

# The Siege of Corinth

## Byron

*“Guns, Trumpets, Blunderbusses, Drums and Thunder.”—POPE,  
SAT. I. 26.*



## INTRODUCTION TO *THE SIEGE OF CORINTH*.

In a note to the “Advertisement” to the *Siege of Corinth* (*vide post*, p. 447), Byron puts it on record that during the years 1809–10 he had crossed the Isthmus of Corinth eight times, and in a letter to his mother, dated Patras, July 30, 1810, he alludes to a recent visit to the town of Corinth, in company with his friend Lord Sligo. (See, too, his letter to Coleridge, dated October 27, 1815, *Letters*, 1899, iii. 228.) It is probable that he revisited Corinth more than once in the autumn of 1810; and we may infer that, just as the place and its surroundings—the temple with its “two or three columns” (line 497), and the view across the bay from Acro-Corinth—are sketched from memory, so the story of the siege which took place in 1715 is based upon tales and legends which were preserved and repeated by the grandchildren of the besieged, and were taken down from their lips. There is point and meaning in the apparently insignificant line (stanza xxiv. line 765), “We have heard the hearers say” (see *variant* i. p. 483), which is slipped into the description of the final catastrophe. It bears witness to the fact that the *Siege of Corinth* is not a poetical expansion of a chapter in history, but a heightened reminiscence of local tradition.

History has, indeed, very little to say on the subject. The anonymous *Compleat History of the Turks* (London, 1719), which Byron quotes as an authority, is meagre and inaccurate. Hammer-Purgstall (*Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman*, 1839, xiii. 269), who gives as his authorities Girolamo Ferrari and Raschid, dismisses the siege in a few lines; and it was not till the publication of Finlay's *History of Greece* (vol. v., a.d. 1453–1821), in 1856, that the facts were known or reported. Finlay's newly discovered authority was a then unpublished MS. of a journal kept by Benjamin Brue, a connection of Voltaire's, who accompanied the Grand Vizier, Ali Cumurgi, as his interpreter, on the expedition into the Morea. According to Brue (*Journal de la Campagne . . . en 1715 . . . Paris*, 1870, p. 18), the siege began on June 28, 1715. A peremptory demand on the part of the Grand Vizier to surrender at discretion was answered by the Venetian proveditor-general, Giacomo Minetto, with calm but assured defiance (“Your menaces are useless, for we are prepared to resist all your attacks, and, with confidence in the assistance of God, we will preserve this fortress to the most

serene Republic. God is with us”). Nevertheless, the Turks made good their threat, and on the 2nd of July the fortress capitulated. On the following day at noon, whilst a party of Janissaries, contrary to order, were looting and pillaging in all directions, the fortress was seen to be enveloped in smoke. How or why the explosion happened was never discovered, but the result was that some of the pillaging Janissaries perished, and that others, to avenge their death, which they attributed to Venetian treachery, put the garrison to the sword. It was believed at the time that Minetto was among the slain; but, as Brue afterwards discovered, he was secretly conveyed to Smyrna, and ultimately ransomed by the Dutch Consul.

The late Professor Kölbing (*Siege of Corinth*, 1893, p. xxvii.), in commenting on the sources of the poem, suggests, under reserve, that Byron may have derived the incident of Minetto’s self-immolation from an historic source—the siege of Zsigetvar, in 1566, when a multitude of Turks perished from the explosion of a powder magazine which had been fired at the cost of his own life by the Hungarian commander Zrini.

It is, at least, equally probable that local patriotism was, in the first instance, responsible for the poetic colouring, and that Byron supplemented the meagre and uninteresting historic details which were at his disposal by “intimate knowledge” of the Corinthian version of the siege. (See *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Right Hon. Lord Byron*, London, 1822, p. 222; and *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Lord Byron*, by George Clinton, London, 1825, p. 284.)

It has been generally held that the *Siege of Corinth* was written in the second half of 1815 (Kölbing’s *Siege of Corinth*, p. vii.). “It appears,” says John Wright (*Works*, 1832, x. 100), “by the original MS., to have been begun in July, 1815;” and Moore (*Life*, p. 307), who probably relied on the same authority, speaks of “both the *Siege of Corinth* and *Parisina* having been produced but a short time before the Separation” (i.e. spring, 1816). Some words which Medwin (*Conversations*, 1824, p. 55) puts into Byron’s mouth point to the same conclusion. Byron’s own testimony, which is completely borne out by the MS. itself (dated J<sup>y</sup> [i.e. January, not July] 31, 1815), is in direct conflict with these statements. In a note to stanza xix. lines 521–532 (*vide post*, pp. 471–473) he affirms that it “was not till after these lines were written” that he heard “that wild and singularly original and beautiful poem [*Christabel*] recited;” and in a letter to S. T. Coleridge, dated October 27, 1815 (*Letters*, 1899, iii. 228), he is careful to explain that “the enclosed

extract from an unpublished poem (i.e. stanza xix. lines 521–532) . . . was written before (not seeing your *Christabelle* [sic], for that you know I never did till this day), but before I heard Mr. S[cott] repeat it, which he did in June last, and this thing was begun in January, and more than half written before the Summer.” The question of plagiarism will be discussed in an addendum to Byron’s note on the lines in question; but, subject to the correction that it was, probably, at the end of May (see Lockhart’s *Memoir of the Life of Sir W. Scott*, 1871, pp. 311–313), not in June, that Scott recited *Christabel* for Byron’s benefit, the date of the composition of the poem must be determined by the evidence of the author himself.

