

Who has the whole world for a dungeon strong,
Seas, mountains, and the horizon's verge for bars,
Which shut him from the sole small spot of earth
Where—whatsoever his fate—he still were hers,
His country's, and might die where he had birth—
Florence! when this lone spirit shall return
To kindred spirits, thou wilt feel my worth,
And seek to honour with an empty urn
The ashes thou shalt ne'er obtain!—Alas!
“What have I done to thee, my people?”² Stern
Are all thy dealings, but in this they pass
The limits of man's common malice, for

of that fairest and most renowned daughter of Rome, Florence, to cast me forth out of her sweet bosom, in which I had my birth and nourishment even to the ripeness of my age, and in which, with her good-will, I desire, with all my heart, to rest this wearied spirit of mine, and to terminate the time allotted to me on earth. Wandering over almost every part, to which this our language extends, I have gone about like a mendicant, showing against my will the wound with which fortune has smitten me, and which is often imputed to his ill-deserving on whom it is inflicted. I have, indeed, been a vessel without sail and without steerage, carried about to divers ports, and roads, and shores, by the dry wind that springs out of sad poverty, and have appeared before the eyes of many who, perhaps, from some report that had reached them, had imagined me of a different form; in whose sight not only my person was disparaged, but every action of mine became of less value, as well already performed, as those which yet remained for me to attempt.”

¹ [About the year 1316, the friends of Dante succeeded in obtaining his restoration to his country and his possessions, on condition that he should pay a certain sum of money, and, entering a church, there avow himself guilty, and ask pardon of the republic. The following was his answer, on this occasion, to one of his kinsmen:—“From your letter, which I received with due respect and affection, I observe how much you have at heart my restoration to my country. I am bound to you the more gratefully, that an exile rarely finds a friend. But, after mature consideration, I must, by my answer, disappoint the wishes of some little minds; and I confide in the judgment to which your impartiality and prudence will lead you. Your nephew and mine has written to me, what indeed had been mentioned by many other friends, that by a decree concerning the exiles, I am allowed to return to Florence, provided I pay a certain sum of money, and submit to the humiliation of asking and receiving absolution: wherein, my Father, I see two propositions that are ridiculous and impertinent. I speak of the impertinence of those who mention such conditions to me: for in your letter, dictated by judgment and discretion, there is no such thing. Is such an invitation to return to his country glorious for Dante, after suffering in exile almost fifteen years? Is it thus, then, they would recompense innocence which all the world knows, and the labour and fatigue of unremitting study? Far from the man who is familiar with philosophy be the senseless baseness of a heart of earth, that could do like a little scologist, and imitate the infamy of some others, by offering himself up as it were in chains. Far from the man who cries aloud for justice this compromise, by his money, with his persecutors! No, my Father, this is not the way that shall lead me back to my country. But I shall return with hasty steps, if you or any other can open to me a way that shall not derogate from the fame and honour of Dante; but if by no such way Florence can be entered, then Florence I shall never enter. What! shall I not every where enjoy the sight of the sun and stars? and may I not seek and contemplate, in every corner of the earth under the canopy of heaven, consoling and delightful truth, without first rendering myself inglorious, nay infamous, to the people and republic of Florence? Bread, I hope, will not fail me.” Yet he continued to experience

“How salt the savour is of others' bread,
How hard the passage to descend and climb
By others' stairs!”

His countrymen persecuted even his memory: he was excommunicated after death by the Pope.]

All that a citizen could be I was;
Raised by thy will, all thine in peace or war,
And for this thou hast warr'd with me.—'Tis done:
I may not overleap the eternal bar
Built up between us, and will die alone,
Beholding with the dark eye of a seer
The evil days to gifted souls foreshown,
Foretelling them to those who will not hear.
As in the old time, till the hour be come
When Truth shall strike their eyes through many
a tear,
And make them own the Prophet in his tomb.³

² “E scrisse più volte non solamente a particolari cittadini del reggimento, ma ancora al popolo, e intra l'altre una Epistola assai lunga che comincia:—‘Popule mi, quid feci tibi?’—*Vita di Dante, scritta da Lionardo Aretino.*”

³ [Dante died at Ravenna in 1321, in the palace of his patron, Guido Novello da Polenta, who testified his sorrow and respect by the sumptuousness of his obsequies, and by giving orders to erect a monument, which he did not live to complete. His countrymen showed, too late, that they knew the value of what they had lost. At the beginning of the next century, they entreated that the mortal remains of their illustrious citizen might be restored to them, and deposited among the tombs of their fathers. But the people of Ravenna were unwilling to part with the sad and honourable memorial of their own hospitality. No better success attended the subsequent negotiations of the Florentines for the same purpose, though renewed under the auspices of Leo X., and conducted through the powerful mediation of Michael Angelo.

Never did any poem rise so suddenly into notice, after the death of its author, as the Divina Commedia. About the year 1350, Giovanni Visconti, Archbishop of Milan, selected six of the most learned men in Italy,—two divines, two philosophers, and two Florentines,—and gave them in charge to contribute their joint endeavours towards the compilation of an ample comment, a copy of which is preserved in the Laurentian library. At Florence, a public lecture was founded for the purpose of explaining a poem, which was at the same time the boast and the disgrace of the city. The decree for this institution was passed in 1373; and in that year Boccaccio was appointed, with a salary of a hundred florins, to deliver lectures in one of the churches on the first of their poets. The example of Florence was speedily followed by Bologna, Pisa, Piacenza, and Venice. It is only within a few years that the merits of this great and original poet were attended to and made known in this country. And this seems to be owing to a translation of the very pathetic story of Count Ugolino; to the judicious and spirited summary given of this poem in the 31st section of the History of English Poetry; and to Mr. Hayley's translations of the three cantos of the Inferno. “Dante believed,” says Ugo Foscolo, “that, by his sufferings on earth, he atoned for the errors of humanity—

‘Ma la bontà divina ha sì gran braccia,
Che prende ciò che si rivolge a lei.’

‘So wide arms
Hath goodness infinite, that it receives
All who turn to it.’

And he seems to address Heaven in the attitude of a worshipper, rather than a suppliant. Being convinced ‘that Man is then truly happy when he freely exercises all his energies,’ he walked through the world with an assured step, ‘keeping his vigils’—

‘So that nor night nor slumber with close stealth
Convey'd from him a single step in all
The goings on of time.’

He collected the opinions, the follies, the vicissitudes, the miseries, and the passions that agitate mankind; and left behind him a monument, which, while it humbles us by the representation of our own wretchedness, should make us glory that we partake of the same nature with such a man, and encourage us to make the best use of our fleeting existence.”]

Francesca of Rimini.¹

DANTE, L'INFERNO.²

CANTO V.

SIEDÈ la terra dove nata fui
Su la marina, dove il Po discende,
Per aver pace coi seguaci sui.
Amor, che al cor gentil ratto s' apprende,
Prese costui della bella persona
Che mi fu tolta; e il modo ancor m' offende.
Amor, che a nullo amato amar perdona,
Mi prese del costui piacer sì forte,
Che, come vedi, ancor non m' abbandona;
Amor condusse noi ad una morte:
Caina³ attende chi in vita ci spense:⁶

¹ [This translation, of what is generally considered the most exquisitely pathetic episode in the Divina Commedia, was executed in March, 1820, at Ravenna, where, just five centuries before, and in the very house in which the unfortunate lady was born, Dante's poem had been composed.

In mitigation of the crime of Francesca, Boccaccio relates, that “Guido engaged to give his daughter in marriage to Lanciotto, the eldest son of his enemy, the master of Rimini. Lanciotto, who was hideously deformed in countenance and figure, foresaw that, if he presented himself in person, he should be rejected by the lady. He therefore resolved to marry her by proxy, and sent as his representative his younger brother, Paolo, the handsomest and most accomplished man in all Italy. Francesca saw Paolo arrive, and imagined she beheld her future husband. That mistake was the commencement of her passion. The friends of Guido addressed him in strong remonstrances, and mournful predictions of the dangers to which he exposed a daughter, whose high spirit would never brook to be sacrificed with impunity. But Guido was no longer in a condition to make war; and the necessities of the politician overcame the feelings of the father.”

In transmitting his version to Mr. Murray, Lord Byron says—“Enclosed you will find, line for line, in third rhyme (terza rima), of which your British blackguard reader as yet understands nothing, Fanny of Rimini. You know that she was born here, and married, and slain, from Cary, Boyd, and such people. I have done it into *cramp* English, line for line, and rhyme for rhyme, to try the possibility. If it is published, publish it with the original.”

In one of the poet's MS. Diaries we find the following passage:—“January 29, 1821, past midnight—one of the clock. I have been reading Frederick Schlegel ('Lectures on the History of Literature, Ancient and Modern,' till now, and I can make out nothing. He evidently shows a great power of words, but there is nothing to be taken hold of. He is like Hazlitt in English, who *talks pimples*; a red and white corruption rising up (in little imitation of mountains upon maps), but containing nothing, and discharging nothing, except their own humours. I like him the worse (that is, Schlegel), because he always seems upon the verge of meaning; and, lo! he goes down like sunset, or melts like a rainbow, leaving a rather rich confusion. Of Dante, he says, that ‘at no time has the greatest and most national of all Italian poets ever been much the favourite of his countrymen!’ 'Tis false. There have been more editors and commentators (and imitators ultimately) of Dante than of all their poets put together. *Not a favourite!* Why, they talk Dante—write Dante—and think and dream Dante, at this moment (1821), to an excess which would be ridiculous, but that he deserves it. He says also that Dante's ‘chief defect is a want, in a word, of gentle feelings.’ Of gentle feelings!—and Francesca of Rimini—and the father's feelings in Ugolino—and Beatrice—and ‘La Pia!’ Why, there is a gentleness in Dante beyond all gentleness, when he is tender. It is true that, treating of the Christian Hades, or Hell, there is not much scope or site for gentleness: but who *but* Dante could have introduced any ‘gentleness’ at all into Hell? Is there any in Milton's? No—and Dante's Heaven is all love, and glory, and majesty.” This translation was first published in 1830.]

² [Francesca, daughter of Guido da Polenta, Lord of Ravenna and of Cervia, was given by her father in marriage to Lanciotto, son of Malatesta, Lord of Rimini, a man of extraordinary courage, but deformed in his person. His brother,

FROM THE INFERNO OF DANTE.

CANTO V.

“THE land where I was born³ sits by the seas,
Upon that shore to which the Po descends,
With all his followers, in search of peace.
Love, which the gentle heart soon apprehends,
Seized him for the fair person which was ta'en⁴
From me, and me even yet the mode offends.
Love, who to none beloved to love again
Remits, seized me with wish to please, so strong,
That, as thou seest, yet, yet it doth remain.
Love to one death conducted us along,
But Caina waits for him our life who ended:”

Paolo, who unhappily possessed those graces which the husband of Francesca wanted, engaged her affections; and being taken in adultery, they were both put to death by the enraged Lanciotto. The interest of this pathetic narrative is much increased, when it is recollected that the father of this unfortunate lady was the beloved friend and generous protector of Dante during his latter days. See *ante*, p. 504., and also Canto xxvii. of the Inferno, where Dante, speaking of Ravenna, says—

L' aquila da Polenta là si cova,
Sì che Cirvia ricopre co' suoi vanni.

— There Polenta's eagle broods,
And in his broad circumference of plume
O'ershadows Cervia. CARY.

Guido was the son of Ostasio da Polenta, and made himself master of Ravenna in 1265. In 1322, he was deprived of his sovereignty, and died at Bologna in the year following. He is enumerated, by Tiraboschi, among the poets of his time.]

³ Ravenna.

⁴ [Among Lord Byron's unpublished letters we find the following:—

“Varied readings of the translation from Dante.
Seized him for the fair person, which in its
Bloom was ta'en from me, yet the mode offends.

or,

Seized him for the fair form, of which in its
Bloom I was reft, and yet the mode offends.
Love, which to none beloved to love remits,

Seized me {with mutual wish to please
with wish of pleasing him } so strong,
with the desire to please

That, as thou see'st, not yet that passion quits, &c.

You will find these readings vary from the MS. I sent you. They are closer, but rougher: take which is liked best; or, if you like, print them as variations. They are all close to the text.”—*Byron Letters*.]

⁵ [From Cain, the first fratricide. By Cain we are to understand that part of the Inferno to which murderers are condemned.]

⁶ [The whole history of woman's love is as highly and completely wrought, we think, in these few lines, as that of Juliet in the whole tragedy of Shakspeare. Francesca imputes the passion her brother-in-law conceived for her, not to depravity, but nobleness of heart in him, and to her own loveliness. With a mingled feeling of keen sorrow and complacent naïveté, she says she was fair, and that an ignominious death robbed him of her beauty. She confesses that she loved, because she was beloved,—that charm had deluded her; and she declares, with transport, that joy had not abandoned her even in hell—

— “piacer sì forte,
Che, come vedi, ancor non m' abbandona.”

It is thus that Dante unites perspicuity with conciseness, and the most naked simplicity with the profoundest observation of the heart. Her guilty passion survives its punishment by Heaven—but without a shade of impiety. How striking is the contrast of her extreme happiness in the midst of torments that can never cease; when, resuming her narrative, she looks at her lover, and repeats with enthusiasm—
“Questi, che mai da me non fia diviso” —

Queste parole da lor ci fur porte.
Da ch' io intesi quell' anime offense
Chinaì il viso, e tanto il tenni basso
Fin che il Poeta mi disse: "Che pense?"
Quando risposi incominciai: "Ahi lasso!
Quanti dolci pensier, quanto desio
Menò costoro al doloroso passo!"
Poi mi rivolsi a loro, e parlai io,
E cominciai: Francesca, i tuoi martiri
A lagrimar mi fanno tristo e pio.
Ma dimmi: al tempo de' dolci sospiri
A che, e come concedette Amore
Che conosceste i dubbiosi desiri?
Ed ella a me: nessun maggior dolore
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria¹; e ciò sa il tuo dottore.
Ma se a conoscer la prima radice
Del nostro amor tu hai cotanto affetto
Farò² come colui che piange e dice.
Noi leggevamo un giorno per diletto
Di Lancillotto³, come Amor lo strinse:
Soli eravamo, e senza alcun sospetto.
Per più fiate gli occhi ci sospinse
Quella lettura, e scolorocci il viso:
Ma solo un punto fu quel che ci vinse.
Quando leggemmo il disiato riso
Esser baciato da cotanto amante,
Questi, che mai da me non fia diviso,
La bocca mi baciò tutto tremante:
Galeotto fu il libro, e chi lo scrisse—
Quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante.
Mentre che l'uno spirto questo disse,
L'altro piangeva sì che di pietade
Io venni men così com' io morisse,
E caddi come corpo morto cade.

She nevertheless goes on to relieve her brother-in-law from all imputation of having seduced her. Alone, and unconscious of their danger, they read a love-story together. They gazed upon each other, pale with emotion; but the secret of their mutual passion never escaped their lips:—

"Per più fiate gli occhi ci sospinse
Quella lettura, e scolorocci il viso;
Ma solo un punto fu qual che ci vinse."

The description of two happy lovers in the story was the ruin of Francesca. It was the romance of Lancelot and Geneva, wife of Arthur, King of England:—

"Quando leggemmo il disiato riso
Esser baciato da cotanto amante,
Questi, che mai da me non fia diviso
La bocca mi baciò tutto tremante."

After this avowal, she hastens to complete the picture with one touch which covers her with confusion—

"Quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante."

She utters not another word!—and yet we fancy her before us, with her downcast and glowing looks; whilst her lover stands by her side, listening in silence and in tears. Dante, too, who had hitherto questioned her, no longer ventures to inquire in what manner her husband had put her to death; but is so overawed by pity, that he sinks into a swoon. Nor is this to be considered as merely a poetical exaggeration. The poet had probably known her when a girl, blooming in innocence and beauty under the paternal roof. This, we think, is the true account of the overwhelming sympathy with which her form overpowers him. The episode, too, was written by him in the very house in which she was born, and in which he had himself, during the last ten years of his exile, found a constant asylum.—MACAULAY.

"I pass each day where Dante's bones are laid;
A little cupola, more neat than solemn,
Protects his dust,—but reverence here is paid
To the bard's tomb, and not the warrior's column:
The time must come when, both alike decay'd,
The chieftain's trophy, and the poet's volume,
Will sink where lie the songs and wars of earth,
Before Pelides' death, or Homer's birth."
Don Juan, Canto iii.]

¹ ["In omni adversitate fortunæ infelicissimum genus infortunium est fuisse felicem."—Boetius. Dante himself tells us,

These were the accents utter'd by her tongue.—
Since I first listen'd to these souls offended,
I bow'd my visage, and so kept it till— [bended,
"What think'st thou?" said the bard; when I un-
And recommenced: "Alas! unto such ill
How many sweet thoughts, what strong ecstasies,
Led these their evil fortune to fulfil!"
And then I turn'd unto their side my eyes,
And said, "Francesca, thy sad destinies
Have made me sorrow fill the tears arise.
But tell me, in the season of sweet sighs,
By what and how thy love to passion rose,
So as his dim desires to recognise?"
Then she to me: "The greatest of all woes
Is to remind us of our happy days⁴
In misery, and that thy teacher knows.⁵
But if to learn our passion's first root preys
Upon thy spirit with such sympathy,
I will do even as he who weeps and says.⁶—
We read one day for pastime, seated nigh,
Of Lancilot, how love enchain'd him too.
We were alone, quite unsuspectively.
But oft our eyes met, and our cheeks in hue
All o'er discolour'd by that reading were;
But one point only wholly us o'erthrew;⁷
When we read the long-sigh'd-for smile of her,
To be thus kiss'd by such devoted lover,⁸
He who from me can be divided ne'er
Kiss'd my mouth, trembling in the act all over.
Accursed was the book and he who wrote!
That day no further leaf we did uncover.—
While thus one spirit told us of their lot,
The other wept, so that with pity's thralls
I swoon'd as if by death I had been smote,
And fell down even as a dead body falls.⁹

that Boetius and Cicero de Amicitia were the two first books that engaged his attention.]

² ["In some of the editions it is 'dirò,' in others 'faro;'
—an essential difference between 'saying' and 'doing,'
which I know not how to decide. Ask Foscolo. The d—d
editions drive me mad."—Lord Byron to Mr. M.]

³ [One of the Knights of Arthur's Round Table, and the lover of Geneva, celebrated in romance. See Southey's "King Arthur," vol. i. p. 52. Whitaker, the historian of Manchester, makes out for the knight both a local habitation and a name. "The name of Lancelot," he says, "is an appellation truly British, and significant of royalty; Lance being a Celtic term for a spear, and Leod, Lod, or Lot, importing a people. He was therefore (!) a British sovereign; and since he is denominated Lancelot of the Lake, perhaps (!) he resided at Coccium, in the region Linnis, and was the monarch of Lancashire; as the kings of Creones, living at Selma, on the forest of Morven, are generally denominated sovereigns of Morven; or, more properly, was King of Cheshire, and resided at Pool-ton Lancelot, in the hundred of Wirrall." See also Ellis's Specimens of early Romances, vol. i. p. 271.]

⁴ ["Is to {recall to mind} our happy days."—MS.]

⁵ ["In misery and {this} thy teacher knows."—MS.]

⁶ ["I will {relate} as he weeps and says."—MS.]

⁷ ["But one point only us {overthrew}."—MS.]

⁸ ["To be thus kiss'd by such {a fervent} lover."—MS.]

⁹ [The episode of Francesca of Rimini is thus translated by Cary: and it is only justice to Lord Byron to give the passage here, in order to show how he succeeded in overcoming all the difficulties of rhyme, with which Mr. Cary does not grapple:—

"The land that gave me birth
Is situate on the coast, where Po descends
To rest in ocean with his sequent streams.
"Love, that in gentle heart is quickly learnt,
Entangled him by that fair form, from me

The Blues:

A LITERARY ECLOGUE.¹

"Nimium ne crede colori."—VIRGIL.

O trust not, ye beautiful creatures, to hue,
Though your hair were as red as your stockings are blue.

ECLOGUE FIRST.²

London—Before the Door of a Lecture Room.

Enter TRACY, meeting INKEL.

Ink. You're too late.

Tra. Is it over?

Ink. Nor will be this hour.

But the benches are cramm'd, like a garden in flower,
With the pride of our belles, who have made it the
fashion; [passion"]

So, instead of "beaux arts," we may say "la belle
For learning, which lately has taken the lead in
The world, and set all the fine gentlemen reading.

Tra. I know it too well, and have worn out my
patience

With studying to study your new publications.

There's Vamp, Scamp, and Mouthy, and Wordswords
and Co.³

With their damnable—

Ta'en in such cruel sort, as grieves me still:
Love, that denial takes from none beloved,
Caught me with pleasing him so passing well,
That, as thou seest, he yet deserts me not.
Love brought us to one death: Caina waits
The soul, who spilt our life. Such were their words;
At hearing which downward I bent my looks,
And held them there so long, that the Bard cried:
'What art thou pondering?' I in answer thus:
'Alas! by what sweet thoughts, what fond desire,
Must they at length to that ill pass have reach'd!
'Then turning, I to them my speech address'd,
And thus began: 'Francesca! your sad fate
Even to tears my grief and pity moves.
But tell me; in the time of your sweet sighs,
By what, and how Love granted, that ye knew
Your yet uncertain wishes?' She replied:
'No greater grief than to remember days
Of joy, when misery is at hand. That kens
Thy learn'd instructor. Yet so eagerly
If thou art bent to know the primal root
From whence our love gat being, I will do
As one, who weeps and tells his tale. One day,
For our delight, we read of Lancelot,
How him love thrall'd. Alone we were, and no
Suspicion near us. Ofttimes by that reading
Our eyes were drawn together, and the hue
Fled from our alter'd cheek. But at one point
Alone we fell. When of that smile we read,
The wished smile, so rapturously kiss'd
By one so deep in love, then he, who ne'er
From me shall separate, at once my lips
All trembling kiss'd. The book and writer both
Were love's purveyors. In its leaves that day
We read no more.' While thus one spirit spake,
The other wall'd so sorely, that heart-struck,
I, through compassion fainting, seem'd not far
From death, and like a corse fell to the ground."

The story of Francesca and Paolo is a great favourite with the Italians. It is noticed by all the historians of Ravenna. Petrarca introduces it, in his Trionfi d'Amore, among his examples of calamitous passion; and Tassoni, in his Secchia Rapita, represents Paolo Malatesta as leading the troops of Rimini, and describes him, when mounted on his charger, as contemplating a golden sword-chain, presented to him by Francesca:—

"Rimini vien con la bandiera sesta,
Guida mille cavalli, e mille fanti—

Ink. Hold, my good friend, do you know
Whom you speak to?

Tra. Right well, boy, and so does "the Row."⁴
You're an author—a poet—

Ink. And think you that I
Can stand tamely in silence to hear you decry
The Muses?

Tra. Excuse me: I meant no offence
To the Nine; though the number who make some
pretence

To their favours is such—but the subject to drop,
I am just piping hot from a publisher's shop,
(Next door to the pastry-cook's; so that when I
Cannot find the new volume I wanted to buy
On the bibliopole's shelves, it is only two paces,
As one finds every author in one of those places;)—
Where I just had been skimming a charming critique,
So studded with wit, and so sprinkled with Greek!
Where your friend—you know who—has just got
such a threshing,

Halli donata al dispartir Francesca
L'aurea catena, à cui la spada appende.
La vi mirando al misero, e rinfresca
Quel foco ognor, che l'anima gli accende,
Quanto cerca fuggir, tanto s'invesca."

"To him Francesca gave the golden chain
At parting-time, from which his sword was hung;
The wretched lover gazed at it with pain,
Adding new pangs to those his heart had wrung;
The more he sought to fly the luscious bane,
The firmer he was bound, the deeper stung."

¹ [This trifle, which Lord Byron has himself designated as a "mere buffoonery, never meant for publication," was written in 1820, and first appeared in "The Liberal." The personal allusions in which it abounds are, for the most part, sufficiently intelligible; and, with a few exceptions, so good-humoured, that the parties concerned may be expected to join in the laugh.]

² [About the year 1781, it was much the fashion for several ladies to have evening assemblies, where the fair sex might participate in conversation with literary and ingenious men, animated by a desire to please. These societies were denominated *Blue-Stocking Clubs*; the origin of which title being little known, it may be worth while to relate it. One of the most eminent members of these societies, when they first commenced, was Mr. Stillingfleet, whose dress was remarkably grave, and in particular it was observed that he wore blue stockings. Such was the excellence of his conversation, that his absence was felt as so great a loss, that it used to be said, "We can do nothing without the *blue stockings*;" and thus by degrees the title was established."—Boswell, vol. viii. p. 86. Sir William Forbes, in his Life of Dr. Beattie, says, that "a foreigner of distinction hearing the expression, translated it literally, '*Bas Bleu*,' by which these meetings came to be distinguished. Miss Hannah More, who was herself a member, has written a poem with the title of '*Bas Bleu*,' in allusion to this mistake of the foreigner, in which she has characterised most of the eminent personages of which it was composed."]

³ [See the stanzas on Messrs. Wordsworth and Southey in Don Juan, canto iii.]

⁴ [Paternoster-row—long and still celebrated as a very bazaar of booksellers. Sir Walter Scott "hitches into rhyme" one of the most important firms—that

"Of Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown,
Our fathers of the Row."]

That it is, as the phrase goes, extremely "*refreshing*."¹
What a beautiful word!

Ink. Very true; 'tis so soft
And so cooling—they use it a little too oft;
And the papers have got it at last—but no matter.
So they've cut up our friend then?

Tra. Not left him a tatter—
Not a rag of his present or past reputation,
Which they call a disgrace to the age and the nation.

Ink. I'm sorry to hear this! for friendship, you
know—

Our poor friend!—but I thought it would terminate
Our friendship is such, I'll read nothing to shock it.
You don't happen to have the Review in your pocket?

Tra. No; I left a round dozen of authors and others
(Very sorry, no doubt, since the cause is a brother's)
All scrambling and jostling, like so many imps,
And on fire with impatience to get the next glimpse.

Ink. Let us join them.

Tra. What, won't you return to the lecture?
Ink. Why, the place is so cramm'd, there's not
room for a spectre.

Besides, our friend Scamp is to-day so absurd—

Tra. How can you know that till you hear him?
Ink. I heard

Quite enough; and, to tell you the truth, my retreat
Was from his vile nonsense, no less than the heat.

Tra. I have had no great loss then?
Ink. Loss!—such a palaver!

I'd inoculate sooner my wife with the slaver
Of a dog when gone rabid, than listen two hours
To the torrent of trash which around him he pours,
Pump'd up with such effort, disgorged with such labour,
That—come—do not make me speak ill of one's
neighbour.

Tra. I make you!
Ink. Yes, you! I said nothing until
You compell'd me, by speaking the truth—

Tra. To speak ill?
Is that your deduction?
Ink. When speaking of Scamp ill,
I certainly follow, not set an example.

The fellow's a fool, an impostor, a zany.
Tra. And the crowd of to-day shows that one fool
makes many.

But we two will be wise.
Ink. Pray, then, let us retire.

Tra. I would, but—
Ink. There must be attraction much higher
Than Scamp, or the Jews' harp he nicknames his lyre,
To call you to this hotbed.

Tra. I own it—'tis true—
A fair lady—
Ink. A spinster?

Tra. Miss Lilac!
Ink. The Blue!

The heiress?
Tra. The angel!

Ink. The devil! why, man!
Pray get out of this hobble as fast as you can.

You wed with Miss Lilac! 'twould be your perdition:
She's a poet, a chymist, a mathematician.

Tra. I say she's an angel.

¹ [This cant phrase was first used in the Edinburgh Re-
view—probably by Mr. Jeffrey.]

² ["Her favourite science was the mathematical—
In short she was a walking calculation,

Ink. Say rather an *angle*.

If you and she marry, you'll certainly wrangle.²
I say she's a Blue, man, as blue as the ether.

Tra. And is that any cause for not coming
together?

Ink. Humph! I can't say I know any happy alliance
Which has lately sprung up from a wedlock with
science.

She's so learned in all things, and fond of concerning
Herself in all matters connected with learning,
That—

Tra. What?
Ink. I perhaps may as well hold my tongue;
But there's five hundred people can tell you you're
wrong.

Tra. You forget Lady Lilac's as rich as a Jew.
Ink. Is it miss or the cash of mamma you pursue?

Tra. Why, Jack, I'll be frank with you—something
The girl's a fine girl. [of both.

Ink. And you feel nothing loth
To her good lady-mother's reversion; and yet
Her life is as good as your own, I will bet.

Tra. Let her live, and as long as she likes; I
demand [hand.

Nothing more than the heart of her daughter and
Ink. Why, that heart's in the inkstand—that hand
on the pen.

Tra. A propos—Will you write me a song now
and then?

Ink. To what purpose?
Tra. You know, my dear friend, that in prose
My talent is decent, as far as it goes;

But in rhyme—
Ink. You're a terrible stick, to be sure.
Tra. I own it; and yet, in these times, there's no
lure

For the heart of the fair like a stanza or two;
And so, as I can't, will you furnish a few?

Ink. In your name?
Tra. In my name. I will copy them out,
To slip into her hand at the very next rout.

Ink. Are you so far advanced as to hazard this?
Tra. Why,

Do you think me subdued by a Blue-stocking's eye,
So far as to tremble to tell her in rhyme
What I've told her in prose, at the least, as sublime?

Ink. As sublime! If it be so, no need of my Muse.
Tra. But consider, dear Inkel, she's one of the
"Blues."

Ink. As sublime!—Mr. Tracy—I've nothing to say.
Stick to prose—As sublime!!—but I wish you good
day. [wrong;

Tra. Nay, stay, my dear fellow—consider—I'm
I own it; but, prithee, compose me the song.

Ink. As sublime!!
Tra. I but used the expression in haste.

Ink. That may be, Mr. Tracy, but shows damn'd
bad taste.

Tra. I own it—I know it—acknowledge it—what
Can I say to you more?

Ink. I see what you'd be at:
You disparage my parts with insidious abuse, [use.

Till you think you can turn them best to your own

Miss Edgeworth's novels stepping from their covers,
Morality's prim personification—
But—oh! ye lords of ladies intellectual,
Inform us truly, have they not hen-peck'd you all?"

Don Juan, Canto i.]

Tra. And is that not a sign I respect them?
Ink. Why that

To be sure makes a difference.
Tra. I know what is what:

And you, who're a man of the gay world, no less
Than a poet of t'other, may easily guess

That I never could mean, by a word, to offend
A genius like you, and moreover my friend.

Ink. No doubt; you by this time should know
what is due

To a man of—but come—let us shake hands.
Tra. You knew,

And you know, my dear fellow, how heartily I,
Whatever you publish, am ready to buy. [for sale,

Ink. That's my bookseller's business; I care not
Indeed the best poems at first rather fail.

There were Renegade's epics, and Botherby's plays,¹
And my own grand romance—

Tra. Had its full share of praise.
I myself saw it puff'd in the "Old Girl's Review."²

Ink. What Review? [Trevoux;"³
Tra. 'Tis the English "Journal de

A clerical work of our jesuits at home.
Have you never yet seen it?

Ink. That pleasure's to come.
Tra. Make haste then.

Ink. Why so?
Tra. I have heard people say
That it threaten'd to give up the ghost t'other day.

Ink. Well, that is a sign of some spirit.
Tra. No doubt.

Shall you be at the Countess of Fiddlecome's rout?
Ink. I've a card, and shall go: but at present, as
soon [the moon

As friend Scamp shall be pleased to step down from
(Where he seems to be soaring in search of his wits),
And an interval grants from his lecturing fits,
I'm engaged to the Lady Bluebottle's collation,
To partake of a luncheon and learn'd conversation:
'Tis a sort of re-union for Scamp, on the days
Of his lecture, to treat him with cold tongue and
praise.

And I own, for my own part, that 'tis not unpleasant.
Will you go? There's Miss Lilac will also be present.

Tra. That "metal's attractive."
Ink. No doubt—to the pocket.

Tra. You should rather encourage my passion than
shock it.

But let us proceed; for I think, by the hum—
Ink. Very true; let us go, then, before they can
come,

Or else we'll be kept here an hour at their levy,
On the rack of cross questions, by all the blue bevy.
Hark! Zounds, they'll be on us; I know by the drone
Of old Botherby's spouting ex-cathedrâ tone.

Ay! there he is at it. Poor Scamp! better join
Your friends, or he'll pay you back in your own coin.

Tra. All fair; 'tis but lecture for lecture.

¹ [Messrs. Southey and Sotheby.]

² ["My Grandmother's Review, the British." This heavy
journal has since been gathered to its grandmothers.]

³ [The "Journal de Trevoux" (in fifty-six volumes) is one
of the most curious collections of literary gossip in the world,
—and the Poet paid the British Review an extravagant com-
pliment, when he made this comparison.]

⁴ ["Sotheby is a good man—rhymes well (if not wisely);
but is a bore. He seizes you by the button. One night of a
rout at Mrs. Hope's, he had fastened upon me—(something
about Agamemnon, or Orestes, or some of his plays) not-

Ink. That's clear.

But for God's sake let's go, or the Bore will be here.
Come, come: nay, I'm off. [Exit INKEL.

Tra. You are right, and I'll follow;
'Tis high time for a "*Sic me servavit Apollo*."⁴

And yet we shall have the whole crew on our kibes,
Blues, dandies, and dowagers, and second-hand scribes,
All flocking to moisten their exquisite bottles
With a glass of Madeira at Lady Bluebottle's.

[Exit TRACY.]

ECLOGUE SECOND.

An Apartment in the House of LADY BLUEBOTTLE
—A Table prepared.

SIR RICHARD BLUEBOTTLE solus.

Was there ever a man who was married so sorry?
Like a fool, I must needs do the thing in a hurry.

My life is reversed, and my quiet destroy'd;
My days, which once pass'd in so gentle a void,
Must now, every hour of the twelve, be employ'd:

The twelve, do I say?—of the whole twenty-four,
Is there one which I dare call my own any more?
What with driving and visiting, dancing and dining,
What with learning, and teaching, and scribbling,
and shining

In science and art, I'll be curs'd if I know
Myself from my wife; for although we are two,
Yet she somehow contrives that all things shall be done
In a style which proclaims us eternally one.

But the thing of all things which distresses me more
Than the bills of the week (though they trouble me
sore),

Is the numerous, humourous, backbiting crew
Of scribblers, wits, lecturers, white, black, and blue,
Who are brought to my house as an inn, to my cost—
For the bill here, it seems, is defray'd by the host—
No pleasure! no leisure! no thought for my pains,
But to hear a vile jargon which addles my brains:

A smatter and chatter, glean'd out of reviews,
By the rag, tag, and bobtail, of those they call "BLUES;"
A rabble who know not—but soft, here they come!
Would to God I were deaf! as I'm not, I'll be dumb.

Enter LADY BLUEBOTTLE, MISS LILAC, LADY BLUE-
MOUNT, MR. BOTHERBY, INKEL, TRACY, MISS
MAZARINE, and others, with SCAMP the Lecturer,
&c. &c.

Lady Blueb. Ah! Sir Richard, good morning;
I've brought you some friends.

Sir Rich. (bows, and afterwards aside.) If friends,
they're the first.

Lady Blueb. But the luncheon attends.
I pray ye be seated, "*sans cérémonie*."

Mr. Scamp, you're fatigued; take your chair there,
next me. [They all sit.

withstanding my symptoms of manifest distress—(for I was
in love, and just nicked a minute when neither mothers, nor
husbands, nor rivals, nor gossips were near my then idol,
who was beautiful as the statues of the gallery where we
stood at the time. Sotheby, I say, had seized upon me by
the button and the heart-strings, and spared neither. Wil-
liam Spencer, who likes fun, and don't dislike mischief, saw
my case, and coming up to us both, took me by the hand, and
pathetically bade me farewell; 'for,' said he, 'I see it is all
over with you.' Sotheby then went his way: "*sic me ser-
vavit Apollo*.'"—Byron Diary, 1821.]

Sir Rich. (*aside.*) If he does, his fatigue is to come.
Lady Blueb. Mr. Tracy—
Lady Bluemount—Miss Lilac—be pleased, pray, to place ye;
 And you, Mr. Botherby—
Both. Oh, my dear lady,
 I obey.
Lady Blueb. Mr. Inkel, I ought to upbraid ye: You were not at the lecture.
Ink. Excuse me, I was; But the heat forced me out in the best part—alas! And when—
Lady Blueb. To be sure it was broiling: but then You have lost such a lecture!
Both. The best of the ten.
Tra. How can you know that? there are two more.
Both. Because
 I defy him to beat this day's wondrous applause. The very walls shook.
Ink. Oh, if that be the test,
 I allow our friend Scamp hath this day done his best. Miss Lilac, permit me to help you;—a wing?
Miss Lil. No more, sir, I thank you. Who lectures next spring?
Both. Dick Dunder.
Ink. That is, if he lives.
Miss Lil. And why not?
Ink. No reason whatever, save that he's a sot.
Lady Bluemount! a glass of Madeira?
Lady Bluem. With pleasure.
Ink. How does your friend Wordswords, that Windermere treasure?
 Does he stick to his lakes, like the leeches he sings, And their gatherers, as Homer sung warriors and kings?
Lady Blueb. He has just got a place.
Ink. As a footman?
Lady Bluem. For shame!
 Nor profane with your sneers so poetic a name.
Ink. Nay, I meant him no evil, but pitied his master;
 For the poet of pedlars 't were, sure, no disaster To wear a new livery; the more, as 't is not [coat. The first time he has turn'd both his creed and his
Lady Bluem. For shame! I repeat. If Sir George could but hear—
Lady Blueb. Never mind our friend Inkel; we all know, my dear,
 'T is his way.
Sir Rich. But this place—
Ink. Is perhaps like friend Scamp's,
 A lecturer's. [Stamps:]
Lady Blueb. Excuse me—'t is one in "the He is made a Collector.¹
Tra. Collector!
Sir Rich. How?
Miss Lil. What?
Ink. I shall think of him oft when I buy a new hat: There his works will appear—
Lady Bluem. Sir, they reach to the Ganges.
Ink. I sha'n't go so far—I can have them at Grange's.²

¹ [Mr. Wordsworth is collector of stamps for Cumberland and Westmoreland.]

² Grange is or was a famous pastry-cook and fruiterer in Piccadilly.

³ ["When I belonged to the Drury Lane Committee, the number of plays upon the shelves were about five hundred.

Lady Blueb. Oh fie!
Miss Lil. And for shame!
Lady Bluem. You're too bad.
Both. Very good!
Lady Bluem. How good?
Lady Blueb. He means nought—'t is his phrase.
Lady Bluem. He grows rude.
Lady Blueb. He means nothing; nay, ask him.
Lady Bluem. Pray, sir! did you mean What you say?
Ink. Never mind if he did; 't will be seen That whatever he means won't alloy what he says.
Both. Sir!
Ink. Pray be content with your portion of praise; 'T was in your defence.
Both. If you please, with submission, I can make out my own.
Ink. It would be your perdition. While you live, my dear Botherby, never defend Yourself or your works; but leave both to a friend. A propos—Is your play then accepted at last?
Both. At last?
Ink. Why I thought—that's to say—there had pass'd A few green-room whispers, which hinted—you know,
 That the taste of the actors at best is so so.³
Both. Sir, the green-room's in rapture, and so's the committee.
Ink. Ay—yours are the plays for exciting our "pity [mind," And fear," as the Greek says: for "purging the I doubt if you'll leave us an equal behind.
Both. I have written the prologue, and meant to have pray'd
 For a spice of your wit in an epilogue's aid.
Ink. Well, time enough yet, when the play's to be play'd.
 Is it cast yet?
Both. The actors are fighting for parts, As is usual in that most litigious of arts.
Lady Blueb. We'll all make a party, and go the first night.
Tra. And you promised the epilogue, Inkel.
Ink. Not quite. However, to save my friend Botherby trouble, I'll do what I can, though my pains must be double.
Tra. Why so?
Ink. To do justice to what goes before.
Both. Sir, I'm happy to say, I have no fears on that score.
 Your parts, Mr. Inkel, are—
Ink. Never mind mine; Stick to those of your play, which is quite your own line.
Lady Bluem. You're a fugitive writer, I think, sir, of rhymes?
Ink. Yes, ma'am; and a fugitive reader sometimes. On Wordswords, for instance, I seldom alight, Or on Mouthey, his friend, without taking to flight.
Lady Bluem. Sir, your taste is too common: but time and posterity

Mr. Sotheby obligingly offered us ALL his tragedies, and I pledged myself, and—notwithstanding many squabbles with my committee brethren—did get Ivan accepted, read, and the parts distributed. But lo! in the very heart of the matter, upon some tepid-ness on the part of Kean, or warmth on that of the author, Sotheby withdrew his play."—*Byron Diary*, 1821.]

Will right these great men, and this age's severity
 Be come its reproach.
Ink. I've no sort of objection,
 So I'm not of the party to take the infection.
Lady Blueb. Perhaps you have doubts that they ever will take?
Ink. Not at all; on the contrary, those of the lake Have taken already, and still will continue To take—what they can, from a groat to a guinea, Of pension or place;—but the subject's a bore.
Lady Bluem. Well, sir, the time's coming.
Ink. Scamp! don't you feel sore?
 What say you to this?
Scamp. They have merit, I own; Though their system's absurdity keeps it unknown.
Ink. Then why not unearth it in one of your lectures?
Scamp. It is only time past which comes under my strictures.
Lady Blueb. Come, a truce with all tartness:—the joy of my heart
 Is to see Nature's triumph o'er all that is art.
 Wild Nature!—Grand Shakspeare!
Both. And down Aristotle!
Lady Bluem. Sir George¹ thinks exactly with Lady Bluebottle;
 And my Lord Seventy-four², who protects our dear Bard,
 And who gave him his place, has the greatest regard For the poet, who, singing of pedlars and asses,³ Has found out the way to dispense with Parnassus.
Tra. And you, Scamp!—
Scamp. I needs must confess I'm embarrass'd.
Ink. Dont call upon Scamp, who's already so harass'd
 With old schools, and new schools, and no schools, and all schools.
Tra. Well, one thing is certain, that some must be fools.
 I should like to know who.
Ink. And I should not be sorry To know who are not:—it would save us some worry.
Lady Blueb. A truce with remark, and let nothing control
 This "feast of our reason, and flow of the soul."
 Oh! my dear Mr. Botherby! sympathise!—I Now feel such a rapture, I'm ready to fly, I feel so elastic—"so buoyant—so buoyant!"⁴
Ink. Tracy! open the window.
Tra. I wish her much joy on't.

¹ [The late Sir George Beaumont—a constant friend of Mr. Wordsworth.]

² [It was not the present Earl of Lonsdale, but James, the first earl, who offered to build, and completely furnish and man, a ship of seventy-four guns, towards the close of the American war, for the service of his country, at his own expense;—hence the *subtitled* in the text.]

³ ["We learn from Horace, 'Homer sometimes sleeps;' We feel, without him, Wordsworth sometimes wakes,— To show with what complacency he creeps, With his dear 'waggoners,' around his lakes. He wishes for 'a boat' to sail the deeps— Of ocean?—No, of air; and then he makes Another outcry for 'a little boat,' And drivels seas to set it well afloat.

Both. For God's sake, my Lady Bluebottle, check not
 This gentle emotion, so seldom our lot
 Upon earth. Give it way; 't is an impulse which lifts
 Our spirits from earth; the sublimest of gifts;
 For which poor Prometheus was chain'd to his mountain;
 'T is the source of all sentiment—feeling's true fountain:
 'T is the Vision of Heaven upon Earth: 't is the gas
 Of the soul: 't is the seizing of shades as they pass,
 And making them substance: 't is something divine:—
Ink. Shall I help you, my friend, to a little more wine?
Both. I thank you; not any more, sir, till I dine.
Ink. A propos—Do you dine with Sir Humphry⁵ to-day?
Tra. I should think with Duke Humphry was more in your way.
Ink. It might be of yore; but we authors now look To the knight, as a landlord, much more than the Duke.
 The truth is, each writer now quite at his ease is,
 And (except with his publisher) dines where he pleases.
 But 't is now nearly five, and I must to the Park.
Tra. And I'll take a turn with you there till 't is And you, Scamp— [dark.
Scamp. Excuse me; I must to my notes, For my lecture next week.
Ink. He must mind whom he quotes Out of "Elegant Extracts."
Lady Blueb. Well, now we break up; But remember Miss Diddle⁶ invites us to sup.
Ink. Then at two hours past midnight we all meet again,
 For the sciences, sandwiches, hock, and champagne!
Tra. And the sweet lobster salad!
Both. I honour that meal;
 For 't is then that our feelings most genuinely—feel.
Ink. True; feeling is truest then, far beyond question;
 I wish to the gods 't was the same with digestion!
Lady Blueb. Pshaw!—never mind that; for one moment of feeling
 Is worth—God knows what.
Ink. 'T is at least worth concealing
 For itself, or what follows—But here comes your carriage.
Sir Rich. (*aside.*) I wish all these people were d—d with my marriage! [Exeunt.]

"Pedlars,' and 'boats,' and 'waggoners!' Oh! ye shades Of Pope and Dryden, are we come to this? That trash of such sort not alone evades Contempt, but from the bathos' vast abyss Floats scumlike uppermost, and these Jack Cades Of sense and song above your graves may hiss— The 'little boatman' and his 'Peter Bell' Can sneer at him who drew 'Achitophel!' " *Don Juan*, Canto iii.]

⁴ Fact from life, with the words.
⁵ [The late Sir Humphry Davy, President of the Royal Society.]

⁶ [The late Miss Lydia White, whose hospitable functions have not yet been supplied to the circle of London artists and literati—an accomplished, clever, and truly amiable, but very eccentric lady. The name in the text could only have been suggested by the jingling resemblance it bears to *Lydia*.]