

XXXIII.
He patronised the Improvisatori,
Nay, could himself extemporise some stanzas,
Wrote rhymes, sang songs, could also tell a story,
Sold pictures, and was skilful in the dance as
Italians can be, though in this their glory [has;
Must surely yield the palm to that which France
In short, he was a perfect cavaliero,
And to his very valet seem'd a hero.

XXXIV.
Then he was faithful too, as well as amorous;
So that no sort of female could complain,
Although they're now and then a little clamorous,
He never put the pretty souls in pain;
His heart was one of those which most enamour us,
Wax to receive, and marble to retain.
He was a lover of the good old school,
Who still become more constant as they cool.

XXXV.
No wonder such accomplishments should turn
A female head, however sage and steady—
With scarce a hope that Beppo could return,
In law he was almost as good as dead, he
Nor sent, nor wrote, nor show'd the least concern,
And she had waited several years already;
And really if a man won't let us know
That he's alive, he's *dead*, or should be so.

XXXVI.
Besides, within the Alps, to every woman,
(Although, God knows, it is a grievous sin,)
'Tis, I may say, permitted to have *two* men;
I can't tell who first brought the custom in,
But "Cavalier Serventes" are quite common,
And no one notices, nor cares a pin;
And we may call this (not to say the worst)
A *second* marriage which corrupts the *first*.

XXXVII.
The word was formerly a "Cicisbeo,"
But *that* is now grown vulgar and indecent;
The Spaniards call the person a "*Cortejo*,"¹
For the same mode subsists in Spain, though recent;
In short it reaches from the Po to Teio,
And may perhaps at last be o'er the sea sent.
But Heaven preserve Old England from such courses!
Or what becomes of damage and divorces?

XXXVIII.
However, I still think, with all due deference
To the fair *single* part of the Creation,
That married ladies should preserve the preference
In *tête-à-tête* or general conversation—
And this I say without peculiar reference
To England, France, or any other nation—
Because they know the world, and are at ease,
And being natural, naturally please.

XXXIX.
'Tis true, your budding Miss is very charming,
But shy and awkward at first coming out,
So much alarm'd, that she is quite alarming,
All Giggle, Blush; half Pertness, and half Pout;

¹ Cortejo is pronounced *Cortejo*, with an aspirate, according to the Arabesque guttural. It means what there is as yet no precise name for in England, though the practice is as common as in any tramontane country whatever.

And glancing at *Mamma*, for fear there's harm in
What you, she, it, or they, may be about,
The Nursery still lisps out in all they utter—
Besides, they always smell of bread and butter.

XL.
But "Cavalier Servente" is the phrase
Used in politest circles to express
This supernumerary slave, who stays
Close to the lady as a part of dress,
Her word the only law which he obeys.
His is no sinecure, as you may guess;
Coach, servants, gondola, he goes to call,
And carries fan and tippet, gloves and shawl.

XLI.
With all its sinful doings, I must say,
That Italy's a pleasant place to me,
Who love to see the Sun shine every day,
And vines (not nail'd to walls) from tree to tree
Festoon'd, much like the back scene of a play,
Or melodrame, which people flock to see,
When the first act is ended by a dance
In vineyards copied from the south of France.

XLII.
I like on Autumn evenings to ride out,
Without being forced to bid my groom be sure
My cloak is round his middle strapp'd about,
Because the skies are not the most secure;
I know too that, if stopp'd upon my route,
Where the green alleys windingly allure,
Reeling with *grapes* red waggons choke the way,—
In England 't would be dung, dust, or a dray.

XLIII.
I also like to dine on becaficas,
To see the Sun set, sure he'll rise to-morrow,
Not through a misty morning twinkling weak as
A drunken man's dead eye in maudlin sorrow,
But with all Heaven 't himself; that day will break as
Beauteous as cloudless, nor be forced to borrow
That sort of farthing candlelight which glimmers
Where reeking London's smoky caldron simmers.

