ["If caught, to fate alike betrayed."—MS.]

³ [Mr. Dallas says, that Lord Byron assured him that the paragraph containing the simile of the scorpion was imagined in his sleep. It forms, therefore, a *pendant* to the "psychological curiosity," beginning with those exquisitely musical lines : —

"A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw ;
It was an Abyssinian maid," &c.

The whole of which, Mr. Coleridge says, was composed by him during a siesta.]

Till inly search'd by thousand throes,
And maddening in her ire,
One sad and sole relief she knows,
The sting she nourish'd for her foes,
Whose venom never yet was vain,
Gives but one pang, and cures all pain,
And darts into her desperate brain :
So do the dark in soul expire,
Or live like Scorpion girt by fire ;⁵
So writhes the mind Remorse hath riven,⁶
Unfit for earth, undoom'd for heaven,
Darkness above, despair beneath,
Around it flame, within it death !

Black Hassan from the Haram flies,
Nor bends on woman's form his eyes ;
The unwonted chase each hour employs,
Yet shares he not the hunter's joys.
Not thus was Hassan wont to fly
When Leila dwelt in his Serai.
Doth Leila there no longer dwell ?
That tale can only Hassan tell :
Strange rumours in our city say
Upon that eve she fled away
When Rhamazan's⁷ last sun was set,
And flashing from each minaret
Millions of lamps proclaim'd the feast
Of Bairam through the boundless East.
'T was then she went as to the bath,
Which Hassan vainly search'd in wrath ;
For she was flown her master's rage
In likeness of a Georgian page,
And far beyond the Moslem's power
Had wrong'd him with the faithless Giaour.
Somewhat of this had Hassan deem'd ;
But still so fond, so fair she seem'd,
Too well he trusted to the slave
Whose treachery deserved a grave :
And on that eve had gone to mosque,
And thence to feast in his kiosk.
Such is the tale his Nubians tell,
Who did not watch their charge too well ;
But others say, that on that night,
By pale Phingari's⁸ trembling light,
The Giaour upon his jet black steed
Was seen, but seen alone to speed
With bloody spur along the shore,
Nor maid nor page behind him bore.

Her eye's dark charm 'twere vain to tell,
But gaze on that of the Gazelle,
It will assist thy fancy well ;
As large, as languishingly dark,
But Soul beam'd forth in every spark

⁴ ["The gathering flames around her close."—MS.]

⁵ Alluding to the dubious suicide of the scorpion, so placed for experiment by gentle philosophers. Some maintain that the position of the sting, when turned towards the head, is merely a convulsive movement ; but others have actually brought in the verdict "Rêlo de se." The scorpions are surely interested in a speedy decision of the question ; as, if once fairly established as insect Catos, they will probably be allowed to live as long as they think proper, without being martyred for the sake of an hypothesis.

⁶ ["So writhes the mind by Conscience riven."—MS.]

⁷ The cannon at sunset close the Rhamazan. See *antè*, p. 65. note. ⁸ Phingari, the moon.

That darted from beneath the lid,
Bright as the jewel of Giamschid.¹
Yea, *Soul*, and should our prophet say
That form was nought but breathing clay,
By Alla! I would answer nay;
Though on Al-Sirat's² arch I stood,
Which totters o'er the fiery flood,
With Paradise within my view,
And all his Houris³ beckoning through.
Oh! who young Leila's glance could read
And keep that portion of his creed,
Which saith that woman is but dust,
A soulless toy for tyrant's lust?⁴
On her might Muftis gaze, and own
That through her eye the Immortal shone;
On her fair cheek's unfading hue
The young pomegranate's⁵ blossoms strew
Their bloom in blushes ever new;
Her hair in hyacinthine⁶ flow,
When left to roll its folds below,
As midst her handmaids in the hall
She stood superior to them all,
Hath swept the marble where her feet
Gleam'd whiter than the mountain sleet
Ere from the cloud that gave it birth
It fell, and caught one stain of earth.
The cygnet nobly walks the water;
So moved on earth Circassia's daughter,
The loveliest bird of Franguestan!⁷
As rears her crest the ruffled Swan,
And spurns the wave with wings of pride,
When pass the steps of stranger man
Along the banks that bound her tide;
Thus rose fair Leila's whiter neck:—
Thus arm'd with beauty would she check
Intrusion's glance, till Folly's gaze
Shrunk from the charms it meant to praise:
Thus high and graceful was her gait;
Her heart as tender to her mate;
Her mate—stern Hassan, who was he?
Alas! that name was not for thee!

