

## VII.

I don't mean to reflect—a man so great as  
You, my lord duke! is far above reflection:  
The high Roman fashion, too, of Cincinnatus,  
With modern history has but small connection:  
Though as an Irishman you love potatoes,  
You need not take them under your direction;  
And half a million for your Sabine farm  
Is rather dear!—I'm sure I mean no harm.

## VIII.

Great men have always scorn'd great recompences:  
Epaminondas saved his Thebes, and died,  
Not leaving even his funeral expenses:<sup>1</sup>  
George Washington had thanks and nought beside,  
Except the all-cloudless glory (which few men's is)  
To free his country: Pitt too had his pride,  
And as a high-soul'd minister of state is  
Renown'd for ruining Great Britain gratis.<sup>2</sup>

## IX.

Never had mortal man such opportunity,  
Except Napoleon, or abused it more:  
You might have freed fallen Europe from the unity  
Of tyrants, and been blest from shore to shore:  
And now—what is your fame? Shall the Muse  
tune it ye?  
Now—that the rabble's first vain shouts are o'er?  
Go! hear it in your famish'd country's cries!  
Behold the world! and curse your victories!

## X.

As these new cantos touch on warlike feats,  
To you the unflattering Muse deigns to inscribe  
Truths, that you will not read in the Gazettes,  
But which 'tis time to teach the hireling tribe  
Who fatten on their country's gore, and debts,  
Must be recited, and—without a bribe.  
You did great things; but not being great in mind,  
Have left undone the greatest—and mankind.

## XI.

Death laughs—Go ponder o'er the skeleton  
With which men image out the unknown thing  
That hides the past world, like to a set sun  
Which still elsewhere may rouse a brighter spring—  
Death laughs at all you weep for:—look upon  
This hourly dread of all! whose threaten'd sting  
Turns life to terror, even though in its sheath:  
Mark! how its lipless mouth grins without breath!

## XII.

Mark! how it laughs and scorns at all you are!  
And yet was what you are: from ear to ear  
It laughs not—there is now no fleshy bar  
So call'd; the Antic long hath ceased to hear,  
But still he smiles; and whether near or far,  
He strips from man that mantle (far more dear  
Than even the tailor's), his incarnate skin,  
White, black, or copper—the dead bones will grin.

<sup>1</sup> ["In other illustrious men you will observe that each possessed some one shining quality, which was the foundation of his fame: in Epaminondas, all the virtues are found united; force of body, eloquence of expression, vigour of mind, contempt of riches."—Diod. Sic. lib. xv.]

<sup>2</sup> [Those persons who represent our statesmen as living and fattening upon the public spoil, must either be grossly ignorant, or wicked enough to employ arguments which they know to be false. The emoluments of office, almost in every department of the state, and especially in all the highest, are notoriously inadequate to the expenditure which the situation requires. Mr. Pitt, who was no gambler, no prodigal, and

## XIII.

And thus Death laughs,—it is sad merriment,  
But still it is so; and with such example  
Why should not Life be equally content  
With his superior, in a smile to trample  
Upon the nothings which are daily spent  
Like bubbles on an ocean much less ample  
Than the eternal deluge, which devours  
Suns as rays—worlds like atoms—years like hours?

## XIV.

"To be, or not to be? that is the question,"  
Says Shakspeare, who just now is much in fashion.  
I am neither Alexander nor Hephæstion,  
Nor ever had for abstract fame much passion;  
But would much rather have a sound digestion  
Than Buonaparte's cancer:—could I dash on  
Through fifty victories to shame or fame,  
Without a stomach—that were a good name?

## XV.

"Oh dura ilia messorum!"<sup>3</sup>— "Oh  
Ye rigid guts of reapers!" I translate  
For the great benefit of those who know  
What indigestion is—that inward fate  
Which makes all Styx through one small liver flow.  
A peasant's sweat is worth his lord's estate:  
Let this one toil for bread—that rack for rent,  
He who sleeps best may be the most content.

## XVI.

"To be, or not to be?"—Ere I decide,  
I should be glad to know that which is being.  
'Tis true we speculate both far and wide,  
And deem, because we see, we are all-seeing:  
For my part, I'll enlist on neither side,  
Until I see both sides for once agreeing.  
For me, I sometimes think that life is death,  
Rather than life a mere affair of breath.

## XVII.

'Que scais-je?'<sup>4</sup> was the motto of Montaigne,  
As also of the first academicians:  
That all is dubious which man may attain,  
Was one of their most favourite positions.  
There's no such thing as certainty, that's plain  
As any of Mortality's conditions;  
So little do we know what we're about in  
This world, I doubt if doubt itself be doubting.

## XVIII.

It is a pleasant voyage perhaps to float,  
Like Pyrrho<sup>5</sup>, on a sea of speculation;  
But what if carrying sail capsize the boat?  
Your wise men don't know much of navigation;  
And swimming long in the abyss of thought  
Is apt to tire: a calm and shallow station [gathers  
Well nigh the shore, where one stoops down and  
Some pretty shell, is best for moderate bathers.

too much a man of business to have expensive habits of any kind, died in debt; and the nation discharged his debts, not less as a mark of respect, than as an act of justice.—SOUTHEY.]

<sup>3</sup> ["O, dura messorum ilia!" &c.—HOR.]

<sup>4</sup> [See Biographie Universelle, tom. xix. p. 434.]

<sup>5</sup> [Pyrrho, the philosopher of Elis, was in continual suspense of judgment: he doubted of every thing; never made any conclusion; and when he had carefully examined a subject, and investigated all its points, he concluded by still doubting of its evidence.—AUL. GEL.]