XLIV.
I love the language, that soft bastard Latin,
Which melts like kisses from a female mouth,
And sounds as if it should be writ on satin,
With syllables which breathe of the sweet South,
And gentle liquids gliding all so pat in,
That not a single accent seems uncouth,
Like our harsh northern whistling, grunting guttural,
Which we're obliged to hiss, and spit, and sputter all.

XLV.
I like the women too (forgive my folly),
From the rich peasant-cheek of ruddy bronze,²
And large black eyes that flash on you a volley
Of rays that say a thousand things at once,
To the high dama's brow, more melancholy,
But clear, and with a wild and liquid glance,
Heart on her lips, and soul within her eyes,
Soft as her clime³, and sunny as her skies.⁴

² ["From the tall peasant with her ruddy bronze."—MS.]

³ ["Like her own clime, all sun, and bloom, and skies."—MS.]

⁴ ["In these lines the author rises above the usual and

XLVI.
Eve of the land which still is Paradise!
Italian beauty! didst thou not inspire
Raphael¹, who died in thy embrace, and vies
With all we know of Heaven, or can desire,
In what he hath bequeath'd us?—in what guise,
Though flashing from the fervour of the lyre,
Would *words* describe thy past and present glow,
While yet Canova can create below?²

XLVII.
"England! with all thy faults I love thee still,"
I said at Calais, and have not forgot it;
I like to speak and lucubrate my fill;
I like the government (but that is not it);
I like the freedom of the press and quill;
I like the Habeas Corpus (when we've got it);
I like a parliamentary debate,
Particularly when 'tis not too late;

XLVIII.
I like the taxes, when they're not too many;
I like a seacoal fire, when not too dear;
I like a beef-steak, too, as well as any;
Have no objection to a pot of beer;
I like the weather, when it is not rainy,
That is, I like two months of every year.
And so God save the Regent, Church, and King!
Which means that I like all and every thing.

XLIX.
Our standing army, and disbanded seamen,
Poor's rate, Reform, my own, the nation's debt,
Our little riots just to show we are free men,
Our trifling bankruptcies in the Gazette,
Our cloudy climate, and our chilly women,
All these I can forgive, and those forget,
And greatly venerate our recent glories,
And wish they were not owing to the Tories.

L.
But to my tale of Laura,—for I find
Digression is a sin, that by degrees
Becomes exceeding tedious to my mind,
And, therefore, may the reader too displease—
The gentle reader, who may wax unkind,
And caring little for the author's ease,
Insist on knowing what he means, a hard
And hapless situation for a bard.

LI.
Oh that I had the art of easy writing
What should be easy reading! could I scale
Parnassus, where the Muses sit inditing
Those pretty poems never known to fail,

appropriate pitch of his composition, and is betrayed into something too like enthusiasm and deep feeling for the light and fantastic strain of his poetry. Neither does the fit go off, for he rises quite into rapture in the succeeding stanza. This is, however, the only slip of the kind in the whole work—the only passage in which the author betrays the secret (which might, however, have been suspected) of his own genius, and his affinity to a higher order of poets than those to whom he has here been pleased to hold out a model."—JEFFREY.]

¹ For the received accounts of the cause of Raphael's death, see his lives.

² Note.—(In talking thus, the writer, more especially of women, would be understood to say, He speaks as a spectator, not officially, And always, reader, in a modest way;

How quickly would I print (the world delighting)
A Grecian, Syrian, or Assyrian tale;
And sell you, mix'd with western sentimentalism,
Some samples of the finest Orientalism.

LII.
But I am but a nameless sort of person,
(A broken Dandy³ lately on my travels)
And take for rhyme, to hook my rambling verse on,
The first that Walker's Lexicon unravels,
And when I can't find that, I put a worse on,
Not caring as I ought for critics' cavils;
I've half a mind to tumble down to prose,
But verse is more in fashion—so here goes.