Stern Hassan hath a journey ta'en
With twenty vassals in his train,
Each arm'd, as best becomes a man,
With arquebuss and ataghan;
The chief before, as deck'd for war,
Bears in his belt the scimitar

¹ The celebrated fabulous ruby of Sultan Giamschid, the embellisher of Istakhar; from its splendour, named Schebgerag, "the torch of night;" also "the cup of the sun," &c. In the first edition, "Giamschid" was written as a word of three syllables; so D'Herbelot has it; but I am told Richardson reduces it to a dissyllable, and writes "Jamshid." I have left in the text the orthography of the one with the pronunciation of the other.—[In the first edition, Lord Byron had used this word as a trisyllable,—"Bright as the gem of Giamschid,"—but, on my remarking to him, upon the authority of Richardson's Persian Dictionary, that this was incorrect, he altered it to "Bright as the ruby of Giamschid." On seeing this, however, I wrote to him, "that, as the comparison of his heroine's eye to a ruby might unluckily call up the idea of its being bloodshot, he had better change the line to "Bright as the jewel of Giamschid;" which he accordingly did, in the following edition.—MOORE.]

² Al-Sirat, the bridge of breadth, narrower than the thread of a famished spider, and sharper than the edge of a sword, over which the Mussulmans must *skate* into Paradise, to which 't is the only entrance; but this is not the worst, the river beneath being hell itself, into which, as may be expected, the unskillful and tender of foot contrive to tumble with a "facilis descensus Avernus," not very pleasing in prospect to

Stain'd with the best of Arnaut blood,
When in the pass the rebels stood,
And few return'd to tell the tale
Of what befell in Parne's vale.
The pistols which his girdle bore
Were those that once a pasha wore,
Which still, though gemm'd and boss'd with gold,
Even robbers tremble to behold.
'T is said he goes to woo a bride
More true than her who left his side;
The faithless slave that broke her bower,
And, worse than faithless, for a Giaour!

The sun's last rays are on the hill,
And sparkle in the fountain rill,
Whose welcome waters, cool and clear,
Draw blessings from the mountaineer:
Here may the loitering merchant Greek
Find that repose 't were vain to seek
In cities lodged too near his lord,
And trembling for his secret hoard—
Here may he rest where none can see,
In crowds a slave, in deserts free;
And with forbidden wine may stain
The bowl a Moslem must not drain.

The foremost Tartar's in the gap,
Conspicuous by his yellow cap;
The rest in lengthening line the while
Wind slowly through the long defile:
Above, the mountain rears a peak,
Where vultures whet the thirsty beak,
And theirs may be a feast to-night,
Shall tempt them down ere morrow's light;
Beneath, a river's wintry stream
Has shrunk before the summer beam,
And left a channel bleak and bare,
Save shrubs that spring to perish there:
Each side the midway path there lay
Small broken crags of granite gray,
By time, or mountain lightning, riven
From summits clad in mists of heaven;
For where is he that hath beheld
The peak of Liakura unweild?

the next passenger. There is a shorter cut downwards for the Jews and Christians.

³ [The virgins of Paradise, called from their large black eyes, *Hur al oyun*. An intercourse with these, according to the institution of Mahomet, is to constitute the principal felicity of the faithful. Not formed of clay, like mortal women, they are adorned with unfading charms, and deemed to possess the celestial privilege of an eternal youth. See D'Herbelot, and Sale's Koran.]

⁴ A vulgar error: the Koran allots at least a third of Paradise to well-behaved women; but by far the greater number of Mussulmans interpret the text their own way, and exclude their moieties from heaven. Being enemies to Platonics, they cannot discern "any fitness of things" in the souls of the other sex, conceiving them to be superseded by the Houris.

⁵ An oriental simile, which may, perhaps, though fairly stolen, be deemed "plus Arabe qu'en Arabe."

⁶ Hyacinthine, in Arabic "Sunbul;" as common a thought in the eastern poets as it was among the Greeks.

⁷ "Franguestan," Circassia.