The copy of the MS. of the *Siege of Corinth* was sent to Murray at the beginning (probably on the 2nd, the date of the copy) of November, and was placed in Gifford’s hands about the same time (see letter to Murray, November 4, 1815, *Letters*, 1899, iii. 245; and Murray’s undated letter on Gifford’s “great delight” in the poem, and his “three critical remarks,” *Memoir of John Murray*, 1891, i. 356). As with *Lara*, Byron began by insisting that the *Siege* should not be published separately, but slipped into a fourth volume of the collected works, and once again (possibly when he had at last made up his mind to accept a thousand guineas for his own requirements, and not for other beneficiaries—Godwin, Coleridge, or Maturin) yielded to his publisher’s wishes and representations. At any rate, the *Siege of Corinth* and *Parisina*, which, says Moore, “during the month of January and part of February were in the hands of the printers” (*Life*, p. 300), were published in a single volume on February 7, 1816. The greater reviews were silent, but notices appeared in numerous periodicals; e.g. the *Monthly Review*, February, 1816, vol. lxxix. p. 196; the *Eclectic Review*, March, 1816, N.S. vol. v. p. 269; the *European*, May, 1816, vol. lxxix. p. 427; the *Literary Panorama*, June, 1816, N.S. vol. iv. p. 418; etc. Many of these reviews took occasion to pick out and hold up to ridicule the illogical sentences, the grammatical solecisms, and general imperfections of *technique* which marked and disfigured the *Siege of Corinth*. A passage in a letter which John Murray wrote to his brother-publisher, William Blackwood (*Annals of a Publishing House*, 1897, i. 53), refers to these cavillings, and suggests both an apology and a retaliation—

“Many who by ‘numbers judge a poet’s song’ are so stupid as not to see the powerful effect of the poems, which is the great object of poetry, because they can pick out fifty careless or even bad lines. The words may be carelessly put together; but this is secondary. Many can write polished lines who will never reach the name of poet. You see it is all poetically conceived in Lord B.’s mind.”

In such wise did Murray bear testimony to Byron's "splendid and imperishable excellence, which covers all his offences and outweighs all his defects—the excellence of sincerity and strength."

### **NOTE ON THE MS. OF *THE SIEGE OF CORINTH.***

The original MS. of the *Siege of Corinth* (now in the possession of Lord Glenesk) consists of sixteen folio and nine quarto sheets, and numbers fifty pages. Sheets 1–4 are folios, sheets 5–10 are quartos, sheets 11–22 are folios, and sheets 23–25 are quartos.

To judge from the occasional and disconnected pagination, this MS. consists of portions of two or more fair copies of a number of detached scraps written at different times, together with two or three of the original scraps which had not been transcribed.

The water-mark of the folios is, with one exception (No. 8, 1815), 1813; and of the quartos, with one exception (No. 8, 1814), 1812.

Lord Glenesk's MS. is dated January 31, 1815. Lady Byron's transcript, from which the *Siege of Corinth* was printed, and which is in Mr. Murray's possession, is dated November 2, 1815.

To  
John Hobhouse, Esq.,  
this poem is inscribed,  
by his  
Friend.  
*January 22nd, 1816.*

## ADVERTISEMENT

“The grand army of the Turks (in 1715), under the Prime Vizier, to open to themselves a way into the heart of the Morea, and to form the siege of Napoli di Romania, the most considerable place in all that country,<sup>1</sup> thought it best in the first place to attack Corinth, upon which they made several storms. The garrison being weakened, and the governor seeing it was impossible to hold out such a place against so mighty a force, thought it fit to beat a parley: but while they were treating about the articles, one of the magazines in the Turkish camp, wherein they had six hundred barrels of powder, blew up by accident, whereby six or seven hundred men were killed; which so enraged the infidels, that they would not grant any capitulation, but stormed the place with so much fury, that they took it, and put most of the garrison, with Signior Minotti, the governor, to the sword. The rest, with Signior or Antonio Bembo, Proveditor Extraordinary, were made prisoners of war.”—*A Compleat History of the Turks* [London, 1719], iii. 151.

<sup>1</sup> Napoli di Romania is not now the most considerable place in the Morea, but Tripolitza, where the Pacha resides, and maintains his government. Napoli is near Argos. I visited all three in 1810–11; and, in the course of journeying through the country from my first arrival in 1809, I crossed the Isthmus eight times in my way from Attica to the Morea, over the mountains; or in the other direction, when passing from the Gulf of Athens to that of Lepanto. Both the routes are picturesque and beautiful, though very different: that by sea has more sameness; but the voyage, being always within sight of land, and often very near it, presents many attractive views of the islands Salamis, Ægina, Poros, etc., and the coast of the Continent.

[“Independently of the suitableness of such an event to the power of Lord Byron’s genius, the Fall of Corinth afforded local attractions, by the intimate knowledge which the poet had of the place and surrounding objects. . . . Thus furnished with that topographical information which could not be well obtained from books and maps, he was admirably qualified to depict the various operations and progress of the siege.”—*Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Right Honourable Lord Byron*, London, 1822, p. 222.]





## THE SIEGE OF CORINTH

In the year since Jesus died for men,<sup>1</sup>  
Eighteen hundred years and ten,<sup>2</sup>  
We were a gallant company,  
Riding o'er land, and sailing o'er sea.  
Oh! but we went merrily!<sup>3</sup>  
We forded the river, and clomb the high hill,  
Never our steeds for a day stood still;  
Whether we lay in the cave or the shed,  
Our sleep fell soft on the hardest bed;  
Whether we couched in our rough capote,<sup>4</sup>  
On the rougher plank of our gliding boat,  
Or stretched on the beach, or our saddles spread,  
As a pillow beneath the resting head,  
Fresh we woke upon the morrow:  
    All our thoughts and words had scope,  
    We had health, and we had hope,  
Toil and travel, but no sorrow.  
We were of all tongues and creeds;—  
Some were those who counted beads,  
Some of mosque, and some of church,  
    And some, or I mis-say, of neither;  
Yet through the wide world might ye search,  
    Nor find a motlier crew nor blither.  
But some are dead, and some are gone,  
And some are scattered and alone,

10

20

And some are rebels on the hills<sup>5</sup>  
That look along Epirus' valleys,  
Where Freedom still at moments rallies,

And pays in blood Oppression's ills;

And some are in a far countree,

30

And some all restlessly at home;

But never more, oh! never, we

Shall meet to revel and to roam.