LIII.
The Count and Laura made their new arrangement,
Which lasted, as arrangements sometimes do,
For half a dozen years without estrangement;
They had their little differences, too;
Those jealous whiffs, which never any change meant:
In such affairs there probably are few
Who have not had this pouting sort of squabble,
From sinners of high station to the rabble.

LIV.
But, on the whole, they were a happy pair,
As happy as unlawful love could make them;
The gentleman was fond, the lady fair,
Their chains so slight, 'twas not worth while to
break them:
The world beheld them with indulgent air;
The pious only wish'd "the devil take them!"
He took them not; he very often waits,
And leaves old sinners to be young ones' baits.

LV.
But they were young: Oh! what without our youth
Would love be! What would youth be without love!
Youth lends it joy, and sweetness, vigour, truth,
Heart, soul, and all that seems as from above;
But, languishing with years, it grows uncouth—
One of few things experience don't improve,
Which is, perhaps, the reason why old fellows
Are always so preposterously jealous.

LVI.
It was the Carnival, as I have said
Some six and thirty stanzas back, and so
Laura the usual preparations made,
Which you do when your mind's made up to go
To-night to Mrs. Boehm's masquerade,
Spectator, or partaker in the show;
The only difference known between the cases
Is—*here*, we have six weeks of "varnish'd faces."

Perhaps, too, in no very great degree shall he
Appear to have offended in this lay,
Since, as all know, without the sex, our sonnets
Would seem unfinished, like their untrimm'd bonnets.)
(Signed) PRINTER'S DEVIL.

³ ["The expressions 'blue-stocking' and 'dandy' may furnish matter for the learning of a commentator at some future period. At this moment, every English reader will understand them. Our present ephemeral dandy is akin to the maccaroni of my earlier days. The first of those expressions has become classical, by Mrs. Hannah More's poem of 'Bas-Bleu,' and the other by the use of it in one of Lord Byron's poems. Though now become familiar and trite, their day may not be long.

—'Cadentque
Quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula.'"
—LORD GLENBERVIE, *Ricciardetto*, 1822.]
L 3

LVII.

Laura, when dress'd, was (as I sang before)
A pretty woman as was ever seen,
Fresh as the Angel o'er a new inn door,
Or frontispiece of a new Magazine,
With all the fashions which the last month wore,
Colour'd, and silver paper leaved between
That and the title-page, for fear the press
Should soil with parts of speech the parts of dress.

LVIII.

They went to the Ridotto; — 'tis a hall
Where people dance, and sup, and dance again;
Its proper name, perhaps, were a masqued ball,
But that's of no importance to my strain;
'Tis (on a smaller scale) like our Vauxhall,
Excepting that it can't be spoilt by rain:
The company is "mix'd" (the phrase I quote is
As much as saying, they're below your notice);

LIX.

For a "mix'd company" implies that, save
Yourself and friends, and half a hundred more,
Whom you may bow to without looking grave,
The rest are but a vulgar set, the bore
Of public places, where they basely brave
The fashionable stare of twenty score
Of well-bred persons, call'd "the World;" but I,
Although I know them, really don't know why.

LX.

This is the case in England; at least was
During the dynasty of Dandies¹, now
Perchance succeeded by some other class
Of imitated imitators: — how
Irreparably soon decline, alas!
The demagogues of fashion: all below
Is frail; how easily the world is lost
By love, or war, and now and then by frost!

LXI.

Crush'd was Napoleon by the northern Thor,
Who knock'd his army down with icy hammer,
Stopp'd by the *elements*², like a whaler, or
A blundering novice in his new French grammar;
Good cause had he to doubt the chance of war,
And as for Fortune — but I dare not d—n her,
Because, were I to ponder to infinity,
The more I should believe in her divinity.³

LXII.

She rules the present, past, and all to be yet,
She gives us luck in lotteries, love, and marriage;
I cannot say that she's done much for me yet;
Not that I mean her bounties to disparage,
We've not yet closed accounts, and we shall see yet
How much she'll make amends for past miscarriage;
Meantime the goddess I'll no more importune,
Unless to thank her when she's made my fortune.