They reach the grove of pine at last:
"Bismillah! now the peril's past;
For yonder view the opening plain,
And there we'll prick our steeds amain:"
The Chiaus spake, and as he said,
A bullet whistled o'er his head;
The foremost Tartar bites the ground!¹

Scarce had they time to check the rein,
Swift from their steeds the riders bound;
But three shall never mount again:
Unseen the foes that gave the wound,
The dying ask revenge in vain.
With steel unsheath'd, and carbine bent,
Some o'er their courier's harness leant,
Half shelter'd by the steed;
Some fly behind the nearest rock,
And there await the coming shock,
Nor tamely stand to bleed
Beneath the shaft of foes unseen,
Who dare not quit their craggy screen.
Stern Hassan only from his horse
Disdains to light, and keeps his course,
Till fiery flashes in the van
Proclaim too sure the robber-clan
Have well secured the only way
Could now avail the promised prey;
Then curl'd his very beard³ with ire,
And glared his eye with fiercer fire:
"Though far and near the bullets hiss,
I've 'scaped a bloodier hour than this."

And now the foe their covert quit,
And call his vassals to submit;
But Hassan's frown and furious word
Are dreaded more than hostile sword,
Nor of his little band a man
Resign'd carbine or ataghan,
Nor raised the craven cry, Amaun!⁴
In fuller sight, more near and near,
The lately ambush'd foes appear,
And, issuing from the grove, advance
Some who on battle-charger prance.
Who leads them on with foreign brand,
Far flashing in his red right hand?
"Tis he! 'tis he! I know him now;
I know him by his pallid brow;
I know him by the evil eye⁵
That aids his envious treachery;
I know him by his jet-black barb:
Though now array'd in Arnaut garb,
Apostate from his own vile faith,
It shall not save him from the death:
'T is he! well met in any hour,
Lost Leila's love, accursed Giaour!"

As rolls the river into ocean,
In sable torrent wildly streaming;
As the sea-tide's opposing motion,
In azure column proudly gleaming,
Beats back the current many a rood,
In curling foam and mingling flood,

¹ Bismillah—"In the name of God;" the commencement of all the chapters of the Koran but one, and of prayer and thanksgiving.

² ["Scarce had they time to check the rein, The foremost Tartar bites the plain."—MS.]

³ A phenomenon not uncommon with an angry Mussulman. In 1809, the Capitan Pacha's whiskers at a diplomatic audience were no less lively with indignation than a tiger cat's, to the horror of all the dragomans; the portentous mustachios twisted, they stood erect of their own accord, and

While eddying whirl, and breaking wave,
Roused by the blast of winter, rave;
Through sparkling spray, in thundering clash,
The lightnings of the waters flash
In awful whiteness o'er the shore,
That shines and shakes beneath the roar;
Thus—as the stream and ocean greet,
With waves that madden as they meet—
Thus join the bands, whom mutual wrong,
And fate, and fury, drive along.
The bickering sabres' shivering jar;
And pealing wide or ringing near
Its echoes on the throbbing ear,
The deathshot hissing from afar;
The shock, the shout, the groan of war,
Reverberate along that vale,
More suited to the shepherd's tale:
Though few the numbers—theirs the strife,
That neither spares nor speaks for life!⁶
Ah! fondly youthful hearts can press,
To seize and share the dear caress;
But Love itself could never pant
For all that Beauty sighs to grant
With half the fervour Hate bestows
Upon the last embrace of foes,
When grappling in the fight they fold
Those arms that ne'er shall lose their hold:
Friends meet to part; Love laughs at faith;
True foes, once met, are join'd till death!

With sabre shiver'd to the hilt,
Yet dripping with the blood he spilt;
Yet strain'd within the sever'd hand
Which quivers round that faithless brand;
His turban far behind him roll'd,
And cleft in twain its firmest fold;
His flowing robe by falchion torn,
And crimson as those clouds of morn
That, streak'd with dusky red, portend
The day shall have a stormy end;
A stain on every bush that bore
A fragment of his palampore,⁷
His breast with wounds unnumber'd riven,
His back to earth, his face to heaven,
Fall'n Hassan lies—his unclosed eye
Yet lowering on his enemy,
As if the hour that seal'd his fate
Surviving left his quenchless hate;
And o'er him bends that foe with brow
As dark as his that bled below.—

"Yes, Leila sleeps beneath the wave,
But his shall be a redder grave;
Her spirit pointed well the steel
Which taught that felon heart to feel.
He call'd the Prophet, but his power
Was vain against the vengeful Giaour:

were expected every moment to change their colour, but at last condescended to subside, which, probably, saved more heads than they contained hairs.

⁴ "Amaun," quarter, pardon.

⁵ The "evil eye," a common superstition in the Levant, and of which the imaginary effects are yet very singular on those who conceive themselves affected.

⁶ ["That neither gives nor asks for life."—MS.]

⁷ The flowered shawls generally worn by persons of rank.