

LIX.

And therefore all we have related in
Two long octaves, pass'd in a little minute;
But in the same small minute, every sin
Contrived to get itself comprised within it.
The very cannon, deafened by the din,
Grew dumb, for you might almost hear a linnet,
As soon as thunder, 'midst the general noise
Of human nature's agonising voice!

LX.

The town was enter'd. Oh eternity! —
"God made the country, and man made the town,"
So Cowper says — and I begin to be
Of his opinion, when I see cast down
Rome, Babylon, Tyre, Carthage, Nineveh,
All walls men know, and many never known;
And pondering on the present and the past,
To deem the woods shall be our home at last: —

LXI.

Of all men, saving Sylla¹ the man-slayer,
Who passes for in life and death most lucky,
Of the great names which in our faces stare,
The General Boon, back-woodsman of Kentucky,
Was happiest amongst mortals any where;
For killing nothing but a bear or buck, he
Enjoy'd the lonely, vigorous, harmless days
Of his old age in wilds of deepest maze.²

LXII.

Crime came not near him — she is not the child
Of solitude; Health shrank not from him — for
Her home is in the rarely trodden wild,
Where if men seek her not, and death be more
Their choice than life, forgive them, as beguiled
By habit to what their own hearts abhor —
In cities caged. The present case in point I
Cite is, that Boon lived hunting up to ninety;

LXIII.

And what's still stranger, left behind a name
For which men vainly decimate the throng,
Not only famous, but of that good fame,
Without which glory's but a tavern song —
Simple, serene, the antipodes of shame,
Which hate nor envy e'er could tinge with wrong;
An active hermit, even in age the child
Of Nature, or the Man of Ross run wild.

LXIV.

'Tis true he shrank from men even of his nation,
When they built up unto his darling trees, —
He moved some hundred miles off, for a station
Where there were fewer houses and more ease;³
The inconvenience of civilisation
Is, that you neither can be pleased nor please;
But where he met the individual man,
He show'd himself as kind as mortal can.

¹ [See *anti*, p. 461.]

² ["The wildest solitudes are to the taste of some people. General Boon, who was chiefly instrumental in the first settlement of Kentucky, is of this turn. It is said, that he is now (1818), at the age of seventy, pursuing the daily chase two hundred miles to the westward of the last abode of civilised man. He had retired to a chosen spot, beyond the Missouri, which, after him, is named Boon's Lick, out of the reach, as he flattered himself, of intrusion; but white men, even there, encroached upon him, and, two years ago, he vent back two hundred miles farther." — *Birkbeck's Notes on America*.]

³ ["Such is the restless disposition of these back-woods-men, and soaverse are their habits from those of a civilised neighbourhood, that nothing short of the salt, sandy desert

LXV.

He was not all alone: around him grew
A sylvan tribe of children of the chase,
Whose young, unawaken'd world was ever new,
Nor sword nor sorrow yet had left a trace
On her unwrinkled brow, nor could you view
A frown on Nature's or on human face; —
The free-born forest found and kept them free,
And fresh as is a torrent or a tree.

LXVI.

And tall, and strong, and swift of foot were they,
Beyond the dwarfing city's pale abortions,
Because their thoughts had never been the prey
Of care or gain; the green woods were their portions;
No sinking spirits told them they grew grey,
No fashion made them apes of her distortions;
Simple they were, not savage; and their rifles,
Though very true, were not yet used for trifles.

LXVII.

Motion was in their days, rest in their slumbers,
And cheerfulness the handmaid of their toil;
Nor yet too many nor too few their numbers;
Corruption could not make their hearts her soil;
The lust which stings, the splendour which encumbers,
With the free foresters divide no spoil;
Serene, not sullen, were the solitudes
Of this unsighing people of the woods.

LXVIII.

So much for Nature: — by way of variety,
Now back to thy great joys, Civilisation!
And the sweet consequence of large society,
War, pestilence, the despot's desolation,
The kingly scourge, the lust of notoriety,
The millions slain by soldiers for their rations,
The scenes like Catherine's boudoir at threescore,
With Ismail's storm to soften it the more.

LXIX.

The town was enter'd: first one column made
Its sanguinary way good — then another;
The reeking bayonet and the flashing blade
Clash'd 'gainst the scimitar, and babe and mother
With distant shrieks were heard Heaven to upbraid: —
Still closer sulphury clouds began to smother
The breath of morn and man, where foot by foot
The madden'd Turks their city still dispute.

LXX.

Koutousow, he who afterward beat back
(With some assistance from the frost and snow)
Napoleon on his bold and bloody track,
It happen'd was himself beat back just now:
He was a jolly fellow, and could crack
His jest alike in face of friend or foe,
Though life, and death, and victory were at stake;⁴
But here it seem'd his jokes had ceased to take:

can stop them. The notorious Daniel Boon, who about fifty different times has shifted his abode westward, as civilisation approached his dwelling, when asked the cause of his frequent change, replied, "I think it time to remove, when I can no longer fell a tree for fuel, so that its top will lie within a few yards of my cabin." — *Quart. Rev.* vol. xxix. p. 14.]

⁴ ["Parmi les colonnes, une de celles qui souffrirent le plus était commandée par le Général Koutousow (aujourd'hui Prince de Smolensko). Ce brave militaire réunit l'intrépidité à un grand nombre de connaissances acquises; il marche au feu avec la même gaieté qu'il va à une fête; il sait commander avec autant de sang froid qu'il déploie d'esprit et d'amabilité dans le commerce habituel de la vie." — *Hist. de la Nouvelle Russie*, tom. iii. p. 212.]

LXXXI.

For having thrown himself into a ditch,
Follow'd in haste by various grenadiers,
Whose blood the puddle greatly did enrich,
He climb'd to where the parapet appears;
But there his project reach'd its utmost pitch
('Mongst other deaths the General Ribaupierre's
Was much regretted), for the Moslem men
Threw them all down into the ditch again.¹

LXXXII.

And had it not been for some stray troops landing
They knew not where, being carried by the stream
To some spot, where they lost their understanding,
And wander'd up and down as in a dream,
Until they reach'd, as daybreak was expanding,
That which a portal to their eyes did seem, —
The great and gay Koutousow might have lain
Where three parts of his column yet remain.²

LXXXIII.

And scrambling round the rampart, these same troops,
After the taking of the "Cavalier,"³
Just as Koutousow's most "forlorn" of "hopes"
Took, like chameleons, some slight tinge of fear,
Open'd the gate call'd "Kilia," to the groups⁴
Of baffled heroes, who stood shyly near,
Sliding knee-deep in lately frozen mud,
Now thaw'd into a marsh of human blood.

LXXXIV.

The Kozacks, or, if so you please, Cossacques —
(I don't much pique myself upon orthography,
So that I do not grossly err in facts,
Statistics, tactics, politics, and geography) —
Having been used to serve on horses' backs,
And no great dilettanti in topography
Of fortresses, but fighting where it pleases
Their chiefs to order, — were all cut to pieces.⁵

LXXXV.

Their column, though the Turkish batteries thunder'd
Upon them, ne'ertheless had reach'd the rampart,⁶
And naturally thought they could have plunder'd
The city, without being farther hamper'd;
But as it happens to brave men, they blunder'd —
The Turks at first pretended to have scamper'd,
Only to draw them 'twixt two bastion corners,⁷
From whence they sallied on those Christian scorners.

¹ ["Ce brave Koutousow se jeta dans le fossé, fut suivi des siens, et ne pénétra jusqu'au haut du parapet qu'après avoir éprouvé des difficultés incroyables. (Le brigadier Ribaupierre perdit la vie dans cette occasion: il avait fixé l'estime générale, et sa mort occasionna beaucoup de regrets. Les Turcs accoururent en grand nombre; cette multitude repoussa deux fois le général jusqu'au fossé." — *Hist. de la Nouvelle Russie*, p. 212.]

² ["Quelques troupes Russes, emportées par le courant, n'ayant pu débarquer sur le terrain qu'on leur avait prescrit," &c. — *Ibid.* p. 213.]

³ ["A "Cavalier" is an elevation of earth, situated ordinarily in the gorge of a bastion, bordered with a parapet, and cut into more or fewer embrasures, according to its capacity." — *Milit. Dict.*]

⁴ ["... "Jongèrent le rempart, après la prise du cavalier, et ouvrirent la porte dite de Kilia aux soldats du Général Koutousow." — *Hist. de la N. R.* p. 213.]

⁵ ["Il était réservé aux Kozaks de combler de leur corps la partie du fossé où ils combattaient; leur colonne avait été divisée entre MM. Platow et d'Orlow..." — *Ibid.* p. 213.]

⁶ ["La première partie, devant se joindre à la gauche du Général Arsénieu, fut foudroyée par le feu des batteries, et parvint néanmoins au haut du rempart." — *Ibid.* p. 213.]

⁷ ["Les Turcs la laissèrent un peu s'avancer, dans la ville,

LXXXVI.

Then being taken by the tail — a taking
Fatal to bishops as to soldiers — these
Cossacques were all cut off as day was breaking,
And found their lives were let at a short lease —
But perish'd without shivering or shaking,
Leaving as ladders their heap'd carcasses,
O'er which Lieutenant-Colonel Yesouskoi
March'd with the brave battalion of Polouzki: —⁸

LXXXVII.

This valiant man kill'd all the Turks he met,
But could not eat them, being in his turn
Slain by some Mussulmans⁹, who would not yet,
Without resistance, see their city burn.
The walls were won, but 'twas an even bet
Which of the armies would have cause to mourn:
'T was blow for blow, disputing inch by inch,
For one would not retreat, nor t'other finch.

LXXXVIII.

Another column also suffer'd much: —
And here we may remark with the historian,
You should but give few cartridges to such
Troops as are meant to march with greatest glory on:
When matters must be carried by the touch
Of the bright bayonet, and they all should hurry on,
They sometimes, with a hankering for existence,
Keep merely firing at a foolish distance.¹⁰

LXXXIX.

A junction of the General Meknop's men
(Without the General, who had fallen some time
Before, being badly seconded just then)
Was made at length with those who dared to climb
The death-disgorging rampart once again;
And though the Turk's resistance was sublime,
They took the bastion, which the Seraskier
Defended at a price extremely dear.¹¹

LXXX.

Juan and Johnson, and some volunteers
Among the foremost, offer'd him good quarter,
A word which little suits with Seraskiers,
Or at least suited not this valiant Tartar.
He died, deserving well his country's tears,
A savage sort of military martyr.
An English naval officer, who wish'd
To make him prisoner, was also dish'd:

et firent deux sorties par les angles saillans des bastions." — *Hist. de la N. R.* tom. ii. p. 213.]

⁸ ["Alors, se trouvant prise en queue, elle fut écrasée; cependant le Lieutenant-colonel Yesouskoi, qui commandait la réserve composée d'un bataillon du régiment de Polozk, traversa le fossé sur les cadavres des Kozaks..." — *Ibid.* p. 212.]

⁹ ["... "et extermina tous les Turcs qu'il eut en tête: ce brave homme fut tué pendant l'action." — *Ibid.* p. 213.]

¹⁰ ["L'autre partie des Kozaks, qu'Orlow commandait, souffrit de la manière la plus cruelle: elle attaqua à maintes reprises, fut souvent repoussée, et perdit les deux tiers de son monde. Et c'est ici le lieu de placer une observation, que nous prenons dans les mémoires qui nous guident; elle fait remarquer combien il est mal vu de donner beaucoup de cartouches aux soldats qui doivent emporter un poste de vive force, et par conséquent où la baïonnette doit principalement agir; ils pensent ne devoir se servir de cette dernière arme, que lorsque les cartouches sont épuisées: dans cette persuasion, ils retardent leur marche, et restent plus long-temps exposés au canon et à la mitraille de l'ennemi." — *Ibid.* p. 214.]

¹¹ ["La jonction de la colonne de Meknop — (le général étant mal secondé fut tué) — s'étant effectuée avec celle qui l'avoisina, ces colonnes attaquèrent un bastion, et éprouvèrent un résistance opiniâtre; mais bientôt des cris de victoire se font entendre de toutes parts, et le bastion est emporté: le séraskier défendait cette partie." — *Ibid.* p. 214.]

LXXXI.

For all the answer to his proposition
Was from a pistol-shot that laid him dead ;¹
On which the rest, without more intermission,
Began to lay about with steel and lead —
The pious metals most in requisition
On such occasions : not a single head
Was spared ; — three thousand Moslems perish'd here,
And sixteen bayonets pierced the Seraskier.²

LXXXII.

The city's taken — only part by part —
And Death is drunk with gore : there's not a street
Where fights not to the last some desperate heart,
For those for whom it soon shall cease to beat.³
Here War forgot his own destructive art
In more destroying Nature ; and the heat
Of carnage, like the Nile's sun-sodden slime,
Engender'd monstrous shapes of every crime.

LXXXIII.

A Russian officer, in martial tread
Over a heap of bodies, felt his heel
Seized fast, as if 't were by the serpent's head
Whose fangs Eve taught her human seed to feel ;
In vain he kick'd, and swore, and writhed, and bled,
And howl'd for help as wolves do for a meal —
The teeth still kept their gratifying hold,
As do the subtle snakes described of old.

LXXXIV.

A dying Moslem, who had felt the foot
Of a foe o'er him, snatch'd at it, and bit
The very tendon which is most acute —
(That which some ancient Muse or modern wit
Named after thee, Achilles) and quite through 't
He made the teeth meet, nor relinquish'd it
Even with his life — for (but they lie) 't is said
To the live leg still clung the sever'd head.

LXXXV.

However this may be, 't is pretty sure
The Russian officer for life was lamed,
For the Turk's teeth stuck faster than a skewer,
And left him 'midst the invalid and maim'd :
The regimental surgeon could not cure
His patient, and perhaps was to be blamed
More than the head of the inveterate foe,
Which was cut off, and scarce even then let go.

LXXXVI.

But then the fact's a fact — and 't is the part
Of a true poet to escape from fiction
Whene'er he can ; for there is little art
In leaving verse more free from the restriction
Of truth than prose, unless to suit the mart
For what is sometimes called poetic diction,
And that outrageous appetite for lies
Which Sataa angles with for souls, like flies.

¹ ["... un officier de marine Anglais, vent le faire prisonnier, et reçoit un coup de pistolet qui l'étend roide mort." — *Hist. de la N. R.* p. 214.]

² [" Les Russes passent trois mille Turcs au fil de l'épée ; seize baïonnettes percent à la fois le séraskier." — *Ibid.* p. 214.]

³ [" La ville est emportée ; l'image de la mort et de la destruction se représente de tous les côtés ; le soldat furieux n'écoute plus la voix de ses officiers, il ne respire que le

LXXXVII.

The city's taken, but not render'd ! — No !
There's not a Moslem that hath yielded sword :
The blood may gush out, as the Danube's flow
Rolls by the city wall ; but deed nor word
Acknowledge aught of dread of death or foe :
In vain the yell of victory is roar'd
By the advancing Muscovite — the groan
Of the last foe is echoed by his own.

LXXXVIII.

The bayonet pierces and the sabre cleaves,
And human lives are lavish'd every where,
As the year closing whirls the scarlet leaves
When the stripp'd forest bows to the bleak air,
And groans ; and thus the peopled city grieves,
Shorn of its best and loveliest, and left bare ;
But still it falls in vast and awful splinters,
As oaks blown down with all their thousand winters.

LXXXIX.

It is an awful topic — but 't is not
My cue for any time to be terrific :
For checker'd as is seen our human lot
With good, and bad, and worse, alike prolific
Of melancholy merriment, to quote
Too much of one sort would be soporific ; —
Without, or with, offence to friends or foes,
I sketch your world exactly as it goes.

XC.

And one good action in the midst of crimes
Is " quite refreshing," in the affected phrase
Of these ambrosial, Pharisaic times,
With all their pretty milk-and-water ways,
And may serve therefore to bedew these rhymes,
A little scorch'd at present with the blaze
Of conquest and its consequences, which
Make epic poesy so rare and rich.

XCI.

Upon a taken bastion, where there lay
Thousands of slaughter'd men, a yet warm group
Of murder'd women, who had found their way
To this vain refuge, made the good heart droop
And shudder ; — while, as beautiful as May,
A female child of ten years tried to stoop
And hide her little palpitating breast
Amidst the bodies lull'd in bloody rest.⁴

XCII.

Two villanous Cossacques pursued the child
With flashing eyes and weapons : match'd with
them,
The rudest brute that roams Siberia's wild
Has feelings pure and polish'd as a gem, —
The bear is civilised, the wolf is mild ;
And whom for this at last must we condemn ?
Their natures ? or their sovereigns, who employ
All arts to teach their subjects to destroy ?

carnage ; altéré de sang, tout est indifférent pour lui." — *Hist. de la N. R.* p. 214.]

⁴ [" Je sauvai la vie à une fille de dix ans, dont l'innocence et la candeur formaient un contraste bien frappant avec la rage de tout ce qui m'environnait. En arrivant sur le bastion où commença le carnage, j'aperçus un groupe de quatre femmes égorgées, entre lesquelles cet enfant, d'une figure charmante, cherchait un asile contre la fureur de deux Kozaks qui étaient sur le point de la massacrer." — *DUC DE RICHELIEU. See Hist. de la Nouv. Russ.* tom. iii. p. 217.]

XCIII.

Their sabres glitter'd o'er her little head,
Whence her fair hair rose twining with affright,
Her hidden face was plunged amidst the dead :
When Juan caught a glimpse of this sad sight,
I shall not say exactly what he said,
Because it might not solace " ears polite ;"¹
But what he did, was to lay on their backs,
The readiest way of reasoning with Cossacques.

XCIV.

One's hip he slash'd, and split the other's shoulder,
And drove them with their brutal yells to seek,
If there might be chirurgeons who could solder
The wounds they richly merited,² and shriek
Their baffled rage and pain ; while waxing colder
As he turn'd o'er each pale and gory cheek,
Don Juan raised his little captive from
The heap a moment more had made her tomb.

XCV.

And she was chill as they, and on her face
A slender streak of blood announced how near
Her fate had been to that of all her race ;
For the same blow which laid her mother here
Had scarr'd her brow, and left its crimson trace,
As the last link with all she had held dear ;³
But else unhurt, she open'd her large eyes,
And gazed on Juan with a wild surprise.

XCVI.

Just at this instant, while their eyes were fix'd
Upon each other, with dilated glance,
In Juan's look, pain, pleasure, hope, fear, mix'd
With joy to save, and dread of some mischance
Unto his protégée ; while hers, transfix'd
With infant terrors, glared as from a trance,
A pure, transparent, pale, yet radiant face,
Like to a lighted alabaster vase ; —

XCVII.

Up came John Johnson (I will not say " Jack,"
For that were vulgar, cold, and common-place
On great occasions, such as an attack
In cities, as hath been the present case) :
Up Johnson came, with hundreds at his back,
Exclaiming : — " Juan ! Juan ! On, boy ! brace
Your arm, and I'll bet Moscow to a dollar,
That you and I will win St. George's collar.⁴

XCVIII.

" The Seraskier is knock'd upon the head,
But the stone bastion still remains, wherein
The old Pacha sits among some hundreds dead,
Smoking his pipe quite calmly 'midst the din
Of our artillery and his own : 't is said
Our kill'd, already piled up to the chin,
Lie round the battery ; but still it batters,
And grape in volleys, like a vineyard, scatters.

XCIX.

" Then up with me ! " — But Juan answer'd, " Look
Upon this child — I saved her — must not leave
Her life to chance ; but point me out some nook
Of safety, where she less may shrink and grieve,

¹ [" But never mention hell to ears polite." — POPE.]

² [" Ce spectacle m'attira bientôt, et je n'hésitai pas, comme on peut le croire, à prendre entre mes bras cette infortunée, que les barbares voulaient y poursuivre encore. J'eus bien de la peine à me retenir et à ne pas percer ces misérables du sabre que je tenais suspendu sur leur tête : — je me contentai cependant de les éloigner, non sans leur prodiguer les coups et les injures qu'ils méritaient. . . ." — RICHELIEU.]

And I am with you." — Whereon Johnson took
A glance around — and shrugg'd — and twitch'd his
sleeve
And black silk neckcloth — and replied, " You're right ;
Poor thing ! what's to be done ? I'm puzzled quite."

C.

Said Juan — " Whatsoever is to be
Done, I'll not quit her till she seems secure
Of present life a good deal more than we." —
Quoth Johnson — " Neither will I quite ensure ;
But at the least you may die gloriously." —
Juan replied — " At least I will endure
Whate'er is to be borne — but not resign
This child, who is parentless, and therefore mine."

CI.

Johnson said — " Juan, we've no time to lose ;
The child's a pretty child — a very pretty —
I never saw such eyes — but hark ! now choose
Between your fame and feelings, pride and pity ; —
Hark ! how the roar increases ! — no excuse
Will serve when there is plunder in a city ; —
I should be loath to march without you, but,
By God ! we'll be too late for the first cut."

CII.

But Juan was immoveable ; until
Johnson, who really loved him in his way,
Pick'd out amongst his followers with some skill
Such as he thought the least given up to prey ;
And swearing if the infant came to ill
That they should all be shot on the next day ;
But if she were deliver'd safe and sound,
They should at least have fifty rubles round,

CIII.

And all allowances besides of plunder
In fair proportion with their comrades ; — then
Juan consented to march on through thunder,
Which thinn'd at every step their ranks of men :
And yet the rest rush'd eagerly — no wonder,
For they were heated by the hope of gain,
A thing which happens every where each day —
No hero trusteth wholly to half pay.

CIV.

And such is victory, and such is man !
At least nine tenths of what we call so ; — God
May have another name for half we scan
As human beings, or his ways are odd.
But to our subject : a brave Tartar khan —
Or " sultan," as the author (to whose nod
In prose I bend my humble verse) doth call
This chieftain — somehow would not yield at all :

CV.

But flank'd by five brave sons (such is polygamy,
That she spawns warriors by the score, where non
Are prosecuted for that false crime bigamy),
He never would believe the city won
While courage clung but to a single twig. — Am I
Describing Priam's, Peleus', or Jove's son ?
Neither — but a good, plain, old, temperate man,
Who fought with his five children in the van.⁵

³ [" . . . J'eus le plaisir d'apercevoir que ma petite prisonnière n'avait d'autre mal qu'une coupure légère que lui avait faite au visage le même fer qui avait percé sa mère." — RICHELIEU.]

⁴ A Russian military order.

⁵ [" Le sultan périt dans l'action en brave homme, digne d'un meilleur destin ; ce fut lui qui rallia les Turcs lorsque l'ennemi pénétra dans le place : ce sultan, d'une valeur éprouvée, surpassait en générosité les plus civilisés de sa

CVI.

To take him was the point.—The truly brave,
When they beheld the brave oppress'd with odds,
Are touch'd with a desire to shield and save;—
A mixture of wild beasts and demi-gods
Are they—now furious as the sweeping wave,
Now moved with pity: even as sometimes nods
The rugged tree unto the summer wind,
Compassion breathes along the savage mind.

CVII.

But he would *not* be taken, and replied
To all the propositions of surrender
By mowing Christians down on every side,
As obstinate as Swedish Charles at Bender.¹
His five brave boys no less the foe defied;
Whereon the Russian pathos grew less tender,
As being a virtue, like terrestrial patience,
Apt to wear out on trifling provocations.

CVIII.

And spite of Johnson and of Juan, who
Expended all their Eastern phraseology
In begging him, for God's sake, just to show
So much less fight as might form an apology
For them in saving such a desperate foe—
He hew'd away, like doctors of theology
When they dispute with sceptics; and with curses
Struck at his friends, as babies beat their nurses.

CIX.

Nay, he had wounded, though but slightly, both
Juan and Johnson; whereupon they fell,
The first with sighs, the second with an oath,
Upon his angry sultanship, pell-mell,
And all around were grown exceeding wroth
At such a pertinacious infidel,
And pour'd upon him and his sons like rain,
Which they resisted like a sandy plain.

CX.

That drinks and still is dry. At last they perish'd—
His second son was levell'd by a shot;
His third was sabred; and the fourth, most cherish'd
Of all the five, on bayonets met his lot;
The fifth, who, by a Christian mother nourish'd,
Had been neglected, ill-used, and what not,
Because deform'd, yet died all game and bottom,
To save a sire who blush'd that he begot him.

CXI.

The eldest was a true and tameless Tartar,
As great a scorner of the Nazarene
As ever Mahomet pick'd out for a martyr,
Who only saw the black-eyed girls in green,
Who make the beds of those who won't take quarter
On earth, in Paradise; and when once seen,
Those hours, like all other pretty creatures,
Do just whate'er they please, by dint of features.

CXII.

And what they pleased to do with the young khan
In heaven I know not, nor pretend to guess;
But doubtless they prefer a fine young man
To tough old heroes, and can do no less;

nation; cinq de ses fils combattait à ses côtés, il les encourageait par son exemple."—*Hist. de la N. R.* tom. iii. p. 215.]

¹ ["At Bender, after the fatal battle of Pultawa, Charles gave a proof of that unreasonable obstinacy, which occasioned all his misfortunes in Turkey. When advised to write to the grand vizier, according to the custom of the Turks, he said it was beneath his dignity. The same obstinacy placed him ne-

And that's the cause no doubt why, if we scan
A field of battle's ghastly wilderness,
For one rough, weather-beaten, veteran body,
You'll find ten thousand handsome coxcombs bloody.

CXIII.

Your hours also have a natural pleasure
In lopping off your lately married men,
Before the bridal hours have danced their measure,
And the sad, second moon grows dim again,
Or dull repentance hath had dreary leisure
To wish him back a bachelor now and then.
And thus your houri (it may be) disputes
Of these brief blossoms the immediate fruits.

CXIV.

Thus the young khan, with hours in his sight,
Thought not upon the charms of four young brides,
But bravely rush'd on his first heavenly night.
In short, howe'er our better faith derides,
These black-eyed virgins make the Moslems fight,
As though there were one heaven and none be-

sides,—
Whereas, if all be true we hear of heaven
And hell, there must at least be six or seven.

CXV.

So fully flash'd the phantom on his eyes,
That when the very lance was in his heart,
He shouted "Allah!" and saw Paradise
With all its veil of mystery drawn apart,
And bright eternity without disguise
On his soul, like a ceaseless sunrise, dart:—
With prophets, hours, angels, saints, descried
In one voluptuous blaze,—and then he died:

CXVI.

But with a heavenly rapture on his face,
The good old khan, who long had ceased to see
Hours, or aught except his florid race
Who grew like cedars round him gloriously—
When he beheld his latest hero grace
The earth, which he became like a fell'd tree,
Paused for a moment from the fight, and cast
A glance on that slain son, his first and last.

CXVII.

The soldiers, who beheld him drop his point,
Stopp'd as if once more willing to concede
Quarter, in case he bade them not "aroynt!"
As he before had done. He did not heed
Their pause nor signs: his heart was out of joint,
And shook (till now unshaken) like a reed,
As he look'd down upon his children gone,
And felt—though done with life—he was alone.²

CXVIII.

But 't was a transient tremor:—with a spring
Upon the Russian steel his breast he flung.
As carelessly as hurls the moth her wing
Against the light wherein she dies: he clung
Closer, that all the deadlier they might wring,
Unto the bayonets which had pierced his young;
And throwing back a dim look on his sons,
In one wide wound pour'd forth his soul at once.

cessarily at variance with all the ministers of the Porte."—
VOLTAIRE.]

² ["Ces cinq fils furent tous tués sous ces yeux: il ne cessa point de se battre, répondit par des coups de sabre aux propositions de se rendre, et ne fut atteint du coup mortel qu'après avoir abattu de sa main beaucoup de Kozaks des plus acharnés à sa prise; le reste de sa troupe fut massacré."—*Hist. de la N. R.* p. 215.]

CXIX.

'Tis strange enough—the rough, tough soldiers,
who
Spared neither sex nor age in their career
Of carnage, when this old man was pierced through,
And lay before them with his children near,
Touch'd by the heroism of him they slew,
Were melted for a moment: though no tear
Flow'd from their bloodshot eyes, all red with strife,
They honour'd such determined scorn of life.

CXX.

But the stone bastion still kept up its fire,
Where the chief pacha calmly held his post:
Some twenty times he made the Russ retire,
And baffled the assaults of all their host:
At length he condescended to inquire
If yet the city's rest were won or lost;
And being told the latter, sent a bey
To answer Ribas' summons to give way.¹

CXXI.

In the mean time, cross-legg'd, with great sang-froid,
Among the scorching ruins he sat smoking
Tobacco on a little carpet;—Troy
Saw nothing like the scene around;—yet looking
With martial stoicism, nought seem'd to annoy
His stern philosophy; but gently stroking
His beard, he puff'd his pipe's ambrosial gales,
As if he had three lives, as well as tails.²

CXXII.

The town was taken—whether he might yield
Himself or bastion, little matter'd now:
His stubborn valour was no future shield.
Ismail's no more! The crescent's silver bow
Sunk, and the crimson cross glared o'er the field,
But red with no redeeming gore: the glow
Of burning streets, like moonlight on the water,
Was imaged back in blood, the sea of slaughter.

CXXIII.

All that the mind would shrink from of excesses;
All that the body perpetrates of bad;
All that we read, hear, dream, of man's distresses;
All that the devil would do if run stark mad;
All that defies the worst which pen expresses;
All by which hell is peopled, or as sad
As hell—mere mortals who their power abuse—
Was here (as heretofore and since) let loose.³

¹ ["Quoique les Russes fussent répandus dans la ville, le bastion de pierre résistait encore; il était défendu par un vieillard, pacha à trois queues, et commandant les forces réunies à Ismaël. On lui proposa une capitulation; il demanda si le reste de la ville était conquis; sur cette réponse, il autorisa quelques-uns de ces officiers à capituler avec M. de Ribas."—*Hist. de la N. R.* p. 215.]

² ["Pendant ce colloque, il resta étendu sur des tapis placés sur les ruines de la forteresse, fumant sa pipe avec la même tranquillité et la même indifférence que s'il eût été étranger à tout ce qui se passait."—*Ibid.* p. 215.]

³ ["No man could describe the horrors which ensued. The ferocious victors, instead of being struck with admiration or respect by the noble defence of the brave garrison, were so enraged at the great slaughter of their fellows which had taken place, that no bounds could be prescribed to the excess of their fury. All order and command seem to have been entirely at an end during the horrors of that terrible night: the officers could neither restrain the slaughter, nor prevent the general plunder, made by the lawless and ferocious soldiers. Thousands of the Turks, incapable of enduring the sight of the horrid scenes of destruction in which all that was dear to them was involved, rushed desperately upon the bayonets of the enemy, in order to shorten their misery;

CXXIV.

If here and there some transient trait of pity
Was shown, and some more noble heart broke through
Its bloody bond, and saved, perhaps, some pretty
Child, or an aged, helpless man or two—
What's this in one annihilated city,
Where thousand loves, and ties, and duties grew?
Cockneys of London! Muscadins of Paris!
Just ponder what a pious pastime war is.

CXXV.

Think how the joys of reading a Gazette
Are purchased by all agonies and crimes:
Or if these do not move you, don't forget
Such doom may be your own in after-times.
Meantime the Taxes, Castlereagh, and Debt,
Are hints as good as sermons, or as rhymes.
Read your own hearts and Ireland's present story,
Then feed her famine fat with Wellesley's glory.

CXXVI.

But still there is unto a patriot nation,
Which loves so well its country and its king,
A subject of sublimest exultation—
Bear it, ye Muses, on your brightest wing!
Howe'er the mighty locust, Desolation,
Strip your green fields, and to your harvests cling,
Gaunt famine never shall approach the throne—
Though Ireland starve, great George weighs twenty
stone.

CXXVII.

But let me put an end unto my theme:
There was an end of Ismail—hapless town!
Far flash'd her burning towers o'er Danube's stream,
And redly ran his blushing waters down.
The horrid war-whoop and the shriller scream
Rose still; but fainter were the thunders grown:
Of forty thousand who had mann'd the wall,
Some hundreds breathed—the rest were silent all!⁴

CXXVIII.

In one thing ne'ertheless 'tis fit to praise
The Russian army upon this occasion,
A virtue much in fashion now-a-days,
And therefore worthy of commemoration:
The topic's tender, so shall be my phrase—
Perhaps the season's chill, and their long station
In winter's depth, or want of rest and victual,
Had made them chaste;—they ravish'd very little.

while those who could reach the Danube threw themselves headlong into it for the same purpose. The streets and passages were so choked by the heaps of dead and dying bodies which lay in them, as considerably to impede the progress of the victors in their eager search for plunder.—*DR. LAURENCE, in Ann. Reg. for 1791.*]

⁴ ["On égorga indistinctement, on saccagea la place; et la rage du vainqueur se répandit comme un torrent furieux qui a renversé les digues qui le retenaient: personne obtint de grâce, et trente huit mille huit cent soixante Turcs périrent dans cette journée de sang."—*Hist. de la Nouv. Russie*, tom. iii. p. 214.]

"Among those who fell were a number of the bravest, most experienced, and renowned commanders in the Turkish armies. Six or seven Tartar princes, of the illustrious line of Gherai, likewise perished with the rest. A few hundreds of prisoners were preserved, to serve as melancholy recorders and witnesses of the destruction which they had beheld. In consequence of an accurate inquiry set on foot by an Ottoman commander of rank, it appears that the whole number of Turks, who perished in the slaughter of Ismail, amounted to thirty-eight thousand eight hundred and sixteen."—*DR. LAURENCE.*]

CXXIX.

Much did they slay, more plunder, and no less
Might here and there occur some violation
In the other line;—but not to such excess
As when the French, that dissipated nation,
Take towns by storm: no causes can I guess,
Except cold weather and commiseration;
But all the ladies, save some twenty score,
Were almost as much virgins as before.

CXXX.

Some odd mistakes, too, happen'd in the dark,
Which show'd a want of lanterns, or of taste—
Indeed the smoke was such they scarce could mark
Their friends from foes,—besides such things from
Occur, though rarely, when there is a spark [haste
Of light to save the venerably chaste:
But six old damsels, each of seventy years,
Were all deflower'd by different grenadiers.

CXXXI.

But on the whole their continence was great;
So that some disappointment there ensued
To those who had felt the inconvenient state
Of "single blessedness," and thought it good
(Since it was not their fault, but only fate,
To bear these crosses) for each waning prude
To make a Roman sort of Sabine wedding,
Without the expense and the suspense of bedding.

CXXXII.

Some voices of the buxom middle-aged
Were also heard to wonder in the din
(Widows of forty were these birds long caged)
"Wherefore the ravishing did not begin!"
But while the thirst for gore and plunder raged,
There was small leisure for superfluous sin;
But whether they escaped or no, lies hid
In darkness—I can only hope they did.

CXXXIII.

Suwarrow now was conqueror—a match
For Timour or for Zinghis in his trade. [thatch
While mosques and streets, beneath his eyes, like
Blazed, and the cannon's roar was scarce allay'd,
With bloody hands he wrote his first despatch;
And here exactly follows what he said:—
"Glory to God and to the Empress!" (*Powers
Eternal! such names mingled!*) "Ismail's ours."²

CXXXIV.

Methinks these are the most tremendous words,
Since "Menè, Menè, Tekel," and "Upharsin,"
Which hands or pens have ever traced of swords.
Heaven help me! I'm but little of a parson:
What Daniel read was short-hand of the Lord's,
Severe, sublime; the prophet wrote no farce on
The fate of nations;—but this Russ so witty
Could rhyme, like Nero, o'er a burning city.¹

¹ In the original Russian—

"Slava bogu! slava vam!
Krepost Vzala y iã tam;"

a kind of couplet; for he was a poet.

² [Mr. Tweddell, who met with Suwarrow in the Ukraine, says—"He is a most extraordinary character. He dines every morning about nine. He sleeps almost naked; he affects a perfect indifference to heat and cold; and quits his chamber, which approaches to suffocation, in order to review his troops, in a thin linen jacket, while the thermometer of Reaumur is at ten degrees below freezing. His manners correspond with his humours. I dined with him this morning. He cried to me across the table,—'Tweddell!' (he generally addressed me by my surname, without addition) 'the French have taken Portsmouth—I have just received a

CXXXV.

He wrote this Polar melody, and set it,
Duly accompanied by shrieks and groans,
Which few will sing, I trust, but none forget it—
For I will teach, if possible, the stones
To rise against earth's tyrants. Never let it
Be said that we still truckle unto thrones;—
But ye—our children's children! think how we
Show'd *what things were* before the world was free!

CXXXVI.

That hour is not for us, but 'tis for you:
And as, in the great joy of your millennium,
You hardly will believe such things were true
As now occur, I thought that I would pen you 'em;
But may their very memory perish too!—
Yet if perchance remember'd, still disdain you 'em
More than you scorn the savages of yore,
Who *painted* their bare limbs, but *not* with gore.

CXXXVII.

And when you hear historians talk of thrones,
And those that sate upon them, let it be
As we now gaze upon the mammoth's bones,
And wonder what old world such things could see,
Or hieroglyphics on Egyptian stones,
The pleasant riddles of futurity—
Guessing at what shall happily be hid,
As the real purpose of a pyramid.

CXXXVIII.

Reader! I have kept my word,—at least so far
As the first Canto promised. You have now
Had sketches of love, tempest, travel, war—
All very accurate, you must allow,
And *epic*, if plain truth should prove no bar;
For I have drawn much less with a long bow
Than my forerunners. Carelessly I sing,
But Phoebus lends me now and then a string,

CXXXIX.

With which I still can harp, and carp, and fiddle.
What farther hath befallen or may befall
The hero of this grand poetic riddle,
I by and by may tell you, if at all:
But now I choose to break off in the middle,
Worn out with battering Ismail's stubborn wall,
While Juan is sent off with the despatch,
For which all Petersburg is on the watch.³

CXL.

This special honour was conferr'd, because
He had behaved with courage and humanity—
Which *last* men like, when they have time to pause
From their ferocities produced by vanity.
His little captive gain'd him some applause
For saving her amidst the wild insanity
Of carnage,—and I think he was more glad in her
Safety, than his new order of St. Vladimir.

courier from England. The King is in the Tower; and Sheridan, Protector.' A great deal of his whimsical manner is affected: he finds that it suits his troops, and the people he has to deal with. I asked him, if, after the massacre at Ismail, he was perfectly satisfied with the conduct of the day. He said he went home and wept in his tent."—*Re-mains*, p. 135.]

³ [The ostentatious and fantastic display of the bloody trophies taken at Ismail, which were some time after exhibited at Petersburg, was unworthy the greatness, the magnanimity, and the high character of the Empress Catherine. The tragedy should have closed at the conclusion of the last act on the spot. It was attributed more to a desire of gratifying the excessive vanity of Prince Potemkin, which was not easily satiated, than that of the empress herself."—Dr. LAURENCE.]

CXXI.

The Moslem orphan went with her protector,
For she was homeless, houseless, helpless; all
Her friends, like the sad family of Hector,
Had perish'd in the field or by the wall:
Her very place of birth was but a spectre
Of what it had been; there the Muezzin's call¹
To prayer was heard no more!—and Juan wept,
And made a vow to shield her, which he kept.²

Don Juan.

CANTO THE NINTH.³

I.

