

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage
Lord Byron (1812)

CANTO THE SECOND.

I.

Come, blue-eyed maid of heaven!—but thou, alas,
Didst never yet one mortal song inspire—
Goddess of Wisdom! here thy temple was,
And is, despite of war and wasting fire,
And years, that bade thy worship to expire:
But worse than steel, and flame, and ages slow,
Is the drear sceptre and dominion dire
Of men who never felt the sacred glow
That thoughts of thee and thine on polished breasts bestow.

II.

Ancient of days! august Athena! where,
Where are thy men of might, thy grand in soul?
Gone—glimmering through the dream of things that were:
First in the race that led to Glory's goal,
They won, and passed away—is this the whole?
A schoolboy's tale, the wonder of an hour!
The warrior's weapon and the sophist's stole
Are sought in vain, and o'er each mouldering tower,
Dim with the mist of years, grey flits the shade of power.

III.

Son of the morning, rise! approach you here!
Come—but molest not yon defenceless urn!
Look on this spot—a nation's sepulchre!
Abode of gods, whose shrines no longer burn.
E'en gods must yield—religions take their turn:
'Twas Jove's—'tis Mahomet's; and other creeds
Will rise with other years, till man shall learn
Vainly his incense soars, his victim bleeds;
Poor child of Doubt and Death, whose hope is built on reeds.

IV.

Bound to the earth, he lifts his eyes to heaven—

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Is't not enough, unhappy thing, to know
Thou art? Is this a boon so kindly given,
That being, thou wouldst be again, and go,
Thou know'st not, reck'st not to what region, so
On earth no more, but mingled with the skies!
Still wilt thou dream on future joy and woe?
Regard and weigh yon dust before it flies:
That little urn saith more than thousand homilies.

V.

Or burst the vanished hero's lofty mound;
Far on the solitary shore he sleeps;
He fell, and falling nations mourned around;
But now not one of saddening thousands weeps,
Nor warlike worshipper his vigil keeps
Where demi-gods appeared, as records tell.
Remove yon skull from out the scattered heaps:
Is that a temple where a God may dwell?
Why, e'en the worm at last disdains her shattered cell!

VI.

Look on its broken arch, its ruined wall,
Its chambers desolate, and portals foul:
Yes, this was once Ambition's airy hall,
The dome of Thought, the Palace of the Soul.
Behold through each lack-lustre, eyeless hole,
The gay recess of Wisdom and of Wit,
And Passion's host, that never brooked control:
Can all saint, sage, or sophist ever writ,
People this lonely tower, this tenement refit?

VII.

Well didst thou speak, Athena's wisest son!
'All that we know is, nothing can be known.'
Why should we shrink from what we cannot shun?
Each hath its pang, but feeble sufferers groan
With brain-born dreams of evil all their own.
Pursue what chance or fate proclaimeth best;
Peace waits us on the shores of Acheron:
There no forced banquet claims the sated guest,
But Silence spreads the couch of ever welcome rest.

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VIII.

Yet if, as holiest men have deemed, there be
A land of souls beyond that sable shore,
To shame the doctrine of the Sadducee
And sophists, madly vain of dubious lore;
How sweet it were in concert to adore
With those who made our mortal labours light!
To hear each voice we feared to hear no more!
Behold each mighty shade revealed to sight,
The Bactrian, Samian sage, and all who taught the right!

IX.

There, thou!—whose love and life together fled,
Have left me here to love and live in vain—
Twined with my heart, and can I deem thee dead,
When busy memory flashes on my brain?
Well—I will dream that we may meet again,
And woo the vision to my vacant breast:
If aught of young Remembrance then remain,
Be as it may Futurity's behest,
For me 'twere bliss enough to know thy spirit blest!

X.

Here let me sit upon this mossy stone,
The marble column's yet unshaken base!
Here, son of Saturn, was thy favourite throne!
Mightiest of many such! Hence let me trace
The latent grandeur of thy dwelling-place.
It may not be: nor even can Fancy's eye
Restore what time hath laboured to deface.
Yet these proud pillars claim no passing sigh;
Unmoved the Moslem sits, the light Greek carols by.

XI.

But who, of all the plunderers of yon fane
On high, where Pallas lingered, loth to flee
The latest relic of her ancient reign—
The last, the worst, dull spoiler, who was he?
Blush, Caledonia! such thy son could be!
England! I joy no child he was of thine:
Thy free-born men should spare what once was free;

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Yet they could violate each saddening shrine,
And bear these altars o'er the long reluctant brine.

XII.

But most the modern Pict's ignoble boast,
To rive what Goth, and Turk, and Time hath spared:
Cold as the crags upon his native coast,
His mind as barren and his heart as hard,
Is he whose head conceived, whose hand prepared,
Aught to displace Athena's poor remains:
Her sons too weak the sacred shrine to guard,
Yet felt some portion of their mother's pains,
And never knew, till then, the weight of Despot's chains.

XIII.

What! shall it e'er be said by British tongue
Albion was happy in Athena's tears?
Though in thy name the slaves her bosom wrung,
Tell not the deed to blushing Europe's ears;
The ocean queen, the free Britannia, bears
The last poor plunder from a bleeding land:
Yes, she, whose generous aid her name endears,
Tore down those remnants with a harpy's hand.
Which envious eld forbore, and tyrants left to stand.

XIV.

Where was thine aegis, Pallas, that appalled
Stern Alaric and Havoc on their way?
Where Peleus' son? whom Hell in vain enthralled,
His shade from Hades upon that dread day
Bursting to light in terrible array!
What! could not Pluto spare the chief once more,
To scare a second robber from his prey?
Idly he wandered on the Stygian shore,
Nor now preserved the walls he loved to shield before.

XV.

Cold is the heart, fair Greece, that looks on thee,
Nor feels as lovers o'er the dust they loved;
Dull is the eye that will not weep to see
Thy walls defaced, thy mouldering shrines removed

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By British hands, which it had best behoved
To guard those relics ne'er to be restored.
Curst be the hour when from their isle they roved,
And once again thy hapless bosom gored,
And snatched thy shrinking gods to northern climes abhorred!

XVI.

But where is Harold? shall I then forget
To urge the gloomy wanderer o'er the wave?
Little recked he of all that men regret;
No loved one now in feigned lament could rave;
No friend the parting hand extended gave,
Ere the cold stranger passed to other climes.
Hard is his heart whom charms may not enslave;
But Harold felt not as in other times,
And left without a sigh the land of war and crimes.

XVII.

He that has sailed upon the dark blue sea,
Has viewed at times, I ween, a full fair sight;
When the fresh breeze is fair as breeze may be,
The white sails set, the gallant frigate tight,
Masts, spires, and strand retiring to the right,
The glorious main expanding o'er the bow,
The convoy spread like wild swans in their flight,
The dullest sailer wearing bravely now,
So gaily curl the waves before each dashing prow.

XVIII.

And oh, the little warlike world within!
The well-reeved guns, the netted canopy,
The hoarse command, the busy humming din,
When, at a word, the tops are manned on high:
Hark to the boatswain's call, the cheering cry,
While through the seaman's hand the tackle glides
Or schoolboy midshipman that, standing by,
Strains his shrill pipe, as good or ill betides,
And well the docile crew that skilful urchin guides.

XIX.

White is the glassy deck, without a stain,

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Where on the watch the staid lieutenant walks:
Look on that part which sacred doth remain
For the lone chieftain, who majestic stalks,
Silent and feared by all: not oft he talks
With aught beneath him, if he would preserve
That strict restraint, which broken, ever baulks
Conquest and Fame: but Britons rarely swerve
From law, however stern, which tends their strength to nerve.

XX.

Blow, swiftly blow, thou keel-compelling gale,
Till the broad sun withdraws his lessening ray;
Then must the pennant-bearer slacken sail,
That lagging barks may make their lazy way.
Ah! grievance sore, and listless dull delay,
To waste on sluggish hulks the sweetest breeze!
What leagues are lost before the dawn of day,
Thus loitering pensive on the willing seas,
The flapping sails hauled down to halt for logs like these!

XXI.

The moon is up; by Heaven, a lovely eve!
Long streams of light o'er dancing waves expand!
Now lads on shore may sigh, and maids believe:
Such be our fate when we return to land!
Meantime some rude Arion's restless hand
Wakes the brisk harmony that sailors love:
A circle there of merry listeners stand,
Or to some well-known measure featly move,
Thoughtless, as if on shore they still were free to rove.

XXII.

Through Calpe's straits survey the steepy shore;
Europe and Afric, on each other gaze!
Lands of the dark-eyed maid and dusky Moor,
Alike beheld beneath pale Hecate's blaze:
How softly on the Spanish shore she plays,
Disclosing rock, and slope, and forest brown,
Distinct, though darkening with her waning phase:
But Mauritania's giant-shadows frown,
From mountain-cliff to coast descending sombre down.

XXIII.

'Tis night, when Meditation bids us feel
We once have loved, though love is at an end:
The heart, lone mourner of its baffled zeal,
Though friendless now, will dream it had a friend.
Who with the weight of years would wish to bend,
When Youth itself survives young Love and Joy?
Alas! when mingling souls forget to blend,
Death hath but little left him to destroy!
Ah, happy years! once more who would not be a boy?

XXIV.

Thus bending o'er the vessel's laving side,
To gaze on Dian's wave-reflected sphere,
The soul forgets her schemes of Hope and Pride,
And flies unconscious o'er each backward year.
None are so desolate but something dear,
Dearer than self, possesses or possessed
A thought, and claims the homage of a tear;
A flashing pang! of which the weary breast
Would still, albeit in vain, the heavy heart divest.

XXV.

To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,
And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been;
To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,
With the wild flock that never needs a fold;
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean:
This is not solitude; 'tis but to hold
Converse with Nature's charms, and view her stores unrolled.

XXVI.

But midst the crowd, the hum, the shock of men,
To hear, to see, to feel, and to possess,
And roam along, the world's tired denizen,
With none who bless us, none whom we can bless;
Minions of splendour shrinking from distress!
None that, with kindred consciousness endued,
If we were not, would seem to smile the less

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Of all that flattered, followed, sought, and sued:
This is to be alone; this, this is solitude!

XXVII.

More blest the life of godly eremite,
Such as on lonely Athos may be seen,
Watching at eve upon the giant height,
Which looks o'er waves so blue, skies so serene,
That he who there at such an hour hath been,
Will wistful linger on that hallowed spot;
Then slowly tear him from the witching scene,
Sigh forth one wish that such had been his lot,
Then turn to hate a world he had almost forgot.

XXVIII.

Pass we the long, unvarying course, the track
Oft trod, that never leaves a trace behind;
Pass we the calm, the gale, the change, the tack,
And each well-known caprice of wave and wind;
Pass we the joys and sorrows sailors find,
Cooped in their winged sea-girt citadel;
The foul, the fair, the contrary, the kind,
As breezes rise and fall, and billows swell,
Till on some jocund morn—lo, land! and all is well.

XXIX.

But not in silence pass Calypso's isles,
The sister tenants of the middle deep;
There for the weary still a haven smiles,
Though the fair goddess long has ceased to weep,
And o'er her cliffs a fruitless watch to keep
For him who dared prefer a mortal bride:
Here, too, his boy essayed the dreadful leap
Stern Mentor urged from high to yonder tide;
While thus of both bereft, the nymph-queen doubly sighed.

XXX.

Her reign is past, her gentle glories gone:
But trust not this; too easy youth, beware!
A mortal sovereign holds her dangerous throne,
And thou mayst find a new Calypso there.

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Sweet Florence! could another ever share
This wayward, loveless heart, it would be thine:
But checked by every tie, I may not dare
To cast a worthless offering at thy shrine,
Nor ask so dear a breast to feel one pang for mine.

XXXI.

Thus Harold deemed, as on that lady's eye
He looked, and met its beam without a thought,
Save Admiration glancing harmless by:
Love kept aloof, albeit not far remote,
Who knew his votary often lost and caught,
But knew him as his worshipper no more,
And ne'er again the boy his bosom sought:
Since now he vainly urged him to adore,
Well deemed the little god his ancient sway was o'er.

XXXII.

Fair Florence found, in sooth with some amaze,
One who, 'twas said, still sighed to all he saw,
Withstand, unmoved, the lustre of her gaze,
Which others hailed with real or mimic awe,
Their hope, their doom, their punishment, their law:
All that gay Beauty from her bondsmen claims:
And much she marvelled that a youth so raw
Nor felt, nor feigned at least, the oft-told flames,
Which, though sometimes they frown, yet rarely anger dames.

XXXIII.

Little knew she that seeming marble heart,
Now masked by silence or withheld by pride,
Was not unskilful in the spoiler's art,
And spread its snares licentious far and wide;
Nor from the base pursuit had turned aside,
As long as aught was worthy to pursue:
But Harold on such arts no more relied;
And had he doted on those eyes so blue,
Yet never would he join the lover's whining crew.

XXXIV.

Not much he kens, I ween, of woman's breast,

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Who thinks that wanton thing is won by sighs;
What careth she for hearts when once possessed?
Do proper homage to thine idol's eyes,
But not too humbly, or she will despise
Thee and thy suit, though told in moving tropes;
Disguise e'en tenderness, if thou art wise;
Brisk Confidence still best with woman copes;
Pique her and soothe in turn, soon Passion crowns thy hopes.

XXXV.

'Tis an old lesson: Time approves it true,
And those who know it best deplore it most;
When all is won that all desire to woo,
The paltry prize is hardly worth the cost:
Youth wasted, minds degraded, honour lost,
These are thy fruits, successful Passion! these!
If, kindly cruel, early hope is crossed,
Still to the last it rankles, a disease,
Not to be cured when Love itself forgets to please.

XXXVI.

Away! nor let me loiter in my song,
For we have many a mountain path to tread,
And many a varied shore to sail along,
By pensive Sadness, not by Fiction, led—
Climes, fair withal as ever mortal head
Imagined in its little schemes of thought;
Or e'er in new Utopias were read:
To teach man what he might be, or he ought;
If that corrupted thing could ever such be taught.

XXXVII.

Dear Nature is the kindest mother still;
Though always changing, in her aspect mild:
From her bare bosom let me take my fill,
Her never-weaned, though not her favoured child.
Oh! she is fairest in her features wild,
Where nothing polished dares pollute her path:
To me by day or night she ever smiled,
Though I have marked her when none other hath,
And sought her more and more, and loved her best in wrath.

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XXXVIII.

Land of Albania! where Iskander rose;
Theme of the young, and beacon of the wise,
And he his namesake, whose oft-baffled foes,
Shrunk from his deeds of chivalrous emprise:
Land of Albania! let me bend mine eyes
On thee, thou rugged nurse of savage men!
The cross descends, thy minarets arise,
And the pale crescent sparkles in the glen,
Through many a cypress grove within each city's ken.

XXXIX.

Childe Harold sailed, and passed the barren spot
Where sad Penelope o'erlooked the wave;
And onward viewed the mount, not yet forgot,
The lover's refuge, and the Lesbian's grave.
Dark Sappho! could not verse immortal save
That breast imbued with such immortal fire?
Could she not live who life eternal gave?
If life eternal may await the lyre,
That only Heaven to which Earth's children may aspire.

XL.

'Twas on a Grecian autumn's gentle eve,
Childe Harold hailed Leucadia's cape afar;
A spot he longed to see, nor cared to leave:
Oft did he mark the scenes of vanished war,
Actium, Lepanto, fatal Trafalgar:
Mark them unmoved, for he would not delight
(Born beneath some remote inglorious star)
In themes of bloody fray, or gallant fight,
But loathed the bravo's trade, and laughed at martial wight.

XLI.

But when he saw the evening star above
Leucadia's far-projecting rock of woe,
And hailed the last resort of fruitless love,
He felt, or deemed he felt, no common glow:
And as the stately vessel glided slow
Beneath the shadow of that ancient mount,
He watched the billows' melancholy flow,

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And, sunk albeit in thought as he was wont,
More placid seemed his eye, and smooth his pallid front.

XLII.

Morn dawns; and with it stern Albania's hills,
Dark Suli's rocks, and Pindus' inland peak,
Robed half in mist, bedewed with snowy rills,
Arrayed in many a dun and purple streak,
Arise; and, as the clouds along them break,
Disclose the dwelling of the mountaineer;
Here roams the wolf, the eagle whets his beak,
Birds, beasts of prey, and wilder men appear,
And gathering storms around convulse the closing year.

XLIII.

Now Harold felt himself at length alone,
And bade to Christian tongues a long adieu:
Now he adventured on a shore unknown,
Which all admire, but many dread to view:
His breast was armed 'gainst fate, his wants were few:
Peril he sought not, but ne'er shrank to meet:
The scene was savage, but the scene was new;
This made the ceaseless toil of travel sweet,
Beat back keen winter's blast; and welcomed summer's heat.

XLIV.

Here the red cross, for still the cross is here,
Though sadly scoffed at by the circumcised,
Forgets that pride to pampered priesthood dear;
Churchman and votary alike despised.
Foul Superstition! howsoe'er disguised,
Idol, saint, virgin, prophet, crescent, cross,
For whatsoever symbol thou art prized,
Thou sacerdotal gain, but general loss!
Who from true worship's gold can separate thy dross.

XLV.

Ambracia's gulf behold, where once was lost
A world for woman, lovely, harmless thing!
In yonder rippling bay, their naval host
Did many a Roman chief and Asian king

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To doubtful conflict, certain slaughter, bring
Look where the second Caesar's trophies rose,
Now, like the hands that reared them, withering;
Imperial anarchs, doubling human woes!
God! was thy globe ordained for such to win and lose?

XLVI.

From the dark barriers of that rugged clime,
E'en to the centre of Illyria's vales,
Childe Harold passed o'er many a mount sublime,
Through lands scarce noticed in historic tales:
Yet in famed Attica such lovely dales
Are rarely seen; nor can fair Tempe boast
A charm they know not; loved Parnassus fails,
Though classic ground, and consecrated most,
To match some spots that lurk within this lowering coast.

XLVII.

He passed bleak Pindus, Acherusia's lake,
And left the primal city of the land,
And onwards did his further journey take
To greet Albania's chief, whose dread command
Is lawless law; for with a bloody hand
He sways a nation, turbulent and bold:
Yet here and there some daring mountain-band
Disdain his power, and from their rocky hold
Hurl their defiance far, nor yield, unless to gold.

XLVIII.

Monastic Zitza! from thy shady brow,
Thou small, but favoured spot of holy ground!
Where'er we gaze, around, above, below,
What rainbow tints, what magic charms are found!
Rock, river, forest, mountain all abound,
And bluest skies that harmonise the whole:
Beneath, the distant torrent's rushing sound
Tells where the volumed cataract doth roll
Between those hanging rocks, that shock yet please the soul.

XLIX.

Amidst the grove that crowns yon tufted hill,

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Which, were it not for many a mountain nigh
Rising in lofty ranks, and loftier still,
Might well itself be deemed of dignity,
The convent's white walls glisten fair on high;
Here dwells the caloyer, nor rude is he,
Nor niggard of his cheer: the passer-by
Is welcome still; nor heedless will he flee
From hence, if he delight kind Nature's sheen to see.

L.

Here in the sultriest season let him rest,
Fresh is the green beneath those aged trees;
Here winds of gentlest wing will fan his breast,
From heaven itself he may inhale the breeze:
The plain is far beneath—oh! let him seize
Pure pleasure while he can; the scorching ray
Here pierceth not, impregnate with disease:
Then let his length the loitering pilgrim lay,
And gaze, untired, the morn, the noon, the eve away.

LI.

Dusky and huge, enlarging on the sight,
Nature's volcanic amphitheatre,
Chimera's alps extend from left to right:
Beneath, a living valley seems to stir;
Flocks play, trees wave, streams flow, the mountain fir
Nodding above; behold black Acheron!
Once consecrated to the sepulchre.
Pluto! if this be hell I look upon,
Close shamed Elysium's gates, my shade shall seek for none.

LII.

No city's towers pollute the lovely view;
Unseen is Yanina, though not remote,
Veiled by the screen of hills: here men are few,
Scanty the hamlet, rare the lonely cot;
But, peering down each precipice, the goat
Browseth: and, pensive o'er his scattered flock,
The little shepherd in his white capote
Doth lean his boyish form along the rock,
Or in his cave awaits the tempest's short-lived shock.

LIII.

Oh! where, Dodona, is thine aged grove,
Prophetic fount, and oracle divine?
What valley echoed the response of Jove?
What trace remaineth of the Thunderer's shrine?
All, all forgotten—and shall man repine
That his frail bonds to fleeting life are broke?
Cease, fool! the fate of gods may well be thine:
Wouldst thou survive the marble or the oak,
When nations, tongues, and worlds must sink beneath the stroke?

LIV.

Epirus' bounds recede, and mountains fail;
Tired of up-gazing still, the wearied eye
Reposes gladly on as smooth a vale
As ever Spring yclad in grassy dye:
E'en on a plain no humble beauties lie,
Where some bold river breaks the long expanse,
And woods along the banks are waving high,
Whose shadows in the glassy waters dance,
Or with the moonbeam sleep in Midnight's solemn trance.

LV.

The sun had sunk behind vast Tomerit,
The Laos wide and fierce came roaring by;
The shades of wonted night were gathering yet,
When, down the steep banks winding wearily
Childe Harold saw, like meteors in the sky,
The glittering minarets of Tepalen,
Whose walls o'erlook the stream; and drawing nigh,
He heard the busy hum of warrior-men
Swelling the breeze that sighed along the lengthening glen.

LVI.

He passed the sacred harem's silent tower,
And underneath the wide o'erarching gate
Surveyed the dwelling of this chief of power
Where all around proclaimed his high estate.
Amidst no common pomp the despot sate,
While busy preparation shook the court;
Slaves, eunuchs, soldiers, guests, and santons wait;

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Within, a palace, and without a fort,
Here men of every clime appear to make resort.

LVII.

Richly caparisoned, a ready row
Of armed horse, and many a warlike store,
Circled the wide-extending court below;
Above, strange groups adorned the corridor;
And ofttimes through the area's echoing door,
Some high-capped Tartar spurred his steed away;
The Turk, the Greek, the Albanian, and the Moor,
Here mingled in their many-hued array,
While the deep war-drum's sound announced the close of day.

LVIII.

The wild Albanian kirtled to his knee,
With shawl-girt head and ornamented gun,
And gold-embroidered garments, fair to see:
The crimson-scarfed men of Macedon;
The Delhi with his cap of terror on,
And crooked glaive; the lively, supple Greek;
And swarthy Nubia's mutilated son;
The bearded Turk, that rarely deigns to speak,
Master of all around, too potent to be meek,

LIX.

Are mixed conspicuous: some recline in groups,
Scanning the motley scene that varies round;
There some grave Moslem to devotion stoops,
And some that smoke, and some that play are found;
Here the Albanian proudly treads the ground;
Half-whispering there the Greek is heard to prate;
Hark! from the mosque the nightly solemn sound,
The muezzin's call doth shake the minaret,
'There is no god but God!—to prayer—lo! God is great!'

LX.

Just at this season Ramazani's fast
Through the long day its penance did maintain.
But when the lingering twilight hour was past,
Revel and feast assumed the rule again:

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Now all was bustle, and the menial train
Prepared and spread the plenteous board within;
The vacant gallery now seemed made in vain,
But from the chambers came the mingling din,
As page and slave anon were passing out and in.

LXI.

Here woman's voice is never heard: apart
And scarce permitted, guarded, veiled, to move,
She yields to one her person and her heart,
Tamed to her cage, nor feels a wish to rove;
For, not unhappy in her master's love,
And joyful in a mother's gentlest cares,
Blest cares! all other feelings far above!
Herself more sweetly rears the babe she bears,
Who never quits the breast, no meaner passion shares.

LXII.

In marble-paved pavilion, where a spring
Of living water from the centre rose,
Whose bubbling did a genial freshness fling,
And soft voluptuous couches breathed repose,
Ali reclined, a man of war and woes:
Yet in his lineaments ye cannot trace,
While Gentleness her milder radiance throws
Along that aged venerable face,
The deeds that lurk beneath, and stain him with disgrace.

LXIII.

It is not that yon hoary lengthening beard
Ill suits the passions which belong to youth:
Love conquers age—so Hafiz hath averred,
So sings the Teian, and he sings in sooth—
But crimes that scorn the tender voice of ruth,
Beseeming all men ill, but most the man
In years, have marked him with a tiger's tooth:
Blood follows blood, and through their mortal span,
In bloodier acts conclude those who with blood began.

LXIV.

Mid many things most new to ear and eye,

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The pilgrim rested here his weary feet,
And gazed around on Moslem luxury,
Till quickly wearied with that spacious seat
Of Wealth and Wantonness, the choice retreat
Of sated Grandeur from the city's noise:
And were it humbler, it in sooth were sweet;
But Peace abhorreth artificial joys,
And Pleasure, leagued with Pomp, the zest of both destroys.

LXV.

Fierce are Albania's children, yet they lack
Not virtues, were those virtues more mature.
Where is the foe that ever saw their back?
Who can so well the toil of war endure?
Their native fastnesses not more secure
Than they in doubtful time of troublous need:
Their wrath how deadly! but their friendship sure,
When Gratitude or Valour bids them bleed,
Unshaken rushing on where'er their chief may lead.

LXVI.

Childe Harold saw them in their chieftain's tower,
Thronging to war in splendour and success;
And after viewed them, when, within their power,
Himself awhile the victim of distress;
That saddening hour when bad men hotlier press:
But these did shelter him beneath their roof,
When less barbarians would have cheered him less,
And fellow-countrymen have stood aloof—
In aught that tries the heart how few withstand the proof!

LXVII.

It chanced that adverse winds once drove his bark
Full on the coast of Suli's shaggy shore,
When all around was desolate and dark;
To land was perilous, to sojourn more;
Yet for awhile the mariners forbore,
Dubious to trust where treachery might lurk:
At length they ventured forth, though doubting sore
That those who loathe alike the Frank and Turk
Might once again renew their ancient butcher-work.

LXVIII.

Vain fear! the Suliotes stretched the welcome hand,
Led them o'er rocks and past the dangerous swamp,
Kinder than polished slaves, though not so bland,
And piled the hearth, and wrung their garments damp,
And filled the bowl, and trimmed the cheerful lamp,
And spread their fare: though homely, all they had:
Such conduct bears Philanthropy's rare stamp—
To rest the weary and to soothe the sad,
Doth lesson happier men, and shames at least the bad.

LXIX.

It came to pass, that when he did address
Himself to quit at length this mountain land,
Combined marauders half-way barred egress,
And wasted far and near with glaive and brand;
And therefore did he take a trusty band
To traverse Acarnania forest wide,
In war well-seasoned, and with labours tanned,
Till he did greet white Achelous' tide,
And from his farther bank AEtolia's wolds espied.

LXX.

Where lone Utraikey forms its circling cove,
And weary waves retire to gleam at rest,
How brown the foliage of the green hill's grove,
Nodding at midnight o'er the calm bay's breast,
As winds come whispering lightly from the west,
Kissing, not ruffling, the blue deep's serene:
Here Harold was received a welcome guest;
Nor did he pass unmoved the gentle scene,
For many a joy could he from night's soft presence glean.

LXXI.

On the smooth shore the night-fires brightly blazed,
The feast was done, the red wine circling fast,
And he that unawares had there ygazed
With gaping wonderment had stared aghast;
For ere night's midmost, stillest hour was past,
The native revels of the troop began;
Each palikar his sabre from him cast,

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And bounding hand in hand, man linked to man,
Yelling their uncouth dirge, long danced the kirtled clan.

LXXII.

Childe Harold at a little distance stood,
And viewed, but not displeased, the revelrie,
Nor hated harmless mirth, however rude:
In sooth, it was no vulgar sight to see
Their barbarous, yet their not indecent, glee:
And as the flames along their faces gleamed,
Their gestures nimble, dark eyes flashing free,
The long wild locks that to their girdles streamed,
While thus in concert they this lay half sang, half screamed:

Tambourgi! Tambourgi! thy larum afar
Gives hope to the valiant, and promise of war;
All the sons of the mountains arise at the note,
Chimariot, Illyrian, and dark Suliote!

Oh! who is more brave than a dark Suliote,
To his snowy camese and his shaggy capote?
To the wolf and the vulture he leaves his wild flock,
And descends to the plain like the stream from the rock.

Shall the sons of Chimari, who never forgive
The fault of a friend, bid an enemy live?
Let those guns so unerring such vengeance forego?
What mark is so fair as the breast of a foe?

Macedonia sends forth her invincible race;
For a time they abandon the cave and the chase:
But those scarves of blood-red shall be redder, before
The sabre is sheathed and the battle is o'er.

Then the pirates of Parga that dwell by the waves,
And teach the pale Franks what it is to be slaves,
Shall leave on the beach the long galley and oar,
And track to his covert the captive on shore.

I ask not the pleasure that riches supply,
My sabre shall win what the feeble must buy:
Shall win the young bride with her long flowing hair,
And many a maid from her mother shall tear.

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I love the fair face of the maid in her youth;
Her caresses shall lull me, her music shall soothe:
Let her bring from her chamber the many-toned lyre,
And sing us a song on the fall of her sire.

Remember the moment when Previsa fell,
The shrieks of the conquered, the conqueror's yell;
The roofs that we fired, and the plunder we shared,
The wealthy we slaughtered, the lovely we spared.

I talk not of mercy, I talk not of fear;
He neither must know who would serve the Vizier;
Since the days of our prophet, the crescent ne'er saw
A chief ever glorious like Ali Pasha.

Dark Muchtar his son to the Danube is sped,
Let the yellow-haired Giaours view his horsetail with dread;
When his Delhis come dashing in blood o'er the banks,
How few shall escape from the Muscovite ranks!

Selictar! unsheath then our chief's scimitar:
Tambourgi! thy larum gives promise of war.
Ye mountains that see us descend to the shore,
Shall view us as victors, or view us no more!

LXXIII.

Fair Greece! sad relic of departed worth!
Immortal, though no more; though fallen, great!
Who now shall lead thy scattered children forth,
And long accustomed bondage uncreate?
Not such thy sons who whilome did await,
The hopeless warriors of a willing doom,
In bleak Thermopylae's sepulchral strait—
Oh, who that gallant spirit shall resume,
Leap from Eurotas' banks, and call thee from the tomb?

LXXIV.

Spirit of Freedom! when on Phyle's brow
Thou sat'st with Thrasybulus and his train,
Couldst thou forbode the dismal hour which now
Dims the green beauties of thine Attic plain?
Not thirty tyrants now enforce the chain,
But every carle can lord it o'er thy land;

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Nor rise thy sons, but idly rail in vain,
Trembling beneath the scourge of Turkish hand,
From birth till death enslaved; in word, in deed, unmanned.

LXXV.

In all save form alone, how changed! and who
That marks the fire still sparkling in each eye,
Who would but deem their bosom burned anew
With thy unquenched beam, lost Liberty!
And many dream withal the hour is nigh
That gives them back their fathers' heritage:
For foreign arms and aid they fondly sigh,
Nor solely dare encounter hostile rage,
Or tear their name defiled from Slavery's mournful page.

LXXVI.

Hereditary bondsmen! know ye not
Who would be free themselves must strike the blow?
By their right arms the conquest must be wrought?
Will Gaul or Muscovite redress ye? No!
True, they may lay your proud despoilers low,
But not for you will Freedom's altars flame.
Shades of the Helots! triumph o'er your foe:
Greece! change thy lords, thy state is still the same;
Thy glorious day is o'er, but not thy years of shame.

LXXVII.

The city won for Allah from the Giaour,
The Giaour from Othman's race again may wrest;
And the Serai's impenetrable tower
Receive the fiery Frank, her former guest;
Or Wahab's rebel brood, who dared divest
The Prophet's tomb of all its pious spoil,
May wind their path of blood along the West;
But ne'er will Freedom seek this fated soil,
But slave succeed to slave through years of endless toil.

LXXVIII.

Yet mark their mirth—ere lenten days begin,
That penance which their holy rites prepare
To shrive from man his weight of mortal sin,

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By daily abstinence and nightly prayer;
But ere his sackcloth garb Repentance wear,
Some days of joyaunce are decreed to all,
To take of pleasaunce each his secret share,
In motley robe to dance at masking ball,
And join the mimic train of merry Carnival.

LXXIX.

And whose more rife with merriment than thine,
O Stamboul! once the empress of their reign?
Though turbans now pollute Sophia's shrine
And Greece her very altars eyes in vain:
(Alas! her woes will still pervade my strain!)
Gay were her minstrels once, for free her throng,
All felt the common joy they now must feign;
Nor oft I've seen such sight, nor heard such song,
As wooed the eye, and thrilled the Bosphorus along.

LXXX.

Loud was the lightsome tumult on the shore;
Oft Music changed, but never ceased her tone,
And timely echoed back the measured oar,
And rippling waters made a pleasant moan:
The Queen of tides on high consenting shone;
And when a transient breeze swept o'er the wave,
'Twas as if, darting from her heavenly throne,
A brighter glance her form reflected gave,
Till sparkling billows seemed to light the banks they lave.

LXXXI.

Glanced many a light caique along the foam,
Danced on the shore the daughters of the land,
No thought had man or maid of rest or home,
While many a languid eye and thrilling hand
Exchanged the look few bosoms may withstand,
Or gently pressed, returned the pressure still:
Oh Love! young Love! bound in thy rosy band,
Let sage or cynic prattle as he will,
These hours, and only these, redeemed Life's years of ill!

LXXXII.

But, midst the throng in merry masquerade,
Lurk there no hearts that throb with secret pain,
E'en through the closest searment half-betrayed?
To such the gentle murmurs of the main
Seem to re-echo all they mourn in vain;
To such the gladness of the gamesome crowd
Is source of wayward thought and stern disdain:
How do they loathe the laughter idly loud,
And long to change the robe of revel for the shroud!

LXXXIII.

This must he feel, the true-born son of Greece,
If Greece one true-born patriot can boast:
Not such as prate of war but skulk in peace,
The bondsman's peace, who sighs for all he lost,
Yet with smooth smile his tyrant can accost,
And wield the slavish sickle, not the sword:
Ah, Greece! they love thee least who owe thee most—
Their birth, their blood, and that sublime record
Of hero sires, who shame thy now degenerate horde!

LXXXIV.

When riseth Lacedaemon's hardihood,
When Thebes Epaminondas rears again,
When Athens' children are with hearts endued,
When Grecian mothers shall give birth to men,
Then mayst thou be restored; but not till then.
A thousand years scarce serve to form a state;
An hour may lay it in the dust: and when
Can man its shattered splendour renovate,
Recall its virtues back, and vanquish Time and Fate?

LXXXV.

And yet how lovely in thine age of woe,
Land of lost gods and godlike men, art thou!
Thy vales of evergreen, thy hills of snow,
Proclaim thee Nature's varied favourite now;
Thy fanes, thy temples to the surface bow,
Commingling slowly with heroic earth,
Broke by the share of every rustic plough:
So perish monuments of mortal birth,
So perish all in turn, save well-recorded worth;

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LXXXVI.

Save where some solitary column mourns
Above its prostrate brethren of the cave;
Save where Tritonia's airy shrine adorns
Colonna's cliff, and gleams along the wave;
Save o'er some warrior's half-forgotten grave,
Where the grey stones and unmolested grass
Ages, but not oblivion, feebly brave,
While strangers only not regardless pass,
Lingering like me, perchance, to gaze, and sigh 'Alas!'

LXXXVII.

Yet are thy skies as blue, thy crags as wild:
Sweet are thy groves, and verdant are thy fields,
Thine olives ripe as when Minerva smiled,
And still his honeyed wealth Hymettus yields;
There the blithe bee his fragrant fortress builds,
The freeborn wanderer of thy mountain air;
Apollo still thy long, long summer gilds,
Still in his beam Mendeli's marbles glare;
Art, Glory, Freedom fail, but Nature still is fair.

LXXXVIII.

Where'er we tread, 'tis haunted, holy ground;
No earth of thine is lost in vulgar mould,
But one vast realm of wonder spreads around,
And all the Muse's tales seem truly told,
Till the sense aches with gazing to behold
The scenes our earliest dreams have dwelt upon:
Each hill and dale, each deepening glen and wold,
Defies the power which crushed thy temples gone:
Age shakes Athena's tower, but spares gray Marathon.

LXXXIX.

The sun, the soil, but not the slave, the same;
Unchanged in all except its foreign lord—
Preserves alike its bounds and boundless fame;
The battle-field, where Persia's victim horde
First bowed beneath the brunt of Hellas' sword,
As on the morn to distant Glory dear,

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When Marathon became a magic word;
Which uttered, to the hearer's eye appear
The camp, the host, the fight, the conqueror's career.

XC.

The flying Mede, his shaftless broken bow;
The fiery Greek, his red pursuing spear;
Mountains above, Earth's, Ocean's plain below;
Death in the front, Destruction in the rear!
Such was the scene—what now remaineth here?
What sacred trophy marks the hallowed ground,
Recording Freedom's smile and Asia's tear?
The rifled urn, the violated mound,
The dust thy courser's hoof, rude stranger! spurns around.

XCI.

Yet to the remnants of thy splendour past
Shall pilgrims, pensive, but unwearied, throng:
Long shall the voyager, with th' Ionian blast,
Hail the bright clime of battle and of song;
Long shall thine annals and immortal tongue
Fill with thy fame the youth of many a shore:
Boast of the aged! lesson of the young!
Which sages venerate and bards adore,
As Pallas and the Muse unveil their awful lore.

XCII.

The parted bosom clings to wonted home,
If aught that's kindred cheer the welcome hearth;
He that is lonely, hither let him roam,
And gaze complacent on congenial earth.
Greece is no lightsome land of social mirth;
But he whom Sadness sootheth may abide,
And scarce regret the region of his birth,
When wandering slow by Delphi's sacred side,
Or gazing o'er the plains where Greek and Persian died.

XCIII.

Let such approach this consecrated land,
And pass in peace along the magic waste:
But spare its relics—let no busy hand

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Deface the scenes, already how defaced!
Not for such purpose were these altars placed.
Revere the remnants nations once revered;
So may our country's name be undisgraced,
So mayst thou prosper where thy youth was reared,
By every honest joy of love and life endeared!

XCIV.

For thee, who thus in too protracted song
Hath soothed thine idlesse with inglorious lays,
Soon shall thy voice be lost amid the throng
Of louder minstrels in these later days:
To such resign the strife for fading bays—
Ill may such contest now the spirit move
Which heeds nor keen reproach nor partial praise,
Since cold each kinder heart that might approve,
And none are left to please where none are left to love.

XCV.

Thou too art gone, thou loved and lovely one!
Whom youth and youth's affections bound to me;
Who did for me what none beside have done,
Nor shrank from one albeit unworthy thee.
What is my being? thou hast ceased to be!
Nor stayed to welcome here thy wanderer home,
Who mourns o'er hours which we no more shall see—
Would they had never been, or were to come!
Would he had ne'er returned to find fresh cause to roam!

XCVI.

Oh! ever loving, lovely, and beloved!
How selfish Sorrow ponders on the past,
And clings to thoughts now better far removed!
But Time shall tear thy shadow from me last.
All thou couldst have of mine, stern Death, thou hast:
The parent, friend, and now the more than friend;
Ne'er yet for one thine arrows flew so fast,
And grief with grief continuing still to blend,
Hath snatched the little joy that life had yet to lend.

XCVII.

Then must I plunge again into the crowd,
And follow all that Peace disdains to seek?
Where Revel calls, and Laughter, vainly loud,
False to the heart, distorts the hollow cheek,
To leave the flagging spirit doubly weak!
Still o'er the features, which perforce they cheer,
To feign the pleasure or conceal the pique;
Smiles form the channel of a future tear,
Or raise the writhing lip with ill-dissembled sneer.

XCVIII.

What is the worst of woes that wait on age?
What stamps the wrinkle deeper on the brow?
To view each loved one blotted from life's page,
And be alone on earth, as I am now.
Before the Chastener humbly let me bow,
O'er hearts divided and o'er hopes destroyed:
Roll on, vain days! full reckless may ye flow,
Since Time hath reft whate'er my soul enjoyed,
And with the ills of eld mine earlier years alloyed.