¹ ["I liked the Dandies; they were always very civil to me; though, in general, they disliked literary people, and persecuted and mystified Madame de Stael, Lewis, Horace Twiss, and the like. The truth is, that though I gave up the business early, I had a tinge of Dandyism in my minority, and probably retained enough of it to conciliate the great ones at four and twenty." — *Byron Diary*, 1821.]

² ["When Brummell was obliged to retire to France, he knew no French, and having obtained a grammar for the purpose of study, our friend Scrope Davies was asked what progress Brummell had made in French; he responded, 'that Brummell had been stopped, like Buonaparte in Russia, by the *elements*. I have put this pun into Beppo, which is 'a fair

LXIII.

To turn, — and to return; — the devil take it!
This story slips for ever through my fingers,
Because, just as the stanza likes to make it,
It needs must be — and so it rather lingers;
This form of verse began, I can't well break it,
But must keep time and tune like public singers;
But if I once get through my present measure,
I'll take another when I'm next at leisure.

LXIV.

They went to the Ridotto ('tis a place
To which I mean to go myself to-morrow,⁴
Just to divert my thoughts a little space,
Because I'm rather hippish, and may borrow
Some spirits, guessing at what kind of face
May lurk beneath each mask; and as my sorrow
Slackens its pace sometimes, I'll make, or find,
Something shall leave it half an hour behind.)

LXV.

Now Laura moves along the joyous crowd,
Smiles in her eyes, and simpers on her lips;
To some she whispers, others speaks aloud;
To some she curtsies, and to some she dips,
Complains of warmth, and this complaint avow'd,
Her lover brings the lemonade, she sips;
She then surveys, condemns, but pities still
Her dearest friends for being dress'd so ill.

LXVI.

One has false curls, another too much paint,
A third — where did she buy that frightful turban?
A fourth's so pale she fears she's going to faint,
A fifth's look's vulgar, dowdyish, and suburban,
A sixth's white silk has got a yellow taint,
A seventh's thin muslin surely will be her bane,
And lo! an eighth appears, — "I'll see no more!"
For fear, like Banquo's kings, they reach a score.

LXVII.

Meantime, while she was thus at others gazing,
Others were levelling their looks at her;
She heard the men's half-whisper'd mode of praising,
And, till 't was done, determined not to stir;
The women only thought it quite amazing
That, at her time of life, so many were
Admirers still, — but men are so debased,
Those brazen creatures always suit their taste.

LXVIII.

For my part, now, I ne'er could understand
Why naughty women — but I won't discuss
A thing which is a scandal to the land,
I only don't see why it should be thus;
And if I were but in a gown and band,
Just to entitle me to make a fuss,
I'd preach on this till Wilberforce and Romilly
Should quote in their next speeches from my homily.

exchange and no robbery; for Scrope made his fortune at several dinners (as he owned himself), by repeating occasionally, as his own, some of the buffooneries with which I had encountered him in the morning." — *Byron Diary* 1821.]

³ ["Like Sylla, I have always believed that all things depend upon Fortune, and nothing upon ourselves. I am not aware of any one thought or action, worthy of being called good to myself or others, which is not to be attributed to the good goddess — Fortune!" — *Byron Diary*, 1821.]

⁴ [In the margin of the original M.S. Lord Byron has written — "January 19th, 1818. To-morrow will be a Sunday, and full Ridotto."]

LXIX.

While Laura thus was seen and seeing, smiling,
Talking, she knew not why and cared not what,
So that her female friends, with envy broiling,
Beheld her airs and triumph, and all that;
And well-dress'd males still kept before her filing,
And passing bow'd and mingled with her chat;
More than the rest one person seem'd to stare
With pertinacity that's rather rare.

LXX.

