

Lucifer. And his father's?
Cain. What is that
 To me? should I not love that which all love?
Lucifer. And the Jehovah—the indulgent Lord,
 And bounteous planter of barr'd Paradise—
 He, too, looks smilingly on Abel.
Cain. I
 Ne'er saw him, and I know not if he smiles.
Lucifer. But you have seen his angels.
Cain. Rarely.
Lucifer. But
 Sufficiently to see they love your brother:
 His sacrifices are acceptable.
Cain. So be they! wherefore speak to me of this?
Lucifer. Because thou hast thought of this ere now.
Cain. And if
 I have thought, why recall a thought that—*(he*
pauses, as agitated)—Spirit!
 Here we are in thy world: speak not of mine. [those
 Thou hast shown me wonders; thou hast shown me
 Mighty pre-Adamites who walk'd the earth
 Of which ours is the wreck; thou hast pointed out
 Myriads of starry worlds, of which our own
 Is the dim and remote companion, in
 Infinity of life: thou hast shown me shadows
 Of that existence with the dreaded name
 Which my sire brought us—Death¹; thou hast
 shown me much—
 But not all: show me where Jehovah dwells,
 In his especial Paradise,—or thine:
 Where is it?
Lucifer. Here, and o'er all space.
Cain. But ye
 Have some allotted dwelling—as all things;
 Clay has its earth, and other worlds their tenants;
 All temporary breathing creatures their
 Peculiar element; and things which have
 Long ceased to breathe our breath, have theirs, thou
 say'st;
 And the Jehovah and thyself have thine—
 Ye do not dwell together?
Lucifer. No, we reign
 Together; but our dwellings are asunder.
Cain. Would there were only one of ye! perchance
 An unity of purpose might make union
 In elements which seem now jarr'd in storms.
 How came ye, being spirits, wise and infinite,
 To separate? Are ye not as brethren in
 Your essence, and your nature, and your glory?
Lucifer. Art thou not Abel's brother?
Cain. We are brethren,
 And so we shall remain; but were it not so,
 Is spirit like to flesh? can it fall out?
 Infinity with Immortality?
 Jarring and turning space to misery—
 For what?
Lucifer. To reign.

¹ ["Which my sire shrinks from—Death."—MS.]

² [In Lord Byron's Diary for January 28, 1821, we find the following entry:—

"Thought for a Speech of Lucifer, in the Tragedy of Cain.
 'Were Death an evil, would I let thee live?
 Fool! live as I live—as thy father lives,
 And thy sons' sons shall live for evermore!'"]

³ ["It would be to no purpose to suppose two such opposite principles. For, admit that a being infinitely mischievous were infinitely cunning, and infinitely powerful, yet it could do no evil, because the opposite principle, of infinite goodness,

Cain. Did ye not tell me that
 Ye are both eternal?
Lucifer. Yea!
Cain. And what I have seen,
 Yon blue immensity, is boundless?
Lucifer. Ay. [not
Cain. And cannot ye both reign then?—is there
 Enough?—why should ye differ?
Lucifer. We both reign.
Cain. But one of you makes evil.
Lucifer. Which?
Cain. Thou! for
 If thou canst do man good, why dost thou not?
Lucifer. And why not he who made? I made ye
 not;
 Ye are his creatures, and not mine.
Cain. Then leave us
 His creatures, as thou say'st we are, or show me
 Thy dwelling, or his dwelling.
Lucifer. I could show thee
 Both; but the time will come thou shalt see one
 Of them for evermore.²
Cain. And why not now?
Lucifer. Thy human mind hath scarcely grasp to
 gather
 The little I have shown thee into calm
 And clear thought; and thou wouldst go on aspiring
 To the great double Mysteries! the two Principles!³
 And gaze upon them on their secret thrones!
 Dust! limit thy ambition; for to see
 Either of these, would be for thee to perish!
Cain. And let me perish, so I see them!
Lucifer. There
 The son of her who snatch'd the apple spake!
 But thou wouldst only perish, and not see them;
 That sight is for the other state.
Cain. Of death?
Lucifer. That is the prelude.
Cain. Then I dread it less,
 Now that I know it leads to something definite.
Lucifer. And now I will convey thee to thy world,
 Where thou shalt multiply the race of Adam,
 Eat, drink, toil, tremble, laugh, weep, sleep, and die.
Cain. And to what end have I beheld these things
 Which thou hast shown me?
Lucifer. Didst thou not require
 Knowledge? And have I not, in what I show'd,
 Taught thee to know thyself?
Cain. Alas! I seem
 Nothing.
Lucifer. And this should be the human sum
 Of knowledge, to know mortal nature's nothingness:
 Bequeath that science to thy children, and
 'T will spare them many tortures.
Cain. Haughty spirit!
 Thou speak'st it proudly; but thyself, though proud,
 Hast a superior.

being also infinitely wise and powerful, they would tie up one another's hands: so that upon this supposition, the notion of a deity would signify just nothing; and, by virtue of the eternal opposition and equality of these principles, they would keep one another at perpetual bay; and, being an equal match for one another, instead of being two deities, they would be two idols, able to do neither good nor evil."—TILLOTSON.
 "Moral evil is occasioned by free will, which implies choice between good and evil. With all the evil that there is, there is no man but would rather be a free agent, than a mere machine without the evil; and what is best for each individual must be best for the whole. If a man would rather be the machine, I cannot agree with him."—JOHNSON.]

Lucifer. No! by heaven, which He
 Holds, and the abyss, and the immensity
 Of worlds and life, which I hold with him—No!
 I have a victor—true; but no superior.
 Homage he has from all—but none from me:
 I battle it against him, as I battled
 In highest heaven. Through all eternity,
 And the unfathomable gulfs of Hades,
 And the interminable realms of space,
 And the infinity of endless ages,
 All, all, will I dispute! And world by world,
 And star by star, and universe by universe,
 Shall tremble in the balance, till the great
 Conflict shall cease, if ever it shall cease,
 Which it ne'er shall, till he or I be quenched!
 And what can quench our immortality,
 Or mutual and irrevocable hate?
 He as a conqueror will call the conquer'd
 Evil; but what will be the good he gives?
 Were I the victor, his works would be deem'd
 The only evil ones. And you, ye new
 And scarce born mortals, what have been his gifts
 To you already, in your little world?¹
Cain. But few! and some of those but bitter.
Lucifer. Back
 With me, then, to thine earth, and try the rest
 Of his celestial boons to you and yours.
 Evil and good are things in their own essence,
 And not made good or evil by the giver;
 But if he gives you good—so call him; if
 Evil springs from him, do not name it mine,
 Till ye know better its true fount; and judge
 Not by words, though of spirits, but the fruits
 Of your existence, such as it must be.
 One good gift has the fatal apple given—
 Your reason:—let it not be over-sway'd
 By tyrannous threats to force you into faith
 'Gainst all external sense and inward feeling:
 Think and endure,—and form an inner world
 In your own bosom—where the outward fails;
 So shall you nearer be the spiritual
 Nature, and war triumphant with your own.²
 [They disappear.]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The Earth near Eden, as in Act I.

Enter CAIN and ADAH.

Adah. Hush! tread softly, Cain.
Cain. I will; but wherefore?

¹ ["Whatever we enjoy is purely a free gift from our Creator; but that we enjoy no more, can never sure be deemed an injury, or a just reason to question his infinite benevolence. All our happiness is owing to his goodness; and that it is no greater, is owing only to ourselves; that is, to our not having any inherent right to any happiness, or even to any existence at all."—JENYNS.]

² [As to the question of the origin of evil, Lord Byron has neither thrown any new light upon it, nor darkened the previous knowledge which we possessed. It remains just where it was, in its mighty, unfathomable obscurity. His Lordship may, it is true, have recapitulated some of the arguments with a more concise and cavalier air than the old schoolmen or fathers; but the result is the same. There is no poetical road to metaphysics. In one view, however, which our rhapsodist has taken of the subject, we conceive he has done well. He represents the temptations held out to Cain by Satan, as constantly succeeding and corresponding to some previous discontent and gloomy disposition in his

Adah. Our little Enoch sleeps upon yon bed
 Of leaves, beneath the cypress.
Cain. Cypress! 'tis
 A gloomy tree, which looks as if it mourn'd
 O'er what it shadows; wherefore didst thou choose it
 For our child's canopy?
Adah. Because its branches
 Shut out the sun like night, and therefore seem'd
 Fitting to shadow slumber.
Cain. Ay, the last—
 And longest; but no matter—lead me to him.
 [They go up to the child.]
 How lovely he appears! his little cheeks,
 In their pure incarnation, vying with
 The rose leaves strewn beneath them.
Adah. And his lips, too,
 How beautifully parted! No; you shall not
 Kiss him, at least not now: he will awake soon—
 His hour of mid-day rest is nearly over;
 But it were pity to disturb him till
 'T is closed.

Cain. You have said well; I will contain
 My heart till then. He smiles, and sleeps!—Sleep on
 And smile, thou little, young inheritor
 Of a world scarce less young: sleep on, and smile!
 Thine are the hours and days when both are cheering
 And innocent! thou hast not pluck'd the fruit—
 Thou know'st not thou art naked! Must the time
 Come thou shalt be amerced for sins unknown,
 Which were not mine nor thine? But now sleep on!
 His cheeks are reddening into deeper smiles,
 And shining lids are trembling o'er his long
 Lashes, dark as the cypress which waves o'er them;
 Half open, from beneath them the clear blue
 Laughs out, although in slumber. He must dream—
 Of what? Of Paradise!—Ay! dream of it,
 My disinherited boy! 'T is but a dream;
 For never more thyself, thy sons, nor fathers,
 Shall walk in that forbidden place of joy!³
Adah. Dear Cain! Nay, do not whisper o'er our son
 Such melancholy yearnings o'er the past:
 Why wilt thou always mourn for Paradise?
 Can we not make another?

Cain. Where?
Adah. Here, or
 Where'er thou wilt: where'er thou art, I feel not
 The want of this so much regretted Eden.
 Have I not thee, our boy, our sire, and brother,
 And Zillah—our sweet sister, and our Eve,
 To whom we owe so much besides our birth?
Cain. Yes—death, too, is amongst the debts we
 owe her. [hence,
Adah. Cain! that proud spirit, who withdrew thee

own mind; so that Lucifer is little more than the personified demon of his imagination; and further, the acts of guilt and folly into which Cain is hurried are not treated as accidental, or as occasioned by passing causes, but as springing from an internal fury, a morbid state akin to phrensy, a mind dissatisfied with itself and all things, and haunted by an insatiable, stubborn longing after knowledge rather than happiness, and a fatal proneness to dwell on the evil side of things rather than the good. We here see the dreadful consequences of not curbing this disposition (which is, after all, perhaps, the sin that most easily besets humanity), exemplified in a striking point of view; and we so far think, that the moral to be derived from a perusal of this Mystery is a valuable one.—JEFFREY.]

³ [The censorious may say what they will, but there are speeches in the mouth of Cain and Adah, especially regarding their child, which nothing in English poetry but the "wood-notes wild" of Shakspeare ever equalled.—SIR EGERTON BRYDGES.]

Hath sadden'd thine still deeper. I had hoped
The promised wonders which thou hast beheld,
Visions, thou say'st, of past and present worlds,
Would have compos'd thy mind into the calm
Of a contented knowledge; but I see
Thy guide hath done thee evil: still I thank him,
And can forgive him all, that he so soon
Hath given thee back to us.

Cain. So soon?
Adah. 'Tis scarcely
Two hours since ye departed: two long hours
To me, but only hours upon the sun.

Cain. And yet I have approach'd that sun, and seen
Worlds which he once shone on, and never more
Shall light; and worlds he never lit: methought
Years had roll'd o'er my absence.

Adah. Hardly hours.

Cain. The mind then hath capacity of time,
And measures it by that which it beholds,
Pleasing or painful; little or almighty.
I had beheld the immemorial works
Of endless beings; skirr'd extinguish'd worlds;
And, gazing on eternity, methought
I had borrow'd more by a few drops of ages
From its immensity; but now I feel
My littleness again. Well said the spirit,
That I was nothing!

Adah. Wherefore said he so?
Jehovah said not that.

Cain. No: he contents him
With making us the *nothing* which we are;
And after flattering dust with glimpses of
Eden and Immortality, resolves
It back to dust again—for what?

Adah. Thou know'st—
Even for our parents' error.

Cain. What is that
To us? they sinn'd, then *let them die!* [thought
Adah. Thou hast not spoken well, nor is that
Thy own, but of the spirit who was with thee.
Would I could die for them, so *they* might live!

Cain. Why, so say I—provided that one victim
Might satiate the insatiable of life,
And that our little rosy sleeper there
Might never taste of death nor human sorrow,
Nor hand it down to those who spring from him. [day
Adah. How know we that some such atonement one
May not redeem our race?

Cain. By sacrificing
The harmless for the guilty? what atonement
Were there? why, *we* are innocent: what have we
Done, that we must be victims for a deed
Before our birth, or need have victims to
Atone for this mysterious, nameless sin—
If it be such a sin to seek for knowledge?

Adah. Alas! thou sinnest now, my Cain: thy words
Sound impious in mine ears.

Cain. Then leave me!
Adah. Never,
Though thy God left thee.

Cain. Say, what have we here?
Adah. Two altars, which our brother Abel made
During thine absence, whereupon to offer
A sacrifice to God on thy return.

¹ [The third Act shows us Cain gloomily lamenting over the future fortunes of his infant son, and withstanding all the consolations and entreaties of Adah, who is anxious to soften him to the task of submission and to a participation in the

Cain. And how knew *he*, that I would be so ready
With the burnt offerings, which he daily brings
With a meek brow, whose base humility
Shows more of fear than worship, as a bribe
To the Creator?

Adah. Surely, 'tis well done.
Cain. One altar may suffice; I have no offering.
Adah. The fruits of the earth, the early, beautiful
Blossom and bud, and bloom of flowers and fruits,
These are a goodly offering to the Lord,
Given with a gentle and a contrite spirit.

Cain. I have toil'd, and till'd, and sweat in the sun
According to the curse:—must I do more?
For what should I be gentle? for a war
With all the elements ere they will yield
The bread we eat? For what must I be grateful?
For being dust, and grovelling in the dust,
Till I return to dust? If I am nothing—
For nothing shall I be an hypocrite,
And seem well-pleas'd with pain? For what should I
Be contrite? for my father's sin, already
Expiate with what we all have undergone,
And to be more than expiated by
The ages prophesied, upon our seed.
Little deems our young blooming sleeper, there,
The germs of an eternal misery
To myriads is within him! better 'twere
I snatch'd him in his sleep, and dash'd him 'gainst
The rocks, than let him live to—

Adah. Oh, my God!
Touch not the child—my child! *thy* child! Oh
Cain!

Cain. Fear not! for all the stars, and all the power
Which sways them, I would not accost yon infant
With ruder greeting than a father's kiss.

Adah. Then, why so awful in thy speech?
Cain. I said,

'T were better that he ceased to live, than give
Life to so much of sorrow as he must
Endure, and, harder still, bequeath; but since
That saying jars you, let us only say—
'T were better that he never had been born.

Adah. Oh, do not say so! Where were then the joys,
The mother's joys of watching, nourishing,
And loving him? Soft! he awakes. Sweet Enoch!
[*She goes to the child.*

Oh Cain! look on him; see how full of life,
Of strength, of bloom, of beauty, and of joy,
How like to me—how like to thee, when gentle,
For *then* we are *all* alike; is't not so, Cain?
Mother, and sire, and son, our features are
Reflected in each other; as they are
In the clear waters, when *they* are *gentle*, and
When *thou* art *gentle*. Love us, then, my Cain!
And love thyself for our sakes, for we love thee.
Look! how he laughs and stretches out his arms,
And opens wide his blue eyes upon thine,
To hail his father; while his little form
Flutters as wing'd with joy. Talk not of pain!
The childless cherubs well might envy thee
The pleasures of a parent! Bless him, Cain!
As yet he hath no words to thank thee, but
His heart will, and thine own too.¹

Cain. Bless thee, boy!

sacrifice which his brother is about to offer. Here are some passages of no common beauty. That which strikes us most is when the parents are hanging over their sleeping boy.—
HEBER.]

If that a mortal blessing may avail thee,
To save thee from the serpent's curse!

Adah. It shall.
Surely a father's blessing may avert
A reptile's subtlety.

Cain. Of that I doubt;
But bless him ne'er the less.

Adah. Our brother comes.
Cain. Thy brother Abel.

Enter ABEL.

Abel. Welcome, Cain! My brother,
The peace of God be on thee!

Cain. Abel, hail!

Abel. Our sister tells me that thou hast been wan-
dering,

In high communion with a spirit, far
Beyond our wonted range. Was he of those
We have seen and spoken with, like to our father?

Cain. No.
Abel. Why then commune with him? he may be
A foe to the Most High.

Cain. And friend to man.
Has the Most High been so—if so you term him?

Abel. Term him! your words are strange to-day,
my brother.

My sister Adah, leave us for awhile—
We mean to sacrifice.

Adah. Farewell, my Cain;
But first embrace thy son. May his soft spirit,
And Abel's pious ministry, recall thee
To peace and holiness!

[*Exit ADAH, with her child.*

Abel. Where hast thou been?

Cain. I know not.
Abel. Nor what thou hast seen?
Cain. The dead,

The immortal, the unbounded, the omnipotent,
The overpowering mysteries of space—
The innumerable worlds that were and are—
A whirlwind of such overwhelming things, [spheres
Suns, moons, and earths, upon their loud-voiced
Singing in thunder round me, as have made me
Unfit for mortal converse: leave me, Abel.

Abel. Thine eyes are flashing with unnatural light—
Thy cheek is flush'd with an unnatural hue—
Thy words are fraught with an unnatural sound—
What may this mean?

Cain. It means—I pray thee, leave me.
Abel. Not till we have pray'd and sacrificed together.

Cain. Abel, I pray thee, sacrifice alone—
Jehovah loves thee well.

Abel. Both well, I hope.
Cain. But thee the better: I care not for that;
Thou art fitter for his worship than I am;
Revere him, then—but let it be alone—
At least, without me.

Abel. Brother, I should ill
Deserve the name of our great father's son,
If, as my elder, I revered thee not,
And in the worship of our God call'd not
On thee to join me, and precede me in
Our priesthood—'tis thy place.

Cain. But I have ne'er
Asserted it.

Abel. The more my grief; I pray thee
To do so now: thy soul seems labouring in
Some strong delusion; it will calm thee.

Cain. No;
Nothing can calm me more. *Calm!* say I? Never
Knew I what calm was in the soul, although
I have seen the elements still'd. My Abel, leave me!
Or let me leave thee to thy pious purpose.

Abel. Neither; we must perform our task together.
Spurn me not.

Cain. If it must be so—well, then,
What shall I do?

Abel. Choose one of those two altars.
Cain. Choose for me: they to me are so much turf
And stone.

Abel. Choose thou!

Cain. I have chosen.

Abel. 'Tis the highest,
And suits thee, as the elder. Now prepare
Thine offerings.

Cain. Where are thine?
Abel. Behold them here—

The firstlings of the flock, and fat thereof—
A shepherd's humble offering.

Cain. I have no flocks;
I am a tiller of the ground, and must
Yield what it yieldeth to my toil—its fruit:

[*He gathers fruits.*
Behold them in their various bloom and ripeness.

[*They dress their altars, and kindle a flame
upon them.*

Abel. My brother, as the elder, offer first
Thy prayer and thanksgiving with sacrifice.

Cain. No—I am new to this; lead thou the way,
And I will follow—as I may.

Abel (*kneeling*). Oh God!

Who made us, and who breathed the breath of life
Within our nostrils, who hath blessed us,
And spared, despite our father's sin, to make
His children all lost, as they might have been,
Had not thy justice been so temper'd with
The mercy which is thy delight, as to
Accord a pardon like a Paradise,

Compared with our great crimes:—Sole Lord of light!
Of good, and glory, and eternity;
Without whom all were evil, and with whom
Nothing can err, except to some good end
Of thine omnipotent benevolence—

Inscrutable, but still to be fulfill'd—
Accept from out thy humble first of shepherd's
First of the first-born flocks—an offering,
In itself nothing—as what offering can be
Aught unto thee?—but yet accept it for
The thanksgiving of him who spreads it in
The face of thy high heaven, bowing his own
Even to the dust, of which he is, in honour
Of thee, and of thy name, for evermore!

Cain (*standing erect during this speech*). Spirit!
whate'er or whose'er thou art,
Omnipotent, it may be—and, if good,
Shown in the exemption of thy deeds from evil;
Jehovah upon earth! and God in heaven!
And it may be with other names, because
Thine attributes seem many, as thy works:—

If thou must be propitiated with prayers,
Take them! If thou must be induced with altars,
And soften'd with a sacrifice, receive them!
Two beings here erect them unto thee. [smokes

If thou lov'st blood, the shepherd's shrine, which
On my right hand, hath shed it for thy service
In the first of his flock, whose limbs now reek

In sanguinary incense to thy skies ;
Or if the sweet and blooming fruits of earth,
And milder seasons, which the unstain'd turf
I spread them on now offers in the face
Of the broad sun which ripen'd them, may seem
Good to thee, inasmuch as they have not
Suffer'd in limb or life, and rather form
A sample of thy works, than supplication
To look on ours ! If a shrine without victim,
And altar without gore, may win thy favour,
Look on it ! and for him who dresses it,
He is—such as thou mad'st him ; and seeks nothing
Which must be won by kneeling : if he's evil,
Strike him ! thou art omnipotent, and may'st—
For what can he oppose ? If he be good,
Strike him, or spare him, as thou wilt ! since all
Rests upon thee ; and good and evil seem
To have no power themselves, save in thy will ;
And whether that be good or ill I know not,
Not being omnipotent, nor fit to judge
Omnipotence, but merely to endure
Its mandate ; which thus far I have endured.

[The fire upon the altar of ABEL kindles into a column of the brightest flame, and ascends to heaven ; while a whirlwind throws down the altar of CAIN, and scatters the fruits abroad upon the earth.]

Abel (kneeling). Oh, brother, pray ! Jehovah's wroth
with thee.

Cain. Why so ?

Abel. Thy fruits are scatter'd on the earth.
Cain. From earth they came, to earth let them
return ;

Their seed will bear fresh fruit there ere the summer :
Thy burnt flesh-off'ring prospers better ; see
How heav'n licks up the flames, when thick with
blood !

Abel. Think not upon my offering's acceptance,
But make another of thine own before
It is too late.

Cain. I will build no more altars,
Nor suffer any.—

Abel (rising). Cain ! what meanest thou ?

Cain. To cast down yon vile flatt'rer of the clouds,
The smoky harbinger of thy dull pray'rs—
Thine altar, with its blood of lambs and kids,
Which fed on milk, to be destroy'd in blood.

Abel (opposing him). Thou shalt not :—add not
impious works to impious

Words ! let that altar stand—'t is hallow'd now
By the immortal pleasure of Jehovah,
In his acceptance of the victims.

Cain. His !

His pleasure ! what was his high pleasure in
The fumes of scorching flesh and smoking blood,

¹ [It is evident that Lord Byron had studied his subject very deeply ; and, though he has varied a little from, or gone a little beyond, the letter of Scripture, which is very concise, yet he has apparently entered with great exactness into the minds of Cain and Abel in this most interesting scene : and were it allowable to ascribe to the author of a dramatic work the principles or feelings of all or any of his characters, except as adopting them for his particular purpose, one would be at a loss to say, whether Lord Byron ought most to be identified with Cain, or with Abel ; so appropriately has he maintained the character of each.—GRANT'S "Notes on Cain," p. 401.]

² [As a whole, this scene is heavy and clumsily managed. It can hardly fail to strike the reader as a defect in poetry, no less than a departure from history, that the event which is the

To the pain of the bleating mothers, which
Still yearn for their dead offspring ? or the pangs
Of the sad ignorant victims underneath
Thy pious knife ? Give way ! this bloody record
Shall not stand in the sun, to shame creation !

Abel. Brother, give back ! thou shalt not touch my
altar

With violence : if that thou wilt adopt it,
To try another sacrifice, 't is thine.

Cain. Another sacrifice ! Give way, or else
That sacrifice may be—

Abel. What mean'st thou ?

Cain. Give—
Give way !—thy God loves blood !—then look to
it :—

Give way, ere he hath more !

Abel. In his great name,
I stand between thee and the shrine which hath
Had his acceptance.

Cain. If thou lov'st thyself,
Stand back till I have strew'd this turf along
Its native soil :—else—

Abel (opposing him). I love God far more
Than life.¹

Cain (striking him with a brand, on the temples,
which he snatches from the altar).

Then take thy life unto thy God,
Since he loves lives.

Abel (falls). What hast thou done, my brother ?

Cain. Brother !

Abel. Oh, God ! receive thy servant, and
Forgive his slayer, for he knew not what
He did—Cain, give me—give me thy hand ; and tell
Poor Zillah—

Cain (after a moment's stupefaction). My hand !
't is all red, and with—

What ?

[A long pause.—Looking slowly round.
Where am I ? alone ! Where's Abel ? where

Cain ? Can it be that I am he ? My brother,
Awake !—why liest thou so on the green earth ?
'T is not the hour of slumber ;—why so pale ?

What, hast thou !—thou wert full of life this morn !
Abel ! I pray thee, mock me not ! I smote
Too fiercely, but not fatally. Ah, why

Wouldst thou oppose me ? This is mockery ;
And only done to daunt me :—'t was a blow—
And but a blow. Stir—stir—nay, only stir !

Why, so—that's well !—thou breath'st ! breathe
Oh, God ! Oh, God ! [upon me !

Abel (very faintly). What's he who speaks of God ?

Cain. Thy murderer.

Abel. Then may God forgive him ! Cain,
Comfort poor Zillah :—she has but one brother
Now. [ABEL dies. ²

cataprophe of the drama, is no otherwise than incidentally we may say accidentally, produced by those which precede it. Cain, whose whole character is represented in Scripture as envious and malicious, rather than impious ;—this Cain, as painted by Lord Byron, has no quarrel with his brother whatever, nor, except in a single word, does he intimate any jealousy of him. Two acts, and half the third, are passed without our advancing a single step towards the conclusion ; and Abel at length falls by a random blow given in a struggle of which the object is not his destruction, but the overthrow of Jehovah's altar. If we could suppose a reader to sit down to the perusal of the drama in ignorance of its catastrophe, he could scarcely be less surprised by its termination in such a stroke of chance-medley, than if Abel had been made to drop down in an apoplexy, or Cain to die of grief over his body.—HEBER.]

Cain. And I none !—Who makes me brotherless ?
His eyes are open ! then he is not dead !
Death is like sleep ; and sleep shuts down our lids.
His lips, too, are apart ; why then he breathes !
And yet I feel it not.—His heart !—his heart !—
Let me see, doth it beat ? methinks—No !—no !
This is a vision, else I am become
The native of another and worse world. [wet ;
The earth swims round me :—what is this ?—'t is
[Puts his hand to his brow, and then looks at it.
And yet there are no dew's ! 'T is blood—my blood—
My brother's and my own ! and shed by me !
Then what have I further to do with life,
Since I have taken life from my own flesh ?
But he can not be dead !—Is silence death ?
No ; he will wake : then let me watch by him.
Life cannot be so slight, as to be quench'd
Thus quickly !—he hath spoken to me since—
What shall I say to him ?—My brother !—No :
He will not answer to that name ; for brethren
Smite not each other. Yet—yet—speak to me.
Oh ! for a word more of that gentle voice,
That I may bear to hear my own again !

Enter ZILLAH.

Zillah. I heard a heavy sound ; what can it be ?
'T is Cain ; and watching by my husband. What
Dost thou there, brother ? Doth he sleep ? Oh,
heav'n ! [no !

What means this paleness, and yon stream ?—No,
It is not blood ; for who would shed his blood ?
Abel ! what's this ?—who hath done this ? He
moves not ;

He breathes not : and his hands drop down from mine
With stony lifelessness ! Ah ! cruel Cain !
Why can'st thou not in time to save him from
This violence ? Whatever hath assail'd him,
Thou wert the stronger, and should'st have stepp'd in
Between him and aggression ! Father !—Eve !—
Adah !—come hither ! Death is in the world !

[Exit ZILLAH, calling on her Parents, &c.
Cain (solus). And who hath brought him there ?
—I— who abhor

The name of Death so deeply, that the thought
Empoison'd all my life, before I knew
His aspect— I have led him here, and giv'n
My brother to his cold and still embrace,
As if he would not have asserted his
Inexorable claim without my aid.
I am awake at last—a dreary dream
Had madden'd me ;—but he shall ne'er awake !

Enter ADAM, EVE, ADAH, and ZILLAH.

Adam. A voice of woe from Zillah brings me
here.—
What do I see ?—'T is true !—My son !—my son !
Woman, behold the serpent's work, and thine !

[To EVE.
Eve. Oh ! speak not of it now : the serpent's fangs
Are in my heart. My best beloved, Abel !
Jehovah ! this is punishment beyond
A mother's sin, to take him from me !

Adam. Who, [thou
Or what hath done this deed ?—speak, Cain, since
Wert present ; was it some more hostile angel,

¹ [The three last lines were not in the original MS. In forwarding them to Mr. Murray, to be added to Eve's speech, Lord Byron says—“ There's as pretty a piece of imprecation

Who walks not with Jehovah ? or some wild
Brute of the forest ?

Eve. Ah ! a livid light
Breaks through, as from a thunder-cloud ! yon brand,
Massy and bloody ! snatch'd from off the altar,
And black with smoke, and red with—

Adam. Speak, my son !
Speak, and assure us, wretched as we are,
That we are not more miserable still.

Adah. Speak, Cain ! and say it was not thou !
Eve. It was.

I see it now—he hangs his guilty head,
And covers his ferocious eye with hands
Incarnadine.

Adah. Mother, thou dost him wrong—
Cain ! clear thee from this horrible accusal,
Which grief wrings from our parent.

Eve. Hear, Jehovah !
May the eternal serpent's curse be on him !
For he was fitter for his seed than ours.
May all his days be desolate. May—

Adah. Hold !
Curse him not, mother, for he is thy son—
Curse him not, mother, for he is my brother,
And my betroth'd.

Eve. He hath left thee no brother—
Zillah no husband—me no son !—for thus
I curse him from my sight for evermore !

All bonds I break between us ! as he broke
That of his nature, in yon—Oh death ! death !
Why didst thou not take me, who first incur'd thee ?
Why dost thou not so now ?

Adam. Eve ! let not this,
Thy natural grief, lead to impiety !
A heavy doom was long forespoken to us ;
And now that it begins, let it be borne
In such sort as may show our God, that we
Are faithful servants to his holy will.

Eve (pointing to Cain). His will !! the will of yon
incarnate spirit

Of death, whom I have brought upon the earth
To strew it with the dead. May all the curses
Of life be on him ! and his agonies
Drive him forth o'er the wilderness, like us
From Eden, till his children do by him
As he did by his brother ! May the swords
And wings of fiery cherubim pursue him
By day and night—snakes spring up in his path—
Earth's fruits be ashes in his mouth—the leaves
On which he lays his head to sleep be strew'd
With scorpions ! May his dreams be of his victim !
His waking a continual dread of death !

May the clear rivers turn to blood as he
Stoops down to stain them with his raging lip !
May every element shun or change to him !
May he live in the pangs which others die with !
And death itself wax something worse than death
To him who first acquainted him with man !
Hence, fratricide ! henceforth that word is Cain,
Through all the coming myriads of mankind,
Who shall abhor thee, though thou wert their sire !
May the grass wither from thy feet ! the woods
Deny thee shelter ! earth a home ! the dust
A grave ! the sun his light ! and heaven her God !
[Exit EVE.

for you, when joined to the lines already sent, as you may wish to meet with in the course of your business. But don't forget the addition of these three lines, which are clinchers to Eve's

Adam. Cain! get thee forth: we dwell no more together.

Depart! and leave the dead to me—I am Henceforth alone—we never must meet more. [not

Adah. Oh, part not with him thus, my father: do Add thy deep curse to Eve's upon his head!

Adam. I curse him not: his spirit be his curse. Come, Zillah!

Zillah. I must watch my husband's corse.

Adam. We will return again, when he is gone Who hath provided for us this dread office.

Come, Zillah!

Zillah. Yet one kiss on yon pale clay, And those lips once so warm—my heart! my heart!

[*Exeunt ADAM and ZILLAH, weeping.*]

Adah. Cain! thou hast heard, we must go forth.

I am ready, So shall our children be. I will bear Enoch, And you his sister. Ere the sun declines

Let us depart, nor walk the wilderness Under the cloud of night.—Nay, speak to me,

To me—*thine own.*

Cain. Leave me!

Adah. Why, all have left thee.

Cain. And wherefore lingerest thou? Dost thou not fear

To dwell with one who hath done this?

Adah. I fear

Nothing except to leave thee, much as I Shrink from the deed which leaves thee brotherless.

I must not speak of this—it is between thee And the great God.

A Voice from within exclaims, Cain! Cain!

Adah. Hear'st thou that voice?

The Voice within. Cain! Cain!

Adah. It soundeth like an angel's tone.

Enter the ANGEL of the Lord.

Angel. Where is thy brother Abel?

Cain. Am I then

My brother's keeper?

Angel. Cain! what hast thou done?

The voice of thy slain brother's blood cries out, Even from the ground, unto the Lord!—Now art thou

Cursed from the earth, which open'd late her mouth To drink thy brother's blood from thy rash hand.

Henceforth, when thou shalt till the ground, it shall not

Yield thee her strength; a fugitive shalt thou

Be from this day, and vagabond on earth!

Adah. This punishment is more than he can bear.

Behold, thou drivest him from the face of earth,

And from the face of God shall he be hid.

A fugitive and vagabond on earth,

'Twill come to pass, that whoso findeth him

Shall slay him.

Cain. Would they could! but who are they Shall slay me? Where are these on the lone earth

As yet unpeopled?

Angel. Thou hast slain thy brother,

And who shall warrant thee against thy son?

speech. Let me know what Gifford thinks, for I have a good opinion of the piece, as poetry; it is in my gay metaphysical style, and in the Manfred line."

¹ The "four rivers" which flowed round Eden, and consequently the only waters with which Cain was acquainted upon earth.

Adah. Angel of Light! be merciful, nor say That this poor aching breast now nourishes A murderer in my boy, and of his father.

Angel. Then he would but be what his father is.

Did not the milk of Eve give nutriment

To him thou now see'st so besmear'd with blood?

The fratricide might well engender parricides.—

But it shall not be so—the Lord thy God

And mine commandeth me to set his seal

On Cain, so that he may go forth in safety.

Who slayeth Cain, a sevenfold vengeance shall

Be taken on his head. Come hither!

Cain. What

Wouldst thou with me?

Angel. To mark upon thy brow

Exemption from such deeds as thou hast done.

Cain. No, let me die!

Angel. It must not be.

[*The ANGEL sets the mark on CAIN'S brow.*]

Cain. It burns

My brow, but nought to that which is within it.

Is there more? let me meet it as I may.

Angel. Stern hast thou been and stubborn from

the womb,

As the ground thou must henceforth till; but he

Thou slew'st was gentle as the flocks he tended.

Cain. After the fall too soon was I begotten;

Ere yet my mother's mind subsided from

The serpent, and my sire still mourn'd for Eden.

That which I am, I am; I did not seek

For life, nor did I make myself; but could I

With my own death redeem him from the dust—

And why not so? let him return to day,

And I lie ghastly! so shall be restored

By God the life to him he loved; and taken

From me a being I ne'er loved to bear.

Angel. Who shall heal murder? what is done is

done;

Go forth! fulfil thy days! and be thy deeds

Unlike the last! [*The ANGEL disappears.*]

Adah. He's gone, let us go forth;

I hear our little Enoch cry within

Our bower.

Cain. Ah! little knows he what he weeps for!

And I who have shed blood cannot shed tears!

But the four rivers¹ would not cleanse my soul.

Think'st thou my boy will bear to look on me?

Adah. If I thought that he would not, I would—

Cain (*interrupting her*). No,

No more of threats: we have had too many of them:

Go to our children; I will follow thee.

Adah. I will not leave thee lonely with the dead;

Let us depart together.²

Cain. Oh! thou dead

And everlasting witness! whose unsinking

Blood darkens earth and heaven! what thou *now* art

I know not! but if *thou* see'st what *I* am,

I think thou wilt forgive him, whom his God

Can ne'er forgive, nor his own soul.—Farewell!

I must not, dare not touch what I have made thee.

I, who sprung from the same womb with thee, drain'd

The same breast, clasp'd thee often to my own,

² [The catastrophe is brought about with great dramatic skill and effect. The murderer is sorrowful and confounded, — his parents reprobate and renounce him, — his wife clings to him with eager and unhesitating affection; and they wander forth together into the vast solitude of the universe. — JEFFREY.]

In fondness brotherly and boyish, I

Can never meet thee more, nor even dare

To do that for thee, which thou shouldst have done

For me—compose thy limbs into their grave—

The first grave yet dug for mortality.

But who hath dug that grave? Oh, earth! Oh, earth!

For all the fruits thou hast render'd to me, I

Give thee back this.—Now for the wilderness.

[*ADAH stoops down and kisses the body of ABEL.*]

Adah. A dreary, and an early doom, my brother,

Has been thy lot! Of all who mourn for thee,

I alone must not weep. My office is

Henceforth to dry up tears, and not to shed them:

But yet, of all who mourn, none mourn like me,

¹ [The reader has seen what Sir Walter Scott's general opinion of "Cain" was, in the letter appended to the Dedication, *ante*, p. 317. Mr. Moore's was conveyed to Lord Byron in these words:—

"I have read Foscari and Cain. The former does not please me so highly as Sardanapalus. It has the fault of all those violent Venetian stories; being unnatural and improbable, and therefore, in spite of all your fine management of them, appealing but remotely to one's sympathies. But Cain is wonderful—terrible—never to be forgotten. If I am not mistaken, it will sink deep into the world's heart; and while many will shudder at its blasphemy, all must fall prostrate before its grandeur. Talk of Æschylus and his Prometheus! here is the true spirit both of the Poet—and the Devil."

Lord Byron's answer to Mr. Moore on this occasion contains the substance of all that he ever thought fit to advance in defence of the assaulted points in his "Mystery":—

"With respect to religion," he says, "can I never convince you that I hold no such opinions as the characters in that drama, which seems to have frightened every body? My ideas of a character may run away with me: like all imaginative men, I, of course, embody myself with the character, while I *draw* it, but not a moment after the pen is from off the paper."

He thus alludes to the effects of the critical tempest excited by "Cain," in the eleventh canto of "Don Juan":—

"In twice five years the 'greatest living poet,'

Like to the champion in the fusty ring,

Is call'd on to support his claim, or show it,

Although 'tis an imaginary thing.

Even I—albeit I'm sure I did not know it,

Nor sought of foolscap subjects to be king—

Was reckon'd, a considerable time,

The grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme.

"But Juan was my Moscow, and Faliero

My Leipsic, and my Mont Saint Jean seems Cain."

We shall now present the reader with a few of the most elaborate summaries of the contemporary critics,—favourable and unfavourable—beginning with the Edinburgh Review.

Mr. Jeffrey says,—"Though 'Cain' abounds in beautiful passages, and shows more *power*, perhaps, than any of the author's dramatical compositions, we regret very much that it should ever have been published. . . . Lord Byron has no priestlike cant or priestlike reviling to apprehend from us. We do not charge him with being either a disciple or an apostle of Lucifer; nor do we describe his poetry as a mere compound of blasphemy and obscenity. On the contrary, we are inclined to believe that he wishes well to the happiness of mankind, and are glad to testify that his poems abound with sentiments of great dignity and tenderness, as well as passages of infinite sublimity and beauty. . . . Philosophy and poetry are both very good things in their way; but, in our opinion, they do not go very well together. It is but a poor and pedantic sort of poetry that seeks to embody nothing but metaphysical subtleties and abstract deductions of reason—and a very suspicious philosophy that aims at establishing its doctrines by appeals to the passions and the fancy. Though such arguments, however, are worth little in the schools, it does not follow that their effect is inconsiderable in the world. On the contrary, it is the mischief of all poetical paradoxes, that, from the very limits and end of poetry, which deals only in obvious and glancing views, they are never brought to the fair test of argument. An allusion to a doubtful topic will

Not only for thyself, but him who slew thee.

Now, Cain! I will divide thy burden with thee.

Cain. Eastward from Eden will we take our way:

'Tis the most desolate, and suits my steps. [*God*

Adah. Lead! thou shalt be my guide, and may our

Be thine! Now let us carry forth our children.

Cain. And *he* who lieth there was childless. I

Have dried the fountain of a gentle race,

Which might have graced his recent marriage couch,

And might have temper'd this stern blood of mine,

Uniting with our children Abel's offspring!

O Abel!

Adah. Peace be with him!

Cain. But with me!¹

[*Exeunt.*]

often pass for a definitive conclusion on it; and, clothed in beautiful language, may leave the most pernicious impressions behind. We therefore think that poets ought fairly to be confined to the established creed and morality of their country, or to the *actual* passions and sentiments of mankind; and that poetical dreamers and sophists who pretend to *theorise* according to their feverish fancies, without a warrant from authority or reason, ought to be banished the commonwealth of letters. In the courts of morality, poets are unexceptionable *witnesses*: they may give in the evidence, and depose to facts whether good or ill; but we demur to their arbitrary and self-pleasing summing up; they are suspected *judges*, and not very often safe advocates, where great questions are concerned, and universal principles brought to issue."

The Reviewer in the Quarterly was the late Bishop Heber. His article ends as follows:—

"We do not think, indeed, that there is much vigour or poetical propriety in any of the characters of Lord Byron's *Mystery*. Eve, on one occasion, and one only, expresses herself with energy, and not even then with any great depth of that maternal feeling which the death of her favourite son was likely to excite in her. Adam moralises without dignity. Abel is as dull as he is pious. Lucifer, though his first appearance is well conceived, is as sententious and sarcastic as a Scotch metaphysician; and the gravamina which drive Cain into impiety are circumstances which could only produce a similar effect on a weak and sluggish mind,—the necessity of exertion and the fear of death! Yet, in the happiest climate of earth, and amid the early vigour of nature, it would be absurd to describe (nor has Lord Byron so described it) the toil to which Cain can have been subject as excessive or burdensome. And he is made too happy in his love, too extravagantly fond of his wife and his child, to have much leisure for those gloomy thoughts which belong to disappointed ambition and jaded licentiousness. Nor, though there are some passages in this drama of no common power, is the general tone of its poetry so excellent as to atone for these imperfections of design. The dialogue is cold and constrained. The descriptions are like the shadows of a phantasmagoria, at once indistinct and artificial. Except Adah, there is no person in whose fortunes we are interested; and we close the book with no distinct or clinging recollection of any single passage in it, and with the general impression only that Lucifer has said much and done little, and that Cain has been unhappy without grounds and wicked without an object. But if, as a poem, Cain is little qualified to add to Lord Byron's reputation, we are unfortunately constrained to observe that its poetical defects are the very smallest of its demerits. It is not, indeed, as some both of its admirers and its enemies appear to have supposed, a direct attack on Scripture and on the authority of Moses. The expressions of Cain and Lucifer are not more offensive to the ears of piety than such discourses must necessarily be, or than Milton, without offence, has put into the mouths of beings similarly situated. And though the intention is evident which has led the Atheists and Jacobins (the terms are convertible) of our metropolis to circulate the work in a cheap form among the populace, we are not ourselves of opinion that it possesses much power of active mischief, or that many persons will be very deeply or lastingly impressed by insinuations which lead to no practical result, and difficulties which so obviously transcend the range of human experience."

It is not unamusing to compare the above with the following paragraph in one of the Bishop's private letters at the time:—

"I have been very busy since I came home in reviewing Lord Byron's dramatic poems. Of course, I have had occasion to find a reasonable quantity of fault, but I do not think

that I have done him injustice. 'Pereant qui ante nos nostra dixerunt.' I should have liked to have taken up the same ground in a great degree with Jeffrey; but, as it will never do to build on another man's foundation, I have been obliged to break ground on a different side of the fortress, though not, I think, so favourable a one, and with the disadvantage of contending against a rival, who has conducted his attack with admirable taste and skill."

The following extract is from Mr. Campbell's Magazine:—

"'Cain' is altogether of a higher order than 'Sardanapalus' and the 'Two Foscari.' Lord Byron has not, indeed, fulfilled our expectations of a gigantic picture of the first murderer; for there is scarcely any passion, except the immediate agony of rage, which brings on the catastrophe; and Cain himself is little more than the subject of supernatural agency. This piece is essentially nothing but a vehicle for striking allusions to the mighty abstractions of Death and Life, Eternity and Time; for vast but dim descriptions of the regions of space, and for daring disputations on that great problem, the origin of evil. The groundwork of the arguments on the awful subjects handled is very common-place; but they are arrayed in great majesty of language, and conducted with a frightful audacity. The direct attacks on the goodness of God are not, perhaps, taken apart, bolder than some passages of Milton; but they inspire quite a different sensation; because, in thinking of Paradise Lost, we never regard the Deity, or Satan, as other than great adverse powers, created by the imagination of the poet. The personal identity which Milton has given to his spiritual intelligences,—the local habitations which he has assigned them,—the material beauty with which he has invested their forms,—all these remove the idea of impurity from their discourses. But we know nothing of Lord Byron's Lucifer, except his speeches: he is invented only that he may utter them; and the whole appears an abstract discussion, held for its own sake, not maintained in order to serve the dramatic consistency of the persons. He has made no attempt to imitate Milton's plastic power;—that power by which our great poet has made his Heaven and Hell, and the very regions of space, sublime realities, palpable to the imagination, and has traced the lineaments of his angelic messengers with the precision of a sculptor. The Lucifer of 'Cain' is a mere bodiless abstraction,—the shadow of a dogma; and all the scenery over which he presides is dim, vague, and seen only in faint outline. There is, no doubt, a very uncommon power displayed, even in this shadowing out of the ethereal journey of the spirit and his victim, and in the vast sketch of the world of phantasms at which they arrive: but they are utterly unlike the massive grandeur of Milton's creation. We are far from imputing intentional impiety to Lord Byron for this Mystery; nor, though its language occasionally shocks, do we apprehend any danger will arise from its perusal."

So much for the professed Reviewers. We shall conclude with a passage from Sir Egerton Brydges's "Letters on the Character and Genius of Lord Byron:—

"One of the pieces which have had the effect of throwing the most unfavourable hues, not upon the brilliancy of Lord Byron's poetry, but upon its results to society, is 'Cain.' Yet, it must be confessed, that there is no inconsiderable portion of that poem which is second only to portions of similar import in Milton,—and many of them *not second*; in a style still sweeter and more eloquent, and with equal force, grandeur, and purity of sentiment and conception; such as the most rigidly-religious mind would have read, if it had come from Milton, or any other poet whose piety was not suspected, as the effusion of something approaching to holy inspiration.

"Let us then task our candour, and inquire of ourselves, whether he who could write such passages could *mean* wrong? Let us recollect, that as the rebellious and blasphemous speeches he has put into the mouths of Lucifer and Cain are warranted by Milton's example, and the fact of Cain's transgression recorded in the Bible, the omission of the design and filling up a character who should answer all those speeches might be a mere defect in the poet's judgment. He might think that Lucifer's known character as an *Evil Spirit* precluded his arguments from the sanction of authority; and that Cain's punishment, and the denunciations which accompanied it, were a sufficient warning. I know not that any objection has been made to 'Heaven and Earth.' It has the same cast of excellence as the more perfect parts of 'Cain,' but, perhaps, not quite so intense in degree.

"It seems as if Lord Byron persuaded himself, with regard to his own being, that he had always within him two contrary spirits of good and evil contending for the dominion over him, and thus reconciled those extraordinary flights of intellectual elevation and purity with a submission to the pride, the ferocity, the worldly passions, the worldly enjoyments, the corporeal pastimes, the familiar humour, the vulgarisms, the rough and coarse manliness, to which he alternately surrendered himself, and which the *good-natured* public chose to consider as the sole attributes of his personal character. Much of his time, however, must have been spent in the musings by which these high poems, so compacted of the essence of thought, were produced; and, in all this large portion of his existence here, his imagination must have borne him up on its wings into ethereal regions, far above the gross and sensual enjoyments of this grovelling earth. Did he deal, as minor poets deal, in mere splendour of words, his poetry would be no proof of this; but he *never* does so:—there is always a breathing soul beneath his words,

'That o'er-informs the tenement of clay.'

It is like the fragrant vapour that rises in incense from the earth through the morning dew; and when we listen to his lyre,

'Less than a God we think there cannot dwell
Within the hollow of that shell,
That sings so sweetly and so well!'

"If Lord Byron thought that, however loudly noisy voices might salute him with a rude and indiscriminate clamour of applause, they merited, and that severe and cruel comments were attached to them by those who assumed to themselves authority, and who seldom allowed the genius without perverting it into a cause of censure, that more than outweighed the praise; those fumes of flattery which are imputed as the causes of a delirium that led him into extravagancies, outraging decorum and the respect due to the public, never, in fact, reached him. To confer 'faint praise' is 'to damn'; to confer praise in a wrong place is to insult and provoke. Lord Byron, therefore, had not, after all, the encouragement that is most favourable to ripen the richest fruit; and it was a firm and noble courage that still prompted him to persevere.

"For this reason, as well as for others, I think his foreign residences were more propitious to the energies of his Muse than a continued abode in England would have been. The poison of the praises that were insidious did not reach him so soon; and he was not beset by treacherous companions, mortifying gossip, and that petty intercourse with ordinary society which tames and lowers the tone of the mind. To mingle much with the world is to be infallibly degraded by familiarity; not to mingle, at least, among the busy and the known, is to incur the disrespect to which insignificance is subjected. Lord Byron's foreign residence exempted him from these evils: he saw a few intimate friends, and he corresponded with a few others; but such an intercourse does not expose to similar effects. The necessary knowledge and necessary hints may thus be conveyed; but not all the pestilent chills which general society is so officious to unveil.

"If Lord Byron had not had a mind with a strong spring of virtue within it, I think that he would have thrown down his pen at some of the attacks he received, and given himself up to the sensual pleasures of his rank for the remainder of his life. The finer parts of his poems were of such spiritual splendour, and so pure, though passionate, an elevation, that they ought to have redeemed any parts which were open to doubt from a malevolent construction, and even have eclipsed and rendered unnoticeable many positive faults. Lord Byron's style, like his thoughts, had every variety: it did not attempt (as is the common practice) to make poetry by the metaphorical and the figurative; it followed his thoughts, and was a part of them: it did not fatigue itself to render clear by illustration or important by ornament, because the thought was clear or important in itself.

"I remember, when I first read 'Cain,' I thought it, as a composition, the most enchanting and irresistible of all Lord Byron's works; and I think so still. Some of the sentiments, taken detachedly, and left unanswered, are no doubt dangerous, and therefore ought not to have been so left; but the class of readers whom this poem is likely to interest are of so very elevated a cast, and the effect of the poetry is to refine, spiritualise, and illumine the imagination with such a sort of unearthly sublimity, that the mind of these, I am persuaded, will become too strong to incur any taint thus predicted, from the defect which has been so much insisted on."

Werner; or the Inheritance:

A TRAGEDY.¹

TO

THE ILLUSTRIOUS GOETHE,

BY ONE OF HIS HUMBLEST ADMIRERS,

THIS TRAGEDY IS DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

THE following drama is taken entirely from the "*German's Tale, Krutzner*," published many years ago in *Lee's Canterbury Tales*; written (I believe) by two sisters, of whom one furnished only this story and another, both of which are considered superior to the remainder of the collection.² I have adopted the characters, plan, and even the language, of many parts of this story. Some of the characters are modified or altered, a few of the names changed, and one character, Ida of Stralenheim, added by myself; but in the rest the original is chiefly followed. When I was young (about fourteen, I think,) I first read this tale, which made a deep impression upon me; and may, indeed, be said to contain the germ of much that I have since written. I am not sure that it ever was very popular; or, at any rate, its popularity has since been eclipsed by that of other great writers in the same department. But I have generally found that those who *had* read it, agreed with me in their estimate of the singular power of mind and conception which it develops. I should also add *conception*,

¹ [The tragedy of "Werner" was begun at Pisa, December 18th, 1821, completed January 20th, 1822, and published in London in the November following. The reviews of "Werner" were, without exception, unfavourable. One critique of the time thus opens:—

"Who could be so absurd as to think, that a dramatist has no right to make free with other people's fables? On the contrary, we are quite aware that that particular species of genius which is exhibited in the construction of plots, never at any period flourished in England. We all know that Shakspeare himself took his stories from Italian novels, Danish sagas, English Chronicles, Plutarch's Lives—from any where rather than from his own invention. But did he take the *whole* of Hamlet, or Juliet, or Richard the Third, or Antony and Cleopatra, from any of these foreign sources? Did he not *invent*, in the noblest sense of the word, all the *characters* of his pieces? Who dreams that any old Italian novelist, or ballad-maker, could have formed the imagination of such a creature as Juliet? Who dreams that the HAMLET of Shakspeare, the princely enthusiast, the melancholy philosopher, that spirit refined even to pain, that most incomprehensible and unapproachable of all the creations of human genius, is the same being, in any thing but the name, with the rough, strong-hearted, bloody-handed AMLETT of the north? Who is there that supposes Goethe to have taken the character of *his* Faust from the nursery rhymes and penny pamphlets about the Devil and Doctor Faustus? Or who, to come nearer home, imagines that Lord Byron himself found *his* Sardanapalus in Dionysius of Halicarnassus?

"But *here* Lord Byron has *invented* nothing—absolutely NOTHING. There is not one incident in his play, not even the most trivial, that is not to be found in Miss Lee's novel, occurring exactly in the same manner, brought about by exactly the same agents, and producing exactly the same effects on the plot. And then as to the characters—not only is every

rather than execution; for the story might, perhaps, have been developed with greater advantage. Amongst those whose opinions agreed with mine upon this story, I could mention some very high names: but it is not necessary, nor indeed of any use; for every one must judge according to his own feelings. I merely refer the reader to the original story, that he may see to what extent I have borrowed from it; and am not unwilling that he should find much greater pleasure in perusing it than the drama which is founded upon its contents.

I had begun a drama upon this tale so far back as 1815, (the first I ever attempted, except one at thirteen years old, called "*Ulric and Ivina*," which I had sense enough to burn,) and had nearly completed an act, when I was interrupted by circumstances. This is somewhere amongst my papers in England; but as it has not been found, I have re-written the first, and added the subsequent acts.

The whole is neither intended, nor in any shape adapted, for the stage.³

Pisa, February, 1822.

one of them to be found in 'Krutzner,' but every one is to be found there more fully and powerfully developed. Indeed, but for the preparation which we had received from our old familiarity with Miss Lee's own admirable work, we rather incline to think that we should have been unable to comprehend the gist of her noble imitator, or rather copier, in several of what seem to be meant for his most elaborate delineations. The fact is, that this undeviating closeness, this humble fidelity of *imitation*, is a thing so perfectly new in any thing worthy of the name of *literature*, that we are sure no one, who has not read the *Canterbury Tales*, will be able to form the least conception of what it amounts to.

"Those who have never read Miss Lee's book, will, however, be pleased with this production; for, in truth, the story is one of the most powerfully conceived, one of the most picturesque, and at the same time instructive stories, that we are acquainted with.

"Krutzner, or the German's Tale," possesses mystery, and yet clearness, as to its structure; strength of characters, and admirable contrast of characters; and, above all, the most lively interest, blended with and subservient to the most affecting of moral lessons."

The reader will find a minute analysis, introduced by the above remarks, in Blackwood, vol. xii. p. 710.]

² [This is not correct. "The Young Lady's Tale, or the Two Emily's," and "The Clergyman's Tale, or Pembroke," were contributed by Sophia Lee, the author of "The Recess," the comedy of "The Chapter of Accidents," and "Almedya, a Tragedy," who died in 1824. The "German's Tale," and all the others in the *Canterbury Collection*, were written by Harriet, the younger of the sisters.]

³ [Werner is, however, the only one of Lord Byron's dramas that proved successful in representation. It is still (1836) in possession of the stage.]