## XIX.

"But heaven," as Cassio says, "is above all—"<sup>1</sup>  
No more of this, then,—let us pray!" We have  
Souls to save, since Eve's slip and Adam's fall,  
Which tumbled all mankind into the grave,  
Besides fish, beasts, and birds. "The sparrow's fall  
Is special providence,"<sup>2</sup> though how it gave  
Offence, we know not; probably it perch'd  
Upon the tree which Eve so fondly search'd.

## XX.

Oh! ye immortal Gods! what is theogony?  
Oh! thou, too, mortal man! what is philanthropy?  
Oh! world, which was and is, what is cosmogony?  
Some people have accused me of misanthropy;  
And yet I know no more than the mahogany  
That forms this desk, of what they mean; lyhan-  
I comprehend, for without transformation [thropy]<sup>3</sup>  
Men become wolves on any slight occasion.

## XXI.

But I, the mildest, meekest of mankind,  
Like Moses, or Melancthon, who have ne'er  
Done any thing exceedingly unkind,—  
And (though I could not now and then forbear  
Following the bent of body or of mind)  
Have always had a tendency to spare,—  
Why do they call me misanthrope? Because  
They hate me, not I them:—and here we'll pause.

## XXII.

'Tis time we should proceed with our good poem,—  
For I maintain that it is really good,  
Not only in the body but the poem,  
However little both are understood  
Just now,—but by and by the Truth will show 'em  
Herself in her sublimest attitude:  
And till she doth, I fain must be content  
To share her beauty and her banishment.

## XXIII.

Our hero (and, I trust, kind reader! yours—)  
Was left upon his way to the chief city  
Of the immortal Peter's polish'd boors, [witty.  
Who still have shown themselves more brave than  
I know its mighty empire now allures  
Much flattery—even Voltaire's, and that's a pity.  
For me, I deem an absolute autocrat  
Not a barbarian, but much worse than that.

## XXIV.

And I will war, at least in words (and—should  
My chance so happen—deeds), with all who war  
With Thought;—and of Thought's foes by far most  
rude,

Tyrants and sycophants have been and are.

I know not who may conquer: if I could  
Have such a prescience, it should be no bar  
To this my plain, sworn, downright detestation  
Of every despotism in every nation.

## XXV.

It is not that I adulate the people:  
Without me, there are demagogues enough,  
And infidels, to pull down every steeple,  
And set up in their stead some proper stuff.

- See Othello.

<sup>2</sup> ["We defy augury: there is a special Providence in the fall of a sparrow."—Hamlet.]

Whether they may sow scepticism to reap hell,  
As is the Christian dogma rather rough,  
I do not know;—I wish men to be free  
As much from mobs as kings—from you as me.

## XXVI.

The consequence is, being of no party,  
I shall offend all parties:—never mind!  
My words, at least, are more sincere and hearty  
Than if I sought to sail before the wind.  
He who has nought to gain can have small art: he  
Who neither wishes to be bound or bind,  
May still expatiate freely, as will I,  
Nor give my voice to slavery's jackall cry.

## XXVII.

That's an appropriate simile, that jackall;—  
I've heard them in the Ephesian ruins howl<sup>4</sup>  
By night, as do that mercenary pack all,  
Power's base purveyors, who for pickings prowl,  
And scent the prey their masters would attack all.  
However, the poor jackalls are less foul  
(As being the brave lions keen providers)  
Than human insects, catering for spiders.

## XXVIII.

Raise but an arm! 't will brush their web away,  
And without that, their poison and their claws  
Are useless. Mind, good people! what I say—  
(Or rather peoples)—go on without pause!  
The web of these tarantulas each day  
Increases, till you shall make common cause:  
None, save the Spanish fly and Attic bee,  
As yet are strongly stinging to be free.

## XXIX.

Don Juan, who had shone in the late slaughter,  
Was left upon his way with the despatch,  
Where blood was talk'd of as we would of water;  
And carcasses that lay as thick as thatch  
O'er silenced cities, merely served to flatter  
Fair Catherine's pastime—who look'd on the  
match  
Between these nations as a main of cocks,  
Wherein she liked her own to stand like rocks.

## XXX.

And there in a *hibitha* he roll'd on,  
(A cursed sort of carriage without springs,  
Which on rough roads leaves scarcely a whole bone,)  
Pondering on glory, chivalry, and kings,  
And orders, and on all that he had done—  
And wishing that post-horses had the wings  
Of Pegasus, or at the least post-chaises  
Had feathers, when a traveller on deep ways is.

## XXXI.

At every jolt—and they were many—still  
He turn'd his eyes upon his little charge,  
As if he wish'd that she should fare less ill  
Than he, in these sad highways left at large  
To ruts, and flints, and lovely Nature's skill,  
Who is no paviour, nor admits a barge  
On her canals, where God takes sea and land,  
Fishery and farm, both into his own hand.

<sup>3</sup> ["A kind of madness, in which men have the qualities of wild beasts."—TODD.]

<sup>4</sup> In Greece I never saw or heard these animals; but among the ruins of Ephesus I have heard them by hundreds. [See *antiq.*, p. 131.]



## XXXII.

At least he pays no rent, and has best right  
To be the first of what we used to call  
"Gentlemen farmers" — a race worn out quite,  
Since lately there have been no rents at all,  
And "gentlemen" are in a piteous plight,  
And "farmers" can't raise Ceres from her fall:  
She fell with Buonaparte — What strange thoughts  
Arise, when we see emperors fall with oats!

## XXXIII.

But Juan turn'd his eyes on the sweet child  
Whom he had saved from slaughter — what a trophy!  
Oh! ye who build up monuments, defiled  
With gore, like Nadir Shah, that costive sophy,  
Who, after leaving Hindostan a wild,  
And scarce to the Mogul a cup of coffee  
To soothe his woes withal, was slain, the sinner!  
Because he could no more digest his dinner; <sup>1</sup> —

## XXXIV.

Oh ye! or we! or he! or she! reflect,  
That *one* life saved, especially if young  
Or pretty, is a thing to recollect  
Far sweeter than the greenest laurels sprung  
From the manure of human clay, though deck'd  
With all the praises ever said or sung: <sup>2</sup>  
Though hymn'd by every harp, unless within  
Your heart joins chorus, Fame is but a din.

## XXXV.

Oh! ye great authors luminous!  
Ye twice ten hundred thousand daily scribes!  
Whose pamphlets, volumes, newspapers, illumine us!  
Whether you're paid by government in bribes,  
To prove the public debt is not consuming us —  
Or, roughly treading on the "courtier's kibes,"  
With clownish heel <sup>3</sup>, your popular circulation  
Feeds you by printing half the realm's starvation; —

## XXXVI.

Oh, ye great authors! — "Apropos des bottes," —  
I have forgotten what I meant to say,  
As sometimes have been greater sages' lots; —  
<sup>4</sup> 'T was something calculated to allay  
All wrath in barracks, palaces, or cots:  
Certes it would have been but thrown away,  
And that's one comfort for my lost advice,  
Although no doubt it was beyond all price.

## XXXVII.

But let it go: — it will one day be found  
With other relics of "a former world,"  
When this world shall be *former*, underground,  
Thrown topsy-turvy, twisted, crisp'd, and curl'd,  
Baked, fried, or burnt, turn'd inside-out, or drown'd,  
Like all the worlds before, which have been hurl'd  
First out of, and then back again to chaos,  
The superstratum which will overlay us.

## XXXVIII.

So Cuvier says; — and then shall come again  
Unto the new creation, rising out  
From our old crash, some mystic, ancient strain  
Of things destroy'd and left in airy doubt;

<sup>1</sup> He was killed in a conspiracy, after his temper had been exasperated by his extreme costivity to a degree of insanity.

<sup>2</sup> ["One virtuous, or a mere good-natured deed, Does all desert in sciences exceed." — SHEFFIELD.]

<sup>3</sup> ["The age is grown so picked, that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe." — *Hamlet*.]

Like to the notions we now entertain  
Of Titans, giants, fellows of about  
Some hundred feet in height, *not* to say miles,  
And mammoths, and your winged crocodiles.

## XXXIX.

Think if then George the Fourth should be dug up!  
How the new worldlings of the then new East  
Will wonder where such animals could sup!  
(For they themselves will be but of the least:  
Even worlds miscarry, when too oft they pup,  
And every new creation hath decreased  
In size, from overworking the material —  
Men are but maggots of some huge Earth's burial.)

## XL.

How will — to these young people, just thrust out  
From some fresh Paradise, and set to plough,  
And dig, and sweat, and turn themselves about,  
And plant, and reap, and spin, and grind, and sow,  
Till all the arts at length are brought about,  
Especially of war and taxing — how,  
I say, will these great relics, when they see 'em,  
Look like the monsters of a new museum?

## XLI.

But I am apt to grow too metaphysical:  
"The time is out of joint," <sup>4</sup> — and so am I;  
I quite forget this poem's merely quizzical,  
And deviate into matters rather dry.  
I ne'er decide what I shall say, and this I call  
Much too poetical: men should know why  
They write, and for what end; but, note or text,  
I never know the word which will come next.

## XLII.

So on I ramble, now and then narrating,  
Now pondering: — it is time we should narrate.  
I left Don Juan, with his horses baiting —  
Now we'll get o'er the ground at a great rate.  
I shall not be particular in stating  
His journey, we've so many tours of late:  
Suppose him then at Petersburg; suppose  
That pleasant capital of painted snows;

## XLIII.

Suppose him in a handsome uniform;  
A scarlet coat, black facings, a long plume,  
Waving, like sails new shiver'd in a storm,  
Over a cock'd hat in a crowded room,  
And brilliant breeches, bright as a Cairn Gorme, <sup>5</sup>  
Of yellow casimire we may presume,  
White stockings drawn uncurled as new milk  
O'er limbs whose symmetry set off the silk;

## XLIV.

Suppose him sword by side, and hat in hand,  
Made up by youth, fame, and an army tailor —  
That great enchanter, at whose rod's command  
Beauty springs forth, and Nature's self turns paler,  
Seeing how Art can make her work more grand  
(When she don't pin men's limbs in like a gaoler), —  
Behold him placed as if upon a pillar! He  
Seems Love turn'd a lieutenant of artillery.

<sup>4</sup> ["The time is out of joint: — O cursed spite!  
That ever I was born to set it right." — *Hamlet*.]

<sup>5</sup> [A yellow-coloured crystal, denominated from a hill in Inverness-shire, where it is found. This has been generally called the Scottish topaz; but it now gives place to another crystal of a far harder quality, found near Invercauld. — JAMIESON.]

## XLV.

His bandage slipp'd down into a cravat;  
His wings subdued to epaulettes; his quiver  
Shrunk to a scabbard, with his arrows at  
His side as a small sword, but sharp as ever;  
His bow converted into a cock'd hat;  
But still so like, that Psyche were more clever  
Than some wives (who make blunders no less stupid),  
If she had not mistaken him for Cupid.

## XLVI.

The courtiers stared, the ladies whisper'd, and  
The empress smiled: the reigning favourite  
frown'd —  
I quite forget which of them was in hand  
Just then; as they are rather numerous found,  
Who took by turns that difficult command,  
Since first her majesty was singly crown'd:  
But they were mostly nervous six-foot fellows,  
All fit to make a Patagonian jealous.

## XLVII.

Juan was none of these, but slight and slim,  
Blushing and beardless; and yet ne'ertheless  
There was a something in his turn of limb,  
And still more in his eye, which seem'd to express,  
That though he look'd like one of the seraphim,  
There lurk'd a man beneath the spirit's dress.  
Besides, the empress sometimes liked a boy,  
And had just buried the fair-faced Lanskoj. <sup>1</sup>

## XLVIII.

No wonder then that Yermoloff, or Momonoff,  
Or Scherbatoff, or any other *off*  
Or *on*, might dread her majesty had not room enough  
Within her bosom (which was not too tough)  
For a new flame; a thought to cast of gloom enough  
Along the aspect, whether smooth or rough,  
Of him who, in the language of his station,  
Then held that "high official situation."

## XLIX.

O, gentle ladies! should you seek to know  
The import of this diplomatic phrase,  
Bid Ireland's Londonderry's Marquess <sup>2</sup> show  
His parts of speech; and in the strange displays  
Of that odd string of words, all in a row,  
Which none divine, and every one obeys,  
Perhaps you may pick out some queer *no* meaning,  
Of that weak wordy harvest the sole gleanings.

## L.

I think I can explain myself without  
That sad inexplicable beast of prey —  
That Sphinx, whose words would ever be a doubt,  
Did not his deeds unriddle them each day —  
That monstrous hieroglyphic — that long spout  
Of blood and water, leaden Castlereagh!  
And here I must an anecdote relate,  
But luckily of no great length or weight.

<sup>1</sup> He was the grande passion of the grande Catherine. See her Lives under the head of "Lanskoj." — ["Lanskoj was a youth of as fine and interesting a figure as the imagination can paint. Of all Catherine's favourites, he was the man whom she loved the most. His education having been neglected, she took the care of his improvement upon herself. In 1784, he was attacked with a fever, and perished in the flower of his age, in the arms of her majesty. When he was no more, Catherine gave herself up to the most poignant grief, and remained three months without going out of her

## LI.

An English lady ask'd of an Italian,  
What were the actual and official duties  
Of the strange thing, some women set a value on,  
Which hovers oft about some married beauties,  
Called "Cavalier servente?" <sup>3</sup> a Pygmalion  
Whose statues warm (I fear, alas! too true 't is)  
Beneath his art. The dame, press'd to disclose them,  
Said — "Lady, I beseech you to *suppose them*."

## LII.

And thus I supplicate your supposition,  
And mildest, matron-like interpretation,  
Of the imperial favourite's condition.  
<sup>4</sup> 'T was a high place, the highest in the nation  
In fact, if not in rank; and the suspicion  
Of any one's attaining to his station,  
No doubt gave pain, where each new pair of shoulders,  
If rather broad, made stocks rise and their holders.

## LIII.

Juan, I said, was a most beautiful boy,  
And had retain'd his boyish look beyond  
The usual hirsute seasons which destroy,  
With beards and whiskers, and the like, the fond  
*Parisian* aspect, which upset old Troy  
And founded Doctors' Commons: — I have conn'd  
The history of divorces, which, though chequer'd,  
Calls Ilion's the first damages on record.

## LIV.

And Catherine, who loved all things, (save her lord,  
Who was gone to his place,) and pass'd for much,  
Admiring those (by dainty dames abhorr'd)  
Gigantic gentlemen, yet had a touch  
Of sentiment; and he she most adored  
Was the lamented Lanskoj, who was such  
A lover as had cost her many a tear,  
And yet but made a middling grenadier.

## LV.

Oh thou "teterrima causa" of all "belli" — <sup>4</sup>  
Thou gate of life and death — thou nondescript!  
Whence is our exit and our entrance, — well I  
May pause in pondering how all souls are dipt  
In thy perennial fountain: — how man *fell*, I  
Know not, since knowledge saw her branches  
stript  
Of her first fruit; but how he falls and rises  
*Since*, thou hast settled beyond all surmises.

## LVI.

Some call thee "the worst cause of war," but I  
Maintain thou art the *best*: for after all  
From thee we come, to thee we go, and why  
To get at thee not batter down a wall,  
Or waste a world? since no one can deny  
Thou dost replenish worlds both great and small:  
With, or without thee, all things at a stand  
Are, or would be, thou sea of life's dry land!

palace of Tzarsko-selo. She afterwards raised a superb monument to his memory, in the gardens of that imperial seat. Lanskoj's fortune was estimated at three million rubles. He bequeathed it to the empress, who returned it to the sisters of that favourite, reserving only to herself the right of purchasing the pictures, medals, and library." — *TOOKER*.]

<sup>2</sup> This was written long before the suicide of that person.

<sup>3</sup> [See *ante*, p. 148.]

<sup>4</sup> Hor. Sat. lib. i. sat. iii.



## LVII.

Catherine, who was the grand epitome  
Of that great cause of war, or peace, or what  
You please (it causes all the things which be,  
So you may take your choice of this or that) —  
Catherine, I say, was very glad to see  
The handsome herald, on whose plumage sat  
Victory; and, pausing as she saw him kneel  
With his despatch, forgot to break the seal.<sup>1</sup>

## LVIII.

Then recollecting the whole empress, nor  
Forgetting quite the woman (which composed  
At least three parts of this great whole), she tore  
The letter open with an air which posed  
The court, that watch'd each look her visage wore,  
Until a royal smile at length disclosed  
Fair weather for the day. Though rather spacious,  
Her face was noble, her eyes fine, mouth gracious.<sup>2</sup>

## LIX.

Great joy was hers, or rather joys: the first  
Was a ta'en city, thirty thousand slain.  
Glory and triumph o'er her aspect burst,  
As an East Indian sunrise on the main.  
These quest'd a moment her ambition's thirst —  
So Arab deserts drink in summer's rain:  
In vain! — As fall the dews on quenchless sands,  
Blood only serves to wash Ambition's hands!

## LX.

Her next amusement was more fanciful;  
She smiled at mad Suwarrow's rhymes, who threw  
Into a Russian couplet rather dull  
The whole gazette of thousands whom he slew.<sup>3</sup>  
Her third was feminine enough to annul  
The shudder which runs naturally through  
Our veins, when things call'd sovereigns think it best  
To kill, and generals turn it into jest.

## LXI.

The two first feelings ran their course complete,  
And lighted first her eye, and then her mouth:  
The whole court look'd immediately most sweet,  
Like flowers well water'd after a long drouth: —  
But when on the lieutenant at her feet  
Her majesty, who liked to gaze on youth  
Almost as much as on a new despatch,  
Glanced mildly, all the world was on the watch.

## LXII.

Though somewhat large, exuberant, and truculent,  
When *wroth* — while *pleas'd*, she was as fine a figure  
As those who like things rosy, ripe, and succulent,  
Would wish to look on, while they are in vigour.  
She could repay each amatory look you lent  
With interest, and in turn was wont with rigour  
To exact of Cupid's bills the full amount  
At sight, nor would permit you to discount.

<sup>1</sup> [The union of debauchery and ferocity which characterised Catherine, are admirably depicted in her manner of feeding her ambition with the perusal of the despatch, and gratifying her rising passion with the contemplation of Juan; who, in spite of the jealousy and murmurings of rival expectants and candidates, is fairly installed into the "high official situation" of Catherine's favourite. — CAMPBELL.]

<sup>2</sup> [Catherine had been handsome in her youth, and she preserved a gracefulness and majesty to the last period of her life. She was of a moderate stature, but well proportioned; and as she carried her head very high, she appeared rather tall. She had an open front, an aquiline nose, an agreeable mouth, and her chin, though long, was not misshapen. Her hair was auburn, her eyebrows black and rather thick, and her blue eyes had a gentleness which was often affected, but oftener still a mixture of pride. Her physiognomy was not deficient in expression; but this expression never discovered

## LXIII.

With her the latter, though at times convenient,  
Was not so necessary; for they tell [lenient,  
That she was handsome, and though fierce *look'd*  
And always used her favourites too well.  
If once beyond her boudoir's precincts in ye went,  
Your "fortune" was in a fair way "to swell  
A man" (as Giles says)<sup>4</sup>; for though she would  
Nations, she liked man as an individual. [widow all

## LXIV.

What a strange thing is man! and what a stranger  
Is woman! What a whirlwind is her head,  
And what a whirlpool full of depth and danger  
Is all the rest about her! Whether wed,  
Or widow, maid, or mother, she can change her  
Mind like the wind: whatever she has said  
Or done, is light to what she'll say or do; —  
The oldest thing on record, and yet new!

## LXV.

Oh Catherine! (for of all interjections,  
To thee both *oh!* and *ah!* belong of right  
In love and war) how odd are the connections  
Of human thoughts, which jostle in their flight!  
Just now *yours* were cut out in different sections:  
First Ismael's capture caught your fancy quite;  
Next of new knights, the fresh and glorious batch:  
And *thirdly* he who brought you the despatch!

## LXVI.

\*Shakspeare talks of "the herald Mercury  
New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;"<sup>5</sup>  
And some such visions cross'd her majesty,  
While her young herald knelt before her still.  
'Tis very true the hill seem'd rather high,  
For a lieutenant to climb up; but skill [blessing,  
Smooth'd even the Simplon's steep, and by God's  
With youth and health all kisses are "heaven-kissing."

## LXVII.

Her majesty look'd down, the youth look'd up —  
And so they fell in love; — she with his face,  
His grace, his God-knows-what: for Cupid's cup  
With the first draught intoxicates apace,  
A quintessential laudanum or "black drop,"  
Which makes one drunk at once, without the base  
Expedient of full bumpers; for the eye  
In love drinks all life's fountains (save tears) dry.

## LXVIII.

He, on the other hand, if not in love,  
Fell into that no less imperious passion,  
Self-love — which, when some sort of thing above  
Ourselves, a singer, dancer, much in fashion,  
Or duchess, princess, empress, "deigns to prove"<sup>6</sup>  
( 'Tis Pope's phrase) a great longing, though a  
For one especial person out of many, [rash one,  
Makes us believe ourselves as good as any.

what was passing in the soul of Catherine, or rather it served her the better to disguise it." — TOOKE.]

<sup>3</sup> [Suwarrow is as singular for the brevity of his style as for the rapidity of his conquests. On the taking Tourtourkaya, in Bulgaria, he actually wrote no more to the empress than two lines of Russ poetry: —

Slawo Bogon, Slawo bowam,  
Glory to God, glory to you,  
Tourtourkaya awiala, ia tam,  
Tourtourkaya is taken, here am I." — TOOKE.]

<sup>4</sup> [His fortune swells him, it is rank, he's married." — *Sir Giles Overreach*; MASSINGER'S *New Way to pay Old Debts*.]

<sup>5</sup> [Hamlet, act iii. sc. iv.]

<sup>6</sup> [Not Caesar's empress would I deign to prove;  
No! make me mistress to the man I love." —  
POPE: *Eloisa*.]

## LXIX.

Besides, he was of that delighted age  
Which makes all female ages equal — when  
We don't much care with whom we may engage,  
As bold as Daniel in the lion's den,  
So that we can our native sun assuage  
In the next ocean, which may flow just then,  
To make a twilight in, just as Sol's heat is  
Quench'd in the lap of the salt sea, or Thetis.

## LXX.

And Catherine (we must say thus much for Catherine),  
Though bold and bloody, was the kind of thing  
Whose temporary passion was quite flattering,  
Because each lover look'd a sort of king,  
Made up upon an amatory pattern,  
A royal husband in all save the *ring* —  
Which, being the damn'dest part of matrimony,  
Seem'd taking out the sting to leave the honey.

## LXXI.

And when you add to this, her womanhood  
In its meridian, her blue eyes<sup>1</sup> or gray —  
(The last, if they have soul, are quite as good,  
Or better, as the best examples say:  
Napoleon's, Mary's<sup>2</sup> (queen of Scotland), should  
Lend to that colour a transcendent ray;  
And Pallas also sanctions the same hue,  
Too wise to look through optics black or blue) —

## LXXII.

Her sweet smile, and her then majestic figure,  
Her plumpness, her imperial condescension,  
Her preference of a boy to men much bigger  
(Fellows whom Messalina's self would pension),  
Her prime of life, just now in juicy vigour,  
With other *extras*, which we need not mention, —  
All these, or any one of these, explain  
Enough to make a stripling very vain.

## LXXIII.

And that's enough, for love is vanity,  
Selfish in its beginning as its end,  
Except where 'tis a mere insanity,  
A maddening spirit which would strive to blend  
Itself with beauty's frail inanity,  
On which the passion's self seems to depend:  
And hence some heathenish philosophers  
Make love the main-spring of the universe.

## LXXIV.

Besides Platonic love, besides the love  
Of God, the love of sentiment, the loving  
Of faithful pairs — (I needs must rhyme with dove,  
That good old steam-boat which keeps verses moving  
'Gainst reason — Reason ne'er was hand-and-glove  
With rhyme, but always leant less to improving  
The sound than sense) — besides all these pretences  
To love, there are those things which words name  
senses;

<sup>1</sup> [Several persons who lived at the court affirm that Catherine had very blue eyes, and not gray, as M. Rulhières has stated." — TOOKE.]

<sup>2</sup> [See *anti*, p. 661.]

<sup>3</sup> [ "Lust, through certain strainers well refined,  
Is gentle love, and charms all woman kind." — POPE.]

<sup>4</sup> A Russian estate is always valued by the number of the slaves upon it.

<sup>5</sup> [Peter the Third died in July, 1762, just one week after his deposition. The real manner in which he came by his death is one of those events over which, it is probable, there will be for ever a veil impenetrable to human eyes, and known

## LXXV.

Those movements, those improvements in our bodies  
Which make all bodies anxious to get out  
Of their own sand-pits, to mix with a goddess,  
For such all women are at first no doubt.  
How beautiful that moment! and how odd is  
That fever which precedes the languid rout  
Of our sensations! What a curious way  
The whole thing is of clothing souls in clay!

## LXXVI.

The noblest kind of love is love Platonical,  
To end or to begin with; the next grand  
Is that which may be christen'd love canonical,  
Because the clergy take the thing in hand;  
The third sort to be noted in our chronicle  
As flourishing in every Christian land,  
Is, when chaste matrons to their other ties  
Add what may be call'd *marriage in disguise*.

## LXXVII.

Well, we won't analyse — our story must  
Tell for itself: the sovereign was smitten,  
Juan much flatter'd by her love, or lust; —<sup>3</sup>  
I cannot stop to alter words once written,  
And the two are so mix'd with human dust,  
That he who *names one*, both perchance may hit on:  
But in such matters Russia's mighty empress  
Behaved no better than a common sempstress.

## LXXVIII.

The whole court melted into one wide whisper,  
And all lips were applied unto all ears!  
The elder ladies' wrinkles curl'd much crisper  
As they beheld; the younger cast some leers  
On one another, and each lovely lipser  
Smiled as she talk'd the matter o'er; but tears  
Of rivalry rose in each clouded eye  
Of all the standing army who stood by.

## LXXIX.

All the ambassadors of all the powers  
Inquired, Who was this very new young man,  
Who promised to be great in some few hours?  
Which is full soon (though life is but a span).  
Already they beheld the silver showers  
Of rubles rain, as fast as specie can,  
Upon his cabinet, besides the presents  
Of several ribands, and some thousand peasants.<sup>4</sup>

## LXXX.

Catherine was generous, — all such ladies are:  
Love, that great opener of the heart and all  
The ways that lead there, be they near or far,  
Above, below, by turnpikes great or small, —  
Love — (though she had a cursed taste for war,  
And was not the best wife<sup>5</sup>, unless we call  
Such Clytemnestra, though perhaps 'tis better  
That one should die, than two drag on the fetter) —

only to that Being to whom the heart is open, and from whom no secrets are concealed. The partisans that might have retained their attachment to him after his fall; the murmurs of the populace, who quietly permit revolutions to be effected, and afterwards lament those who have fallen their victims; the difficulties arising from keeping in custody a prisoner of such consequence; all these motives in conjunction tend to give credit to the opinion, that some hand of uncontrollable authority shortened his days. But the conduct of Catherine before that event, and especially for four and thirty years that she afterwards reigned, is of itself alone a sufficient refutation of so atrocious a calumny as would fix the guilt of it on her." — TOOKE.]



## LXXXI

Love had made Catherine make each lover's fortune,  
Unlike our own half-chaste Elizabeth,  
Whose avarice all disbursements did importune,  
If history, the grand liar, ever saith [shorten,  
The truth; and though grief her old age might  
Because she put a favourite to death,  
Her vile, ambiguous method of rstation,  
And stinginess, disgrace her sex and station.

## LXXXII.

But when the levee rose, and all was bustle  
In the dissolving circle, all the nations'  
Ambassadors began as 'twere to hustle  
Round the young man with their congratulations.  
Also the softer silks were heard to rustle  
Of gentle dames, among whose recreations  
It is to speculate on handsome faces,  
Especially when such lead to high places.

## LXXXIII.

Juan, who found himself, he knew not how,  
A general object of attention, made  
His answers with a very graceful bow,  
As if born for the ministerial trade.  
Though modest, on his unembarrass'd brow  
Nature had written "gentleman." He said  
Little, but to the purpose; and his manner  
Flung hovering graces o'er him like a banner.

## LXXXIV.

An order from her majesty consign'd  
Our young lieutenant to the genial care  
Of those in office: all the world look'd kind,  
(As it will look sometimes with the first stare,  
Which youth would not act ill to keep in mind,  
As also did Miss Protasoff then there,  
Named from her mystic office "l'Eprouveuse,"  
A term inexplicable to the Muse.

## LXXXV.

With her then, as in humble duty bound,  
Juan retired,—and so will I, until  
My Pegasus shall tire of touching ground.  
We have just lit on a "heaven-kissing hill,"  
So lofty that I feel my brain turn round,  
And all my fancies whirling like a mill;  
Which is a signal to my nerves and brain,  
To take a quiet ride in some green lane.

## Don Juan.

## CANTO THE TENTH.

## I.

WHEN Newton saw an apple fall, he found  
In that slight startle from his contemplation—  
'Tis said (for I'll not answer above ground  
For any sage's creed or calculation)—

<sup>1</sup> ["The celebrated apple-tree, the fall of one of the apples of which is said to have turned the attention of Newton to the subject of gravity, was destroyed by wind about four years ago. The anecdote of the falling apple is mentioned

A mode of proving that the earth turn'd round  
In a most natural whirl, called "gravitation;"  
And this is the sole mortal who could grapple,  
Since Adam, with a fall, or with an apple.<sup>1</sup>

## II.

Man fell with apples, and with apples rose,  
If this be true; for we must deem the mode  
In which Sir Isaac Newton could disclose  
Through the then unpaved stars the turnpike road,  
A thing to counterbalance human woes:  
For ever since immortal man hath glow'd  
With all kinds of mechanics, and full soon  
Steam-engines will conduct him to the moon.

## III.

And wherefore this exordium?—Why, just now,  
In taking up this paltry sheet of paper,  
My bosom underwent a glorious glow,  
And my internal spirit cut a caper:  
And though so much inferior, as I know,  
To those who, by the dint of glass and vapour,  
Discover stars, and sail in the wind's eye,  
I wish to do as much by poesy.

## IV.

In the wind's eye I have sail'd, and sail; but for  
The stars, I own my telescope is dim;  
But at the least I have shunn'd the common shore,  
And leaving land far out of sight, would skim  
The ocean of eternity: the roar  
Of breakers has not daunted my slight, trim,  
But still sea-worthy skiff; and she may float  
Where ships have founder'd, as doth many a boat.

## V.

We left our hero, Juan, in the bloom  
Of favouritism, but not yet in the blush;—  
And far be it from my *Muses* to presume  
(For I have more than one Muse at a push)  
To follow him beyond the drawing-room:  
It is enough that Fortune found him flush  
Of youth, and vigour, beauty, and those things  
Which for an instant clip enjoyment's wings.

## VI.

But soon they grow again and leave their nest.  
"Oh!" saith the Psalmist, "that I had a dove's  
Pinions to flee away, and be at rest!"  
And who that recollects young years and loves,—  
Though hoary now, and with a withering breast,  
And palsied fancy, which no longer roves  
Beyond its dimm'd eye's sphere,—but would much  
rather  
Sigh like his son, than cough like his grandfather?

## VII.

But sighs subside, and tears (even widows') shrink,  
Like Arno in the summer, to a shallow,  
So narrow as to shame their wintry brink,  
Which threatens inundations deep and yellow!  
Such difference doth a few months make. You'd think  
Grief a rich field which never would lie fallow;  
No more it doth, its ploughs but change their boys,  
Who furrow some new soil to sow for joys.

neither by Dr. Stukeley nor by Mr. Conduit, and, as I have not been able to find any authority for it whatever, I did not feel myself at liberty to use it."—BREWSTER'S *Life of Newton*, p. 344.]

## VIII.

But coughs will come when sighs depart—and now  
And then before sighs cease; for oft the one  
Will bring the other, ere the lake-like brow  
Is ruffled by a wrinkle, or the sun  
Of life reach'd ten o'clock: and while a glow,  
Hectic and brief as summer's day nigh done,  
O'erspreads the cheek which seems too pure for clay,  
Thousands blaze, love, hope, die,—how happy they!—

## IX.

But Juan was not meant to die so soon.  
We left him in the focus of such glory  
As may be won by favour of the moon  
Or ladies' fancies—rather transitory  
Perhaps; but who would scorn the month of June,  
Because December, with his breath so hoary,  
Must come? Much rather should he court the ray,  
To hoard up warmth against a wintry day.

## X.

Besides, he had some qualities which fix  
Middle-aged ladies even more than young:  
The former know what's what; while new-fledged  
chicks

Know little more of love than what is sung  
In rhymes, or dreamt (for fancy will play tricks)  
In visions of those skies from whence Love sprung.  
Some reckon women by their suns or years,  
I rather think the moon should date the dears.

## XI.

And why? because she's changeable and chaste.  
I know no other reason, whatsoever  
Suspicious people, who find fault in haste,  
May choose to tax me with; which is not fair,  
Nor flattering to "their temper or their taste."  
As my friend Jeffrey writes with such an air:<sup>1</sup>  
However, I forgive him, and I trust  
He will forgive himself;—if not, I must.

## XII.

Old enemies who have become new friends  
Should so continue—'tis a point of honour;  
And I know nothing which could make amends  
For a return to hatred: I would shun her  
Like garlic, howsoever she extends  
Her hundred arms and legs, and fain outrun her.  
Old flames, new wives, become our bitterest foes—  
Converted foes should scorn to join with those.

## XIII.

This were the worst desertion:—renegadoes,  
Even shuffling Southey, that incarnate lie,  
Would scarcely join again the "reformadoes,"<sup>2</sup>  
Whom he forsook to fill the laureate's sty;

<sup>1</sup> [See *antè*, p. 583.—"I have read the recent article of Jeffrey. I suppose the long and the short of it is, that he wishes to provoke me to reply. But I won't, for I owe him a good turn still for his kindness by-gone. Indeed, I presume that the present opportunity of attacking me again was irresistible; and I can't blame him, knowing what human nature is."—*Byron Letters*, June, 1822.]

<sup>2</sup> "Reformers," or rather "Reformed." The Baron Bradwardine in Waverley is authority for the word.

<sup>3</sup> Query, *suit*?—Printer's Devil.

<sup>4</sup> [This tribute to a former antagonist displays so much frankness, generosity, and manly feeling, that it must eradicate all latent remains of animosity from the bosom of any but the most rancorous and vindictive. In addition to these merits, the felicitous introduction of the poet's recollections of his boyish days renders this passage equal in poetical beauty to any that has proceeded from his pen.—CAMPBELL.]

And honest men from Iceland to Barbadoes,  
Whether in Caledon or Italy,  
Should not veer round with every breath, nor seize  
To pain, the moment when you cease to please.

## XIV.

The lawyer and the critic but behold  
The baser sides of literature and life,  
And nought remains unseen, but much untold,  
By those who scour those double vales of strife.  
While common men grow ignorantly old,  
The lawyer's brief is like the surgeon's knife,  
Dissecting the whole inside of a question,  
And with it all the process of digestion.

## XV.

A legal broom's a moral chimney-sweeper,  
And that's the reason he himself's so dirty;  
The endless soot<sup>3</sup> bestows a tint far deeper  
Than can be hid by altering his shirt; he  
Retains the sable stains of the dark creeper,  
At least some twenty-nine do out of thirty,  
In all their habits;—not so *you*, I own;  
As Cæsar wore his robe you wear your gown.

## XVI.

And all our little feuds, at least all *mine*,  
Dear Jeffrey, once my most redoubted foe  
(As far as rhyme and criticism combine  
To make such puppets of us things below),  
Are over: Here's a health to "Auld Lang Syne!"  
I do not know you, and may never know  
Your face—but you have acted on the whole  
Most nobly, and I own it from my soul.<sup>4</sup>

## XVII.

And when I use the phrase of "Auld Lang Syne!"  
'Tis not address'd to you—the more's the pity  
For me, for I would rather take my wine  
With you, than aught (save Scott) in your proud city.  
But somehow,—it may seem a schoolboy's whine,  
And yet I seek not to be grand nor witty,  
But I am half a Scot by birth, and bred  
A whole one, and my heart flies to my head.—<sup>5</sup>

## XVIII.

As "Auld Lang Syne" brings Scotland, one and all,  
Scotch plaids, Scotch snoods, the blue hills, and clear  
streams,  
The Dee, the Don, Balgounie's brig's *black wall*,<sup>6</sup>  
All my boy feelings, all my gentler dreams  
Of what I *then dreamt*, clothed in their own pall,  
Like Banquo's offspring;—floating past me seems  
My childhood in this childishness of mine:  
I care not—'tis a glimpse of "Auld Lang Syne."

<sup>5</sup> ["I don't like to bore you about the Scotch novels (as they call them, though two of them are English, and the rest half so); but nothing can or could ever persuade me, since I was the first ten minutes in your company, that you are not the man: to me these novels have so much of 'Auld lang syne' (I was bred a canny Scot till ten years old), that I never move without them."—*Lord Byron to Sir W. Scott*, Jan. 12, 1822.]

<sup>6</sup> The brig of Don, near the "auld town" of Aberdeen, with its one arch, and its black deep salmon stream below, is in my memory as yesterday. I still remember, though perhaps I may misquote, the awful proverb which made me pause to cross it, and yet lean over it with a childish delight, being an only son, at least by the mother's side. The saying as recollected by me was this, but I have never heard or seen it since I was nine years of age:—

"Brig of Balgounie, *black's* your *wa'*,  
Wi' a wife's *ae son*, and a mear's *ae foal*,  
Doun ye shall fa'!"