OH, Wellington! (or "Villainton"⁴—for Fame
Sounds the heroic syllables both ways;
France could not even conquer your great name,
But punn'd it down to this facetious phrase—
Beating or beaten she will laugh the same.)
You have obtain'd great pensions and much praise:
Glory like yours should any dare gainsay,
Humanity would rise, and thunder "Nay!"⁵

II.

I don't think that you used Kinnaird quite well
In Marinè's affair⁶—in fact, 'twas shabby,
And like some other things won't do to tell
Upon your tomb in Westminster's old abbey.
Upon the rest 'tis not worth while to dwell,
Such tales being for the tea-hours of some tabby;
But though your years as *man* tend fast to zero,
In fact your grace is still but a *young hero*.

¹ [See *ante*, p. 22.]

² [Canto VI., VII., and VIII., if we except some parts of the assault of Ismail, contain a considerably less proportion of the higher class of poetry, than was to be found in those which preceded them. But in the keen and pervading satire, the bitter and biting irony, which constitute the peculiar forte of Lord Byron, we perceive no falling off in these present cantos. Nor are they deficient in that vein of playful humour, and that felicitous transition "from grave to gay, from lively to severe," so conspicuous in their predecessors. The execution, on the whole, we think quite equal to that displayed in the earlier parts of the poem.—CAMPBELL.]

³ [Cantos IX., X., and XI. were written at Pisa, and published in London, by Mr. John Hunt, in August, 1823. We extract the following specimen of contemporary criticism:—

"That there is a great deal of what is objectionable in these three cantos, who can deny? What can be more so than to attack the King, with low, vile, personal buffooneries—bottomed in utter falsehood, and expressed in crawling malice? What can be more exquisitely worthy of contempt than the savage imbecility of these eternal tirades against the Duke of Wellington? What more pitiable than the state of mind that can find any gratification in calling such a man as Southey by nicknames that one would be ashamed of applying to a coal-heaver? What can be so abject as this eternal trampling upon the dust of Castlereagh? Lord Byron ought to know that all men, of all parties, unite in regarding all these things, but especially the first and the last, as insults to themselves, and as most miserable degradations of him.

"But still Don Juan is, without exception, the first of Lord Byron's works. It is by far the most original in point of *conception*. It is decidedly original in point of *tone*. It contains the finest specimens of serious poetry he has ever written; and it contains the finest specimens of ludicrous poetry that our age has witnessed. Frere may have written the stanza earlier; he may have written it more carefully, more musically, if you will; but what is he to Byron? Where is the sweep, the pith, the soaring pinion, the lavish luxury of genius revelling in strength. No: no: Don Juan, say the

III.

Though Britain owes (and pays you too) so much,
Yet Europe doubtless owes you greatly more:
You have repair'd Legitimacy's crutch,
A prop not quite so certain as before:
The Spanish, and the French, as well as Dutch,
Have seen, and felt, how strongly you *restore*;¹
And Waterloo has made the world your debtor
(I wish your bards would sing it rather better).

IV.

You are "the best of cut-throats:"⁷—do not start;
The phrase is Shakspeare's, and not misapplied:—
War's a brain-spattering, windpipe-slitting art,
Unless her cause by right be sanctified.
If you have acted *once* a generous part,
The world, not the world's masters, will decide,
And I shall be delighted to learn who,
Save you and yours, have gain'd by Waterloo?

V.

I am no flatterer—you've supp'd full of flattery:
They say you like it too—'tis no great wonder.
He whose whole life has been assault and battery,
At last may get a little tired of thunder;
And swallowing eulogy much more than satire, he
May like being praised for every lucky blunder,
Call'd "Saviour of the Nations"—not yet saved,
And "Europe's Liberator"—still enslaved.⁸

VI.

I've done. Now go and dine from off the plate
Presented by the Prince of the Brazils,
And send the sentinel before your gate
A slice or two from your luxurious meals:⁹
He fought, but has not fed so well of late.
Some hunger, too, they say the people feels:—
There is no doubt that you deserve your ration,
But pray give back a little to the nation.

canting world what it will, is destined to hold a permanent rank in the literature of our country. It will always be referred to as furnishing the most powerful picture of that vein of thought (no matter how false and bad) which distinguishes a great portion of the thinking people of our time."—BLACKWOOD.]

⁴ ["Faut qu' lord Villainton ait tout pris,
N'y a plus d'argent dans c'goutex de Paris."—
DE BERANGER.]

⁵ Query, *Ney?*—Printer's Devil.

⁶ [The late Lord Kinnaird was received in Paris, in 1814, with great civility by the Duke of Wellington and the royal family of France, but he had himself presented to Buonaparte during the hundred days, and intrigued on with those of that faction, in spite of the Duke's remonstrances, until the restored government ordered him out of the French territory in 1816. In 1817, he became acquainted at Brussels with one *Marinè*, an adventurer mixed up in a conspiracy to assassinate the Duke in the streets of Paris. This fellow at first promised to discover the man who actually shot at his Grace, but, on reaching Paris, shuffled and would say nothing; and Lord Kinnaird's *avowed* cause of complaint against the Duke was, that he did not *protect* this creature from the French police, who, not doubting that he had been one of the conspirators against his Grace's life, arrested him accordingly. He was tried along with the actual assassin, and both were acquitted by the Parisian jury.]

⁷ ["Thou art the best o' the cut-throats."—*Macbeth*, act iii. sc. iii.]

⁸ Vide Speeches in Parliament, after the battle of Waterloo.

⁹ "I at this time got a post, being for fatigue, with four others. We were sent to break biscuit, and make a mess for Lord Wellington's hounds. I was very hungry, and thought it a good job at the time, as we got our own fill while we broke the biscuit,—a thing I had not got for some days. When thus engaged, the Prodigal Son was never once out of my mind; and I sighed, as I fed the dogs, over my humble situation and my ruined hopes."—*Journal of a Soldier of the 71st Regiment during the War in Spain*.