But those hardy days flew cheerily!

And when they now fall drearily,

My thoughts, like swallows, skim the main,<sup>6</sup>

And bear my spirit back again

Over the earth, and through the air,

A wild bird and a wanderer.

'Tis this that ever wakes my strain,

40

And oft, too oft, implores again

The few who may endure my lay,

To follow me so far away.

Stranger, wilt thou follow now,

And sit with me on Acro-Corinth's brow?

I. <sup>7</sup>  
\_

Many a vanished year and age,

And Tempest's breath, and Battle's rage,

Have swept o'er Corinth; yet she stands,

A fortress formed to Freedom's hands.

The Whirlwind's wrath, the Earthquake's shock,

50

Have left untouched her hoary rock,  
The keystone of a land, which still,  
Though fall'n, looks proudly on that hill,  
The landmark to the double tide  
That purpling rolls on either side,  
As if their waters chafed to meet,  
Yet pause and crouch beneath her feet.  
But could the blood before her shed  
Since first Timoleon's brother bled,<sup>8</sup>  
Or baffled Persia's despot fled,  
Arise from out the Earth which drank  
The stream of Slaughter as it sank,  
That sanguine Ocean would o'erflow  
Her isthmus idly spread below:  
Or could the bones of all the slain,  
Who perished there, be piled again,  
That rival pyramid would rise  
More mountain-like, through those clear skies  
Than yon tower-capp'd Acropolis,  
Which seems the very clouds to kiss.

60

70

II.

On dun Cithæron's ridge appears  
The gleam of twice ten thousand spears;  
And downward to the Isthmian plain,  
From shore to shore of either main,  
The tent is pitched, the Crescent shines

Along the Moslem's leaguering lines;  
And the dusk Spahi's bands<sup>9</sup> advance  
Beneath each bearded Pacha's glance;  
And far and wide as eye can reach  
The turbaned cohorts throng the beach; 80  
And there the Arab's camel kneels,  
And there his steed the Tartar wheels;  
The Turcoman hath left his herd,<sup>10</sup>  
The sabre round his loins to gird;  
And there the volleying thunders pour,  
Till waves grow smoother to the roar.  
The trench is dug, the cannon's breath  
Wings the far hissing globe of death;<sup>11</sup>  
Fast whirl the fragments from the wall,  
Which crumbles with the ponderous ball; 90  
And from that wall the foe replies,  
O'er dusty plain and smoky skies,  
With fares that answer fast and well  
The summons of the Infidel.

III.

But near and nearest to the wall  
Of those who wish and work its fall,  
With deeper skill in War's black art,  
Than Othman's sons, and high of heart  
As any Chief that ever stood  
Triumphant in the fields of blood; 100

From post to post, and deed to deed,  
Fast spurring on his reeking steed,  
Where sallying ranks the trench assail,  
And make the foremost Moslem quail;  
Or where the battery, guarded well,  
Remains as yet impregnable,  
Alighting cheerly to inspire  
The soldier slackening in his fire;  
The first and freshest of the host  
Which Stamboul's Sultan there can boast,  
To guide the follower o'er the field,  
To point the tube, the lance to wield,  
Or whirl around the bickering blade;—  
Was Alp, the Adrian renegade!<sup>12</sup>

110

IV.

From Venice—once a race of worth  
His gentle Sires—he drew his birth;  
But late an exile from her shore,  
Against his countrymen he bore  
The arms they taught to bear; and now  
The turban girt his shaven brow.  
Through many a change had Corinth passed  
With Greece to Venice' rule at last;  
And here, before her walls, with those  
To Greece and Venice equal foes,  
He stood a foe, with all the zeal

120

Which young and fiery converts feel,  
Within whose heated bosom throngs  
The memory of a thousand wrongs.  
To him had Venice ceased to be  
Her ancient civic boast—"the Free;"  
And in the palace of St. Mark  
Unnamed accusers in the dark  
Within the "Lion's mouth" had placed  
A charge against him uneffaced:<sup>13</sup>  
He fled in time, and saved his life,  
To waste his future years in strife,  
That taught his land how great her loss  
In him who triumphed o'er the Cross,  
'Gainst which he reared the Crescent high,  
And battled to avenge or die.

130

140

v.

Coumourgi<sup>14</sup>—he whose closing scene  
Adorned the triumph of Eugene,  
When on Carlowitz' bloody plain,  
The last and mightiest of the slain,  
He sank, regretting not to die,  
But cursed the Christian's victory—  
Coumourgi—can his glory cease,  
That latest conqueror of Greece,  
Till Christian hands to Greece restore  
The freedom Venice gave of yore?

150

A hundred years have rolled away  
Since he refixed the Moslem's sway;  
And now he led the Mussulman,  
And gave the guidance of the van  
To Alp, who well repaid the trust  
By cities levelled with the dust;  
And proved, by many a deed of death,  
How firm his heart in novel faith.

VI.