He was a Turk, the colour of mahogany;
And Laura saw him, and at first was glad,
Because the Turks so much admire philogyny,
Although their usage of their wives is sad;
'Tis said they use no better than a dog any
Poor woman, whom they purchase like a pad:
They have a number, though they ne'er exhibit 'em,
Four wives by law, and concubines "ad libitum."

LXXI.

They lock them up, and veil, and guard them daily,
They scarcely can behold their male relations,
So that their moments do not pass so gaily
As is supposed the case with northern nations;
Confinement, too, must make them look quite palely;
And as the Turks abhor long conversations,
Their days are either pass'd in doing nothing,
Or bathing, nursing, making love, and clothing.

LXXII.

They cannot read, and so don't lisp in criticism;
Nor write, and so they don't affect the muse;
Were never caught in epigram or witticism,
Have no romances, sermons, plays, reviews, —
In harams learning soon would make a pretty schism!
But luckily these beauties are no "Blues,"
No bustling Botherbys have they to show 'em
"That charming passage in the last new poem."

LXXIII.

No solemn, antique gentleman of rhyme,
Who having angled all his life for fame,
And getting but a nibble at a time,
Still fussily keeps fishing on, the same
Small "Triton of the minnows," the sublime
Of mediocrity, the furious tame,
The echo's echo, usher of the school
Of female wits, boy bards — in short, a fool!

LXXIV.

A stalking oracle of awful phrase,
The approving "Good!" (by no means *goon* in law)
Humming like flies around the newest blaze,
The bluest of bluebottles you e'er saw,
Teasing with blame, excruciating with praise,
Gorging the little fame he gets all raw,
Translating tongues he knows not even by letter,
And sweating plays so middling, bad were better.

LXXV.

One hates an author that's *all author*, fellows
In foolscap uniforms turn'd up with ink,
So very anxious, clever, fine, and jealous,
One don't know what to say to them, or think,
Unless to puff them with a pair of bellows;
Of coxcombry's worst coxcombs e'en the pink
Are preferable to these shreds of paper,
These unquench'd snuffings of the midnight taper.

LXXVI.

Of these same we see several, and of others,
Men of the world, who know the world like men,
Scott, Rogers, Moore, and all the better brothers,
Who think of something else besides the pen;
But for the children of the "mighty mother's,"
The would-be wits and can't-be gentlemen,
I leave them to their daily "tea is ready,"
Smug coterie, and literary lady.¹

LXXVII.

The poor dear Mussulwomen whom I mention
Have none of these instructive pleasant people,
And *one* would seem to them a new invention,
Unknown as bells within a Turkish steeple;
I think 't would almost be worth while to pension
(Though best-sown projects very often reap ill)
A missionary author, just to preach
Our Christian usage of the parts of speech.

LXXVIII.

No chemistry for them unfolds her gasses,
No metaphysics are let loose in lectures,
No circulating library amasses
Religious novels, moral tales, and strictures
Upon the living manners, as they pass us;
No exhibition glares with annual pictures;
They stare not on the stars from out their attics,
Nor deal (thank God for that!) in mathematics.

LXXIX.

Why I thank God for that is no great matter,
I have my reasons, you no doubt suppose,
And as, perhaps, they would not highly flatter,
I'll keep them for my life (to come) in prose;
I fear I have a little turn for satire,
And yet methinks the older that one grows
Inclines us more to laugh than scold, though laughter
Leaves us so doubly serious shortly after.

LXXX.

Oh, Mirth and Innocence! Oh, Milk and Water!
Ye happy mixtures of more happy days!
In these sad centuries of sin and slaughter,
Abominable Man no more allays
His thirst with such pure beverage. No matter,
I love you both, and both shall have my praise.
Oh, for old Saturn's reign of sugar-candy! —
Meantime I drink to your return in brandy.

LXXXI.

Our Laura's Turk still kept his eyes upon her,
Less in the Mussulman than Christian way,
Which seems to say, "Madam, I do you honour,
And while I please to stare, you'll please to stay."
Could staring win a woman, this had won her,
But Laura could not thus be led astray;
She had stood fire too long and well, to boggle
Even at this stranger's most outlandish ogle.

LXXXII.

The morning now was on the point of breaking,
A turn of time at which I would advise
Ladies who have been dancing, or partaking
In any other kind of exercise,
To make their preparations for forsaking
The ball-room ere the sun begins to rise,
Because when once the lamps and candles fall,
His blushes make them look a little pale.

¹ [Nothing can be cleverer than this caustic little diatribe, introduced *à propos* of the life of Turkish ladies in their harams. — JEFFREY.]

LXXXIII.

I've seen some balls and revels in my time,
And stay'd them over for some silly reason,
And then I look'd (I hope it was no crime)
To see what lady best stood out the season;
And though I've seen some thousands in their prime,
Lovely and pleasing, and who still may please on,
I never saw but one (the stars withdrawn)
Whose bloom could after dancing dare the dawn.

LXXXIV.

The name of this Aurora I'll not mention,
Although I might, for she was nought to me
More than that patent work of God's invention,
A charming woman, whom we like to see;
But writing names would merit reprehension,
Yet if you like to find out this fair *she*,
At the next London or Parisian ball
You still may mark her cheek, out-blooming all.

LXXXV.

Laura, who knew it would not do at all
To meet the daylight after seven hours' sitting
Among three thousand people at a ball,
To make her curtsy thought it right and fitting:
The Count was at her elbow with her shawl,
And they the room were on the point of quitting,
When lo! those cursed gondoliers had got
Just in the very place where they *should not*.

LXXXVI.

In this they're like our coachmen, and the cause
Is much the same—the crowd, and pulling, hauling,
With blasphemies enough to break their jaws,
They make a never intermitting bawling.
At home, our Bow-street gemmen keep the laws,
And here a sentry stands within your calling;
But for all that, there is a deal of swearing,
And nauseous words past mentioning or bearing.

LXXXVII.

The Count and Laura found their boat at last,
And homeward floated o'er the silent tide,
Discussing all the dances gone and past;
The dancers and their dresses, too, beside;
Some little scandals eke: but all aghast
(As to their palace stairs the rowers glide)
Sate Laura by the side of her Adorer,¹
When lo! the Mussulman was there before her.

LXXXVIII.

"Sir," said the Count, with brow exceeding grave,
"Your unexpected presence here will make
It necessary for myself to crave
Its import? But perhaps 'tis a mistake;
I hope it is so; and, at once to wave
All compliment, I hope so for *your* sake:
You understand my meaning, or you *shall*."
"Sir," (quoth the Turk) "'tis no mistake at all.

LXXXIX.

"That lady is *my wife!*" Much wonder paints
The lady's changing cheek, as well it might;
But where an Englishwoman sometimes faints,
Italian females don't do so outright;
They only call a little on their saints,
And then come to themselves, almost or quite;
Which saves much hartshorn, salts, and sprinkling faces,
And cutting stays, as usual in such cases.

¹ ["Sate Laura with a kind of comic horror."—MS.]

XC.

She said,—what could she say? Why, not a word:
But the Count courteously invited in
The stranger, much appeas'd by what he heard:
"Such things, perhaps, we'd best discuss within,"
Said he; "don't let us make ourselves absurd
In public, by a scene, nor raise a din,
For then the chief and only satisfaction
Will be much quizzing on the whole transaction."

XCII.

They enter'd, and for coffee call'd—it came,
A beverage for Turks and Christians both,
Although the way they make it's not the same.
Now Laura, much recover'd, or less loth
To speak, cries "Beppo! what's your pagan name?
Bless me! your beard is of amazing growth!
And how came you to keep away so long?
Are you not sensible 't was very wrong?"

XCIII.

"And are you *really, truly*, now a Turk?
With any other women did you wive?
Is't true they use their fingers for a fork?
Well, that's the prettiest shawl—as I'm alive!
You'll give it me? They say you eat no pork.
And how so many years did you contrive
To—Bless me! did I ever? No, I never
Saw a man grown so yellow! How 's your liver?"

XCIV.

"Beppo! that beard of yours becomes you not;
It shall be shaved before you're a day older:
Why do you wear it? Oh! I had forgot—
Pray don't you think the weather here is colder?
How do I look! You shan't stir from this spot
In that queer dress, for fear that some beholder
Should find you out, and make the story known.
How short your hair is! Lord! how grey it's grown!"

XCV.

What answer Beppo made to these demands
Is more than I know. He was cast away
About where Troy stood once, and nothing stands;
Became a slave of course, and for his pay
Had bread and bastinadoes, till some bands
Of pirates landing in a neighbouring bay,
He join'd the rogues and prosper'd, and became
A renegado of indifferent fame.

XCVI.

But he grew rich, and with his riches grew so
Keen the desire to see his home again,
He thought himself in duty bound to do so,
And not be always thieving on the main;
Lonely he felt, at times, as Robin Crusoe,
And so he hired a vessel come from Spain,
Bound for Corfu: she was a fine polacca,
Mann'd with twelve hands, and laden with tobacco.

XCVII.

Himself, and much (heaven knows how gotten!) cash,
He then embark'd with risk of life and limb,
And got clear off, although the attempt was rash;
He said that *Providence* protected him—
For my part, I say nothing, lest we clash
In our opinions:—well, the ship was trim,
Set sail, and kept her reckoning fairly on,
Except three days of calm when off Cape Bonn.

XCVII.

They reach'd the island, he transferr'd his lading,
And self and live stock, to another bottom,
And pass'd for a true Turkey-merchant, trading
With goods of various names, but I forgot 'em.
However, he got off by this evading,
Or else the people would perhaps have shot him;
And thus at Venice¹ landed to reclaim
His wife, religion, house, and Christian name.

XCVIII.

His wife received, the patriarch re-baptized him,
(He made the church a present, by the way);
He then threw off the garments which disguised him,
And borrow'd the Count's smallclothes for a day:

His friends the more for his long absence prized him,
Finding he'd wherewithal to make them gay,
With dinners, where he oft became the laugh of
them,
For stories—but I don't believe the half of them.

XCIX.

Whate'er his youth had suffer'd, his old age
With wealth and talking make him some amends;
Though Laura sometimes put him in a rage,
I've heard the Count and he were always friends.
My pen is at the bottom of a page,
Which being finish'd, here the story ends;
'Tis to be wish'd it had been sooner done,
But stories somehow lengthen when begun.²

Mazeppa.³

ADVERTISEMENT.

"CELUI qui remplissait alors cette place était un gentilhomme Polonais, nommé Mazeppa, né dans le

¹ ["You ask me," says Lord Byron, in a letter written in 1820, "for a volume of Manners, &c. on Italy. Perhaps I am in the case to know more of them than most Englishmen, because I have lived among the natives, and in parts of the country where Englishmen never resided before (I speak of Romagna and this place particularly); but there are many reasons why I do not choose to treat in print on such a subject. Their moral is not your moral; their life is not your life; you would not understand it: it is not English, nor French, nor German, which you would all understand. The conventual education, the cavalier servitude, the habits of thought and living, are so entirely different, and the difference becomes so much more striking the more you live intimately with them, that I know not how to make you comprehend a people who are at once temperate and profligate, serious in their characters and buffoons in their amusements, capable of impressions and passions, which are at once sudden and durable (what you find in no other nation), and who actually have no society (what we would call so), as you may see by their comedies; they have no real comedy, not even in Goldoni, and that is because they have no society to draw it from. Their conversazioni are not society at all. They go to the theatre to talk, and into company to hold their tongues. The women sit in a circle, and the men gather into groups, or they play at dreary faro, or 'lotto reale,' for small sums. Their academie are concerts like our own, with better music and more form. Their best things are the carnival balls and masquerades, when every body runs mad for six weeks. After their dinners and suppers they make extempore verses and buffoon one another; but it is in a humour which you would not enter into, ye of the north.—In their houses it is better. As for the women, from the fisherman's wife up to the nobil dama, their system has its rules, and its fitnesses, and its decourms, so as to be reduced to a kind of discipline or game at hearts, which admits few deviations, unless you wish to lose it. They are extremely tenacious, and jealous as furies, not permitting their lovers even to marry if they can help it, and keeping them always close to them in public as in private, whenever they can. In short, they transfer marriage to adultery, and strike the *not* out of that commandment. The reason is, that they marry for their parents, and love for themselves. They exact fidelity from a lover as a debt of honour, while they pay the husband as a tradesman, that is, not at all. You hear a person's character, male or female, canvassed, not as depending on their conduct to their husbands or wives, but to their mistress or lover. If I wrote a quarto, I don't know that I could do more than amplify what I have here noted."]

² [This extremely clever and amusing performance affords a very curious and complete specimen of a kind of diction and composition of which our English literature has hitherto presented very few examples. It is, in itself, absolutely a thing of nothing—without story, characters, sentiments, or

palatinat de Podolie: il avait été élevé page de Jean Casimir, et avait pris à sa cour quelque teinture des belles-lettres. Une intrigue qu'il eut dans sa jeunesse avec la femme d'un gentilhomme Polonais ayant été

intelligible object;—a mere piece of lively and loquacious prattling, in short, upon all kinds of frivolous subjects,—a sort of ray and desultory babbling about Italy and England, Turks, balls, literature, and fish sauces. But still there is something very engaging in the uniform gaiety, politeness, and good humour of the author, and something still more striking and admirable in the matchless facility with which he has cast into regular, and even difficult, versification the unmingled, unconstrained, and unselected language of the most light, familiar, and ordinary conversation. With great skill and felicity, he has furnished us with an example of about one hundred stanzas of good verse, entirely composed of common words, in their common places; never presenting us with one sprig of what is called poetical diction, or even making use of a single inversion, either to raise the style or assist the rhyme, but running on in an inexhaustible series of good easy colloquial phrases, and finding them fall into verse by some unaccountable and happy fatality. In this great and characteristic quality it is almost invariably excellent. In some other respects, it is more unequal. About one half is as good as possible, in the style to which it belongs; the other half bears, perhaps, too many marks of that haste with which such a work must necessarily be written. Some passages are rather too snappish, and some run too much on the cheap and rather plebeian humour of out-of-the-way rhymes, and strange-sounding words and epithets. But the greater part is extremely pleasant, amiable, and gentlemanlike.—JEFFREY.]

³ [The following "lively, spirited, and pleasant tale," as Mr. Gifford calls it, on the margin of the MS., was written in the autumn of 1818, at Ravenna. We extract the following from a review of the time:—"MAZEPPA is a very fine and spirited sketch of a very noble story, and is every way worthy of its author. The story is a well-known one; namely, that of the young Pole, who, being bound naked on the back of a wild horse, on account of an intrigue with the lady of a certain great noble of his country, was carried by his steed into the heart of the Ukraine, and being there picked up by some Cossacks, in a state apparently of utter hopelessness and exhaustion, recovered, and lived to be long after the prince and leader of the nation among whom he had arrived in this extraordinary manner. Lord Byron has represented the strange and wild incidents of this adventure, as being related in a half serious, half sportive way, by Mazeppa himself, to no less a person than Charles the Twelfth of Sweden, in some of whose last campaigns the Cossack Hetman took a distinguished part. He tells it during the desolate bivouac of Charles and the few friends who fled with him towards Turkey, after the bloody overthrow of Pultowa. There is not a little of beauty and gracefulness in this way of setting the picture;—the age of Mazeppa—the calm, practised indifference with which he now submits to the worst of fortune's deeds—the heroic, unthinking coldness of the royal