The walls grew weak; and fast and hot  
Against them poured the ceaseless shot,  
With unabating fury sent  
From battery to battlement;  
And thunder-like the pealing din  
Rose from each heated culverin;  
And here and there some crackling dome  
Was fired before the exploding bomb;  
And as the fabric sank beneath  
The shattering shell's volcanic breath,  
In red and wreathing columns flashed  
The flame, as loud the ruin crashed,  
Or into countless meteors driven,  
Its earth-stars melted into heaven;  
Whose clouds that day grew doubly dun,  
Impervious to the hidden sun,  
With volumed smoke that slowly grew

160

170

To one wide sky of sulphurous hue.

VII.

But not for vengeance, long delayed,  
Alone, did Alp, the renegade,  
The Moslem warriors sternly teach  
His skill to pierce the promised breach:  
Within these walls a Maid was pent  
His hope would win, without consent  
Of that inexorable Sire,  
Whose heart refused him in its ire,  
When Alp, beneath his Christian name,  
Her virgin hand aspired to claim.  
In happier mood, and earlier time,  
While unimpeached for traitorous crime,  
Gayest in Gondola or Hall,  
He glittered through the Carnival;  
And tuned the softest serenade  
That e'er on Adria's waters played  
At midnight to Italian maid.

180

190

VIII.

And many deemed her heart was won;  
For sought by numbers, given to none,  
Had young Francesca's hand remained  
Still by the Church's bonds unchained:  
And when the Adriatic bore  
Lanciotto to the Paynim shore,

Her wonted smiles were seen to fail,  
And pensive waxed the maid and pale;  
More constant at confessional,  
More rare at masque and festival;  
Or seen at such, with downcast eyes,  
Which conquered hearts they ceased to prize:  
With listless look she seems to gaze:  
With humbler care her form arrays;  
Her voice less lively in the song;  
Her step, though light, less fleet among  
The pairs, on whom the Morning's glance  
Breaks, yet unsated with the dance.

200

210

IX.

Sent by the State to guard the land,  
(Which, wrested from the Moslem's hand,<sup>15</sup>  
While Sobieski tamed his pride  
By Buda's wall and Danube's side,  
The chiefs of Venice wrung away  
From Patra to Euboea's bay,)  
Minotti held in Corinth's towers  
The Doge's delegated powers,  
While yet the pitying eye of Peace  
Smiled o'er her long forgotten Greece:  
And ere that faithless truce was broke  
Which freed her from the unchristian yoke,  
With him his gentle daughter came;

220

Nor there, since Menelaus' dame  
Forsook her lord and land, to prove  
What woes await on lawless love,  
Had fairer form adorned the shore  
Than she, the matchless stranger, bore.

X.

The wall is rent, the ruins yawn;  
And, with tomorrow's earliest dawn,  
O'er the disjointed mass shall vault  
The foremost of the fierce assault.  
The bands are ranked—the chosen van  
Of Tartar and of Mussulman,  
The full of hope, misnamed "forlorn,"<sup>16</sup>  
Who hold the thought of death in scorn,  
And win their way with falchion's force,  
Or pave the path with many a corse,  
O'er which the following brave may rise,  
Their stepping-stone—the last who dies!

230

240

XI.

'Tis midnight: on the mountains brown<sup>17</sup>  
The cold, round moon shines deeply down;  
Blue roll the waters, blue the sky  
Spreads like an ocean hung on high,  
Bespangled with those isles of light,<sup>18</sup>  
So wildly, spiritually bright;  
Who ever gazed upon them shining

And turned to earth without repining,

Nor wished for wings to flee away,

250

And mix with their eternal ray?

The waves on either shore lay there

Calm, clear, and azure as the air;

And scarce their foam the pebbles shook,

But murmured meekly as the brook.

The winds were pillowed on the waves;

The banners drooped along their staves,

And, as they fell around them furling,

Above them shone the crescent curling;

And that deep silence was unbroke,

260

Save where the watch his signal spoke,

Save where the steed neighed oft and shrill,

And echo answered from the hill,

And the wide hum of that wild host

Rustled like leaves from coast to coast,

As rose the Muezzin's voice in air

In midnight call to wonted prayer;

It rose, that chanted mournful strain,

Like some lone Spirit's o'er the plain:

'Twas musical, but sadly sweet,

270

Such as when winds and harp-strings meet,

And take a long unmeasured tone,

To mortal minstrelsy unknown.

It seemed to those within the wall

A cry prophetic of their fall:

It struck even the besieger's ear  
With something ominous and drear,<sup>19</sup>  
An undefined and sudden thrill,  
Which makes the heart a moment still,  
Then beat with quicker pulse, ashamed  
Of that strange sense its silence framed;  
Such as a sudden passing-bell  
Wakes, though but for a stranger's knell.

280

XII.

The tent of Alp was on the shore;  
The sound was hushed, the prayer was o'er;  
The watch was set, the night-round made,  
All mandates issued and obeyed:  
'Tis but another anxious night,  
His pains the morrow may requite  
With all Revenge and Love can pay,  
In guerdon for their long delay.  
Few hours remain, and he hath need  
Of rest, to nerve for many a deed  
Of slaughter; but within his soul  
The thoughts like troubled waters roll.  
He stood alone among the host;  
Not his the loud fanatic boast  
To plant the Crescent o'er the Cross,  
Or risk a life with little loss,  
Secure in paradise to be

290

300

By Houris loved immortally:  
Nor his, what burning patriots feel,  
The stern exaltedness of zeal,  
Profuse of blood, untired in toil,  
When battling on the parent soil.  
He stood alone—a renegade  
Against the country he betrayed;  
He stood alone amidst his band,  
Without a trusted heart or hand:  
They followed him, for he was brave,  
And great the spoil he got and gave;  
They crouched to him, for he had skill  
To warp and wield the vulgar will:  
But still his Christian origin  
With them was little less than sin.  
They envied even the faithless fame  
He earned beneath a Moslem name;  
Since he, their mightiest chief, had been  
In youth a bitter Nazarene.

310

They did not know how Pride can stoop,  
When baffled feelings withering droop;  
They did not know how Hate can burn  
In hearts once changed from soft to stern;  
Nor all the false and fatal zeal  
The convert of Revenge can feel.  
He ruled them—man may rule the worst,  
By ever daring to be first:

320

So lions o'er the jackals sway;  
The jackal points, he fells the prey,<sup>20</sup>  
Then on the vulgar, yelling, press,  
To gorge the relics of success.

330

XIII.

His head grows fevered, and his pulse  
The quick successive throbs convulse;  
In vain from side to side he throws  
His form, in courtship of repose;  
Or if he dozed, a sound, a start  
Awoke him with a sunken heart.  
The turban on his hot brow pressed,  
The mail weighed lead-like on his breast,  
Though oft and long beneath its weight  
Upon his eyes had slumber sate,  
Without or couch or canopy,  
Except a rougher field and sky  
Than now might yield a warrior's bed,  
Than now along the heaven was spread.  
He could not rest, he could not stay  
Within his tent to wait for day,  
But walked him forth along the sand,  
Where thousand sleepers strewed the strand.  
What pillowed them? and why should he  
More wakeful than the humblest be,  
Since more their peril, worse their toil?

340

350

And yet they fearless dream of spoil;  
While he alone, where thousands passed  
A night of sleep, perchance their last,  
In sickly vigil wandered on,  
And envied all he gazed upon.

XIV.

He felt his soul become more light  
Beneath the freshness of the night.  
Cool was the silent sky, though calm,  
And bathed his brow with airy balm:  
Behind, the camp—before him lay,  
In many a winding creek and bay,  
Lepanto's gulf; and, on the brow  
Of Delphi's hill, unshaken snow,  
High and eternal, such as shone  
Through thousand summers brightly gone,  
Along the gulf, the mount, the clime;  
It will not melt, like man, to time:  
Tyrant and slave are swept away,  
Less formed to wear before the ray;  
But that white veil, the lightest, frailest,<sup>21</sup>  
Which on the mighty mount thou hailest,  
While tower and tree are torn and rent,  
Shines o'er its craggy battlement;  
In form a peak, in height a cloud,  
In texture like a hovering shroud,

360

370

Thus high by parting Freedom spread,  
As from her fond abode she fled,  
And lingered on the spot, where long  
Her prophet spirit spake in song.  
Oh! still her step at moments falters  
O'er withered fields, and ruined altars,  
And fain would wake, in souls too broken,  
By pointing to each glorious token:  
But vain her voice, till better days  
Dawn in those yet remembered rays,  
Which shone upon the Persian flying,  
And saw the Spartan smile in dying.

380

XV.

Not mindless of these mighty times  
Was Alp, despite his flight and crimes;  
And through this night, as on he wandered,  
And o'er the past and present pondered,  
And thought upon the glorious dead  
Who there in better cause had bled,  
He felt how faint and feebly dim  
The fame that could accrue to him,  
Who cheered the band, and waved the sword,  
A traitor in a turbaned horde;  
And led them to the lawless siege,  
Whose best success were sacrilege.  
Not so had those his fancy numbered,<sup>22</sup>

390

400

The chiefs whose dust around him slumbered;  
Their phalanx marshalled on the plain,  
Whose bulwarks were not then in vain.  
They fell devoted, but undying;  
The very gale their names seemed sighing;  
The waters murmured of their name;  
The woods were peopled with their fame;  
The silent pillar, lone and grey,  
Claimed kindred with their sacred clay;  
Their spirits wrapped the dusky mountain,  
Their memory sparkled o'er the fountain;  
The meanest rill, the mightiest river  
Rolled mingling with their fame for ever.

410

Despite of every yoke she bears,  
That land is Glory's still and theirs!  
'Tis still a watch-word to the earth:  
When man would do a deed of worth  
He points to Greece, and turns to tread,  
So sanctioned, on the tyrant's head:  
He looks to her, and rushes on  
Where life is lost, or Freedom won.

420

XVI.

Still by the shore Alp mutely mused,  
And wooed the freshness Night diffused.  
There shrinks no ebb in that tideless sea,<sup>23</sup>  
Which changeless rolls eternally;

So that wildest of waves, in their angriest mood,  
Scarce break on the bounds of the land for a rood;  
And the powerless moon beholds them flow, 430  
Heedless if she come or go:  
Calm or high, in main or bay,  
On their course she hath no sway.  
The rock unworn its base doth bare,  
And looks o'er the surf, but it comes not there;  
And the fringe of the foam may be seen below,  
On the line that it left long ages ago:  
A smooth short space of yellow sand<sup>24</sup>

Between it and the greener land.  
He wandered on along the beach, 440  
Till within the range of a carbine's reach  
Of the leaguered wall; but they saw him not,  
Or how could he 'scape from the hostile shot?  
Did traitors lurk in the Christians' hold?  
Were their hands grown stiff, or their hearts waxed cold?  
I know not, in sooth; but from yonder wall  
There flashed no fire, and there hissed no ball,  
Though he stood beneath the bastion's frown,  
That flanked the seaward gate of the town;  
Though he heard the sound, and could almost tell 450  
The sullen words of the sentinel,  
As his measured step on the stone below  
Clanked, as he paced it to and fro;  
And he saw the lean dogs beneath the wall

Hold o'er the dead their Carnival,<sup>25</sup>  
Gorging and growling o'er carcass and limb;  
They were too busy to bark at him!  
From a Tartar's skull they had stripped the flesh,  
As ye peel the fig when its fruit is fresh;  
And their white tusks crunched o'er the whiter skull,<sup>26</sup> 460  
As it slipped through their jaws, when their edge grew  
dull,  
As they lazily mumbled the bones of the dead,  
When they scarce could rise from the spot where they  
fed;  
So well had they broken a lingering fast  
With those who had fallen for that night's repast.  
And Alp knew, by the turbans that rolled on the sand,  
The foremost of these were the best of his band:  
Crimson and green were the shawls of their wear,  
And each scalp had a single long tuft of hair,<sup>27</sup>  
All the rest was shaven and bare. 470  
The scalps were in the wild dog's maw,  
The hair was tangled round his jaw:  
But close by the shore, on the edge of the gulf,  
There sat a vulture flapping a wolf,  
Who had stolen from the hills, but kept away,  
Scared by the dogs, from the human prey;  
But he seized on his share of a steed that lay,  
Picked by the birds, on the sands of the bay.

Alp turned him from the sickening sight:

Never had shaken his nerves in fight;

480

But he better could brook to behold the dying,

Deep in the tide of their warm blood lying,<sup>28</sup>

Scorched with the death-thirst, and writhing in vain,

Than the perishing dead who are past all pain.<sup>29</sup>

There is something of pride in the perilous hour,

Whate'er be the shape in which Death may lower;

For Fame is there to say who bleeds,

And Honour's eye on daring deeds!<sup>30</sup>

But when all is past, it is humbling to tread

O'er the weltering field of the tombless dead,<sup>31</sup>

490

And see worms of the earth, and fowls of the air,

Beasts of the forest, all gathering there;

All regarding man as their prey,

All rejoicing in his decay.

#### XVIII.

There is a temple in ruin stands,

Fashioned by long forgotten hands;

Two or three columns, and many a stone,

Marble and granite, with grass o'ergrown!

Out upon Time! it will leave no more

Of the things to come than the things before!<sup>32</sup>

500

Out upon Time! who for ever will leave

But enough of the past for the future to grieve

O'er that which hath been, and o'er that which must be:

What we have seen, our sons shall see;  
Remnants of things that have passed away,  
Fragments of stone, reared by creatures of clay!

XIX.

He sate him down at a pillar's base,<sup>33</sup>  
And passed his hand athwart his face;  
Like one in dreary musing mood,  
Declining was his attitude;  
His head was drooping on his breast,  
Fevered, throbbing, and oppressed;  
And o'er his brow, so downward bent,  
Oft his beating fingers went,  
Hurriedly, as you may see  
Your own run over the ivory key,  
Ere the measured tone is taken  
By the chords you would awaken.

510

There he sate all heavily,  
As he heard the night-wind sigh.  
Was it the wind through some hollow stone,  
Sent that soft and tender moan?<sup>34</sup>  
He lifted his head, and he looked on the sea,  
But it was unrippled as glass may be;  
He looked on the long grass—it waved not a blade;  
How was that gentle sound conveyed?  
He looked to the banners—each flag lay still,  
So did the leaves on Cithæron's hill,

520

And he felt not a breath come over his cheek;

What did that sudden sound bespeak?

530

He turned to the left—is he sure of sight?

There sate a lady, youthful and bright!<sup>35</sup>

XX.

He started up with more of fear

Than if an arméd foe were near.

“God of my fathers! what is here?

Who art thou? and wherefore sent

So near a hostile armament?”

His trembling hands refused to sign

The cross he deemed no more divine:

He had resumed it in that hour,

540

But Conscience wrung away the power.

He gazed, he saw; he knew the face

Of beauty, and the form of grace;

It was Francesca by his side,

The maid who might have been his bride!

The rose was yet upon her cheek,

But mellowed with a tenderer streak:

Where was the play of her soft lips fled?

Gone was the smile that enlivened their red.

The Ocean’s calm within their view,

550

Beside her eye had less of blue;

But like that cold wave it stood still,

And its glance, though clear, was chill.<sup>36</sup>

Around her form a thin robe twining,  
Nought concealed her bosom shining;  
Through the parting of her hair,  
Floating darkly downward there,  
Her rounded arm showed white and bare:  
And ere yet she made reply,  
Once she raised her hand on high;  
It was so wan, and transparent of hue,  
You might have seen the moon shine through.

560

XXI.

“I come from my rest to him I love best,  
That I may be happy, and he may be blessed.  
I have passed the guards, the gate, the wall;  
Sought thee in safety through foes and all.  
'Tis said the lion will turn and flee<sup>37</sup>  
From a maid in the pride of her purity;  
And the Power on high, that can shield the good  
Thus from the tyrant of the wood,  
Hath extended its mercy to guard me as well  
From the hands of the leaguering Infidel.  
I come—and if I come in vain,  
Never, oh never, we meet again!  
Thou hast done a fearful deed  
In falling away from thy fathers' creed:  
But dash that turban to earth, and sign  
The sign of the cross, and for ever be mine;

570

Wring the black drop from thy heart,  
And tomorrow unites us no more to part.” 580

“And where should our bridal couch be spread?  
In the midst of the dying and the dead?  
For tomorrow we give to the slaughter and flame  
The sons and the shrines of the Christian name.  
None, save thou and thine, I’ve sworn,  
Shall be left upon the morn:  
But thee will I bear to a lovely spot,  
Where our hands shall be joined, and our sorrow forgot.

There thou yet shall be my bride,  
When once again I’ve quelled the pride 590  
Of Venice; and her hated race  
Have felt the arm they would debase  
Scourge, with a whip of scorpions, those  
Whom Vice and Envy made my foes.”

Upon his hand she laid her own—  
Light was the touch, but it thrilled to the bone,  
And shot a chillness to his heart,  
Which fixed him beyond the power to start.  
Though slight was that grasp so mortal cold,  
He could not loose him from its hold; 600

But never did clasp of one so dear  
Strike on the pulse with such feeling of fear,  
As those thin fingers, long and white,  
Froze through his blood by their touch that night.  
The feverish glow of his brow was gone,

And his heart sank so still that it felt like stone,  
As he looked on the face, and beheld its hue,  
So deeply changed from what he knew:  
Fair but faint—without the ray  
Of mind, that made each feature play  
Like sparkling waves on a sunny day;  
And her motionless lips lay still as death,  
And her words came forth without her breath,  
And there rose not a heave o'er her bosom's swell,  
And there seemed not a pulse in her veins to dwell.  
Though her eye shone out, yet the lids were fixed,<sup>38</sup>  
And the glance that it gave was wild and unmixed  
With aught of change, as the eyes may seem  
Of the restless who walk in a troubled dream;  
Like the figures on arras, that gloomily glare,  
Stirred by the breath of the wintry air  
So seen by the dying lamp's fitful light,  
Lifeless, but life-like, and awful to sight;  
As they seem, through the dimness, about to come down  
From the shadowy wall where their images frown;  
Fearfully flitting to and fro,  
As the gusts on the tapestry come and go.<sup>39</sup>  
“If not for love of me be given  
Thus much, then, for the love of Heaven,—  
Again I say—that turban tear  
From off thy faithless brow, and swear  
Thine injured country's sons to spare,

610

620

630

Or thou art lost; and never shalt see—  
Not earth—that's past—but Heaven or me.  
If this thou dost accord, albeit  
A heavy doom' tis thine to meet,  
That doom shall half absolve thy sin,  
And Mercy's gate may receive thee within:<sup>40</sup>  
But pause one moment more, and take  
The curse of Him thou didst forsake;  
And look once more to Heaven, and see  
Its love for ever shut from thee.

640

There is a light cloud by the moon—<sup>41</sup>  
'Tis passing, and will pass full soon—  
If, by the time its vapoury sail  
Hath ceased her shaded orb to veil,  
Thy heart within thee is not changed,  
Then God and man are both avenged;  
Dark will thy doom be, darker still  
Thine immortality of ill.”

650

Alp looked to heaven, and saw on high  
The sign she spake of in the sky;  
But his heart was swollen, and turned aside,  
By deep interminable pride.  
This first false passion of his breast  
Rolled like a torrent o'er the rest.  
*He* sue for mercy! *He* dismayed  
By wild words of a timid maid!  
*He*, wronged by Venice, vow to save

Her sons, devoted to the grave!

660

No—though that cloud were thunder's worst,  
And charged to crush him—let it burst!

He looked upon it earnestly,

Without an accent of reply;

He watched it passing; it is flown:

Full on his eye the clear moon shone,

And thus he spake—"Whate'er my fate,

I am no changeling—'tis too late:

The reed in storms may bow and quiver,

Then rise again; the tree must shiver.

670

What Venice made me, I must be,

Her foe in all, save love to thee:

But thou art safe: oh, fly with me!"

He turned, but she is gone!

Nothing is there but the column stone.

Hath she sunk in the earth, or melted in air?

He saw not—he knew not—but nothing is there.

XXII.

The night is past, and shines the sun

As if that morn were a jocund one.<sup>42</sup>

Lightly and brightly breaks away

680

The Morning from her mantle grey,<sup>43</sup>

And the Noon will look on a sultry day.<sup>44</sup>

Hark to the trump, and the drum,

And the mournful sound of the barbarous horn,

And the flap of the banners, that flit as they're borne,  
And the neigh of the steed, and the multitude's hum,  
And the clash, and the shout, "They come! they come!"

The horsetails<sup>45</sup> are plucked from the ground, and the  
sword

From its sheath; and they form, and but wait for the  
word.

Tartar, and Spahi, and Turcoman,

690

Strike your tents, and throng to the van;

Mount ye, spur ye, skirr the plain,<sup>46</sup>

That the fugitive may flee in vain,

When he breaks from the town; and none escape,

Agéd or young, in the Christian shape;

While your fellows on foot, in a fiery mass,

Bloodstain the breach through which they pass.<sup>47</sup>

The steeds are all bridled, and snort to the rein;

Curved is each neck, and flowing each mane;

White is the foam of their champ on the bit;

700

The spears are uplifted; the matches are lit;

The cannon are pointed, and ready to roar,

And crush the wall they have crumbled before:<sup>48</sup>

Forms in his phalanx each Janizar;

Alp at their head; his right arm is bare,

So is the blade of his scimitar;

The Khan and the Pachas are all at their post;

The Vizier himself at the head of the host.

When the culverin's signal is fired, then on;

Leave not in Corinth a living one—

710

A priest at her altars, a chief in her halls,

A hearth in her mansions, a stone on her walls.

God and the prophet—Alla Hu!<sup>49</sup>

Up to the skies with that wild halloo!

“There the breach lies for passage, the ladder to scale;

And your hands on your sabres, and how should ye fail?

He who first downs with the red cross may crave<sup>50</sup>

His heart’s dearest wish; let him ask it, and have!”

Thus uttered Coumourgi, the dauntless Vizier;<sup>51</sup>

The reply was the brandish of sabre and spear,

720

And the shout of fierce thousands in joyous ire:—

Silence—hark to the signal—fire!

XXIII.

As the wolves, that headlong go

On the stately buffalo,

Though with fiery eyes, and angry roar,

And hoofs that stamp, and horns that gore,

He tramples on earth, or tosses on high

The foremost, who rush on his strength but to die

Thus against the wall they went,

Thus the first were backward bent;<sup>52</sup>

730

Many a bosom, sheathed in brass,

Strewed the earth like broken glass,

Shivered by the shot, that tore

The ground whereon they moved no more:

Even as they fell, in files they lay,  
Like the mower's grass at the close of day,  
When his work is done on the levelled plain;  
Such was the fall of the foremost slain.<sup>53</sup>

XXIV.

As the spring-tides, with heavy splash,  
From the cliffs invading dash  
Huge fragments, sapped by the ceaseless flow,  
Till white and thundering down they go,  
Like the avalanche's snow  
On the Alpine vales below;  
Thus at length, outbreathed and worn,  
Corinth's sons were downward borne  
By the long and oft renewed  
Charge of the Moslem multitude.

740

In firmness they stood, and in masses they fell,  
Heaped by the host of the Infidel,  
Hand to hand, and foot to foot:  
Nothing there, save Death, was mute;<sup>54</sup>  
Stroke, and thrust, and flash, and cry  
For quarter, or for victory,  
Mingle there with the volleying thunder,  
Which makes the distant cities wonder  
How the sounding battle goes,  
If with them, or for their foes;  
If they must mourn, or may rejoice

750

In that annihilating voice,

760

Which pierces the deep hills through and through

With an echo dread and new:

You might have heard it, on that day,

O'er Salamis and Megara;

(We have heard the hearers say,)

Even unto Piræus' bay.

XXV.

From the point of encountering blades to the hilt,

Sabres and swords with blood were gilt;<sup>55</sup>

But the rampart is won, and the spoil begun,

And all but the after carnage done.

770

Shriller shrieks now mingling come

From within the plundered dome:

Hark to the haste of flying feet,

That splash in the blood of the slippery street;

But here and there, where 'vantage ground

Against the foe may still be found,

Desperate groups, of twelve or ten,

Make a pause, and turn again—

With banded backs against the wall,

Fiercely stand, or fighting fall.

780

There stood an old man<sup>56</sup>—his hairs were white,

But his veteran arm was full of might:

So gallantly bore he the brunt of the fray,

The dead before him, on that day,

In a semicircle lay;  
Still he combated unwounded,  
Though retreating, unsurrounded.  
Many a scar of former fight  
Lurked<sup>57</sup> beneath his corslet bright;  
But of every wound his body bore,  
Each and all had been ta'en before:  
Though agéd, he was so iron of limb,  
Few of our youth could cope with him,  
And the foes, whom he singly kept at bay,  
Outnumbered his thin hairs<sup>58</sup> of silver grey.

790

From right to left his sabre swept:  
Many an Othman mother wept  
Sons that were unborn, when dipped<sup>59</sup>  
His weapon first in Moslem gore,  
Ere his years could count a score.

800

Of all he might have been the sire<sup>60</sup>  
Who fell that day beneath his ire:  
For, sonless left long years ago,  
His wrath made many a childless foe;  
And since the day, when in the strait<sup>61</sup>  
His only boy had met his fate,  
His parent's iron hand did doom  
More than a human hecatomb.<sup>62</sup>  
If shades by carnage be appeased,  
Patroclus' spirit less was pleased  
Than his, Minotti's son, who died

810

Where Asia's bounds and ours divide.  
Buried he lay, where thousands before  
For thousands of years were inhumed on the shore;  
What of them is left, to tell  
Where they lie, and how they fell?  
Not a stone on their turf, nor a bone in their graves;  
But they live in the verse that immortally saves.<sup>63</sup>

XXVI.

Hark to the Allah shout!<sup>64</sup> a band  
Of the Mussulman bravest and best is at hand; 820  
Their leader's nervous arm is bare,  
Swifter to smite, and never to spare—  
Unclothed to the shoulder it waves them on;  
Thus in the fight is he ever known:  
Others a gaudier garb may show,  
To tempt the spoil of the greedy foe;  
Many a hand's on a richer hilt,  
But none on a steel more ruddily gilt;  
Many a loftier turban may wear,—  
Alp is but known by the white arm bare; 830  
Look through the thick of the fight, 'tis there!  
There is not a standard on that shore  
So well advanced the ranks before;  
There is not a banner in Moslem war  
Will lure the Delhis half so far;  
It glances like a falling star!

Where'er that mighty arm is seen,  
The bravest be, or late have been;<sup>65</sup>  
There the craven cries for quarter  
Vainly to the vengeful Tartar;  
Or the hero, silent lying,  
Scorns to yield a groan in dying;  
Mustering his last feeble blow  
'Gainst the nearest levelled foe,  
Though faint beneath the mutual wound,  
Grappling on the gory ground.

840

XXVII.

Still the old man stood erect.  
And Alp's career a moment checked.  
"Yield thee, Minotti; quarter take,  
For thine own, thy daughter's sake."  
"Never, Renegado, never!  
Though the life of thy gift would last for ever."  
"Francesca!—Oh, my promised bride!  
Must she too perish by thy pride!"  
"She is safe."—"Where? where?"—"In Heaven;  
From whence thy traitor soul is driven—  
Far from thee, and undefiled."  
Grimly then Minotti smiled,  
As he saw Alp staggering bow  
Before his words, as with a blow.  
"Oh God! when died she?"—"Yesternight—

850

860

Nor weep I for her spirit's flight:  
None of my pure race shall be  
Slaves to Mahomet and thee—  
Come on!"—That challenge is in vain—  
Alp's already with the slain!  
While Minotti's words were wreaking  
More revenge in bitter speaking  
Than his falchion's point had found,  
Had the time allowed to wound,  
From within the neighbouring porch  
Of a long defended church,  
Where the last and desperate few  
Would the failing fight renew,  
The sharp shot dashed Alp to the ground;  
Ere an eye could view the wound  
That crashed through the brain of the infidel,  
Round he spun, and down he fell;  
A flash like fire within his eyes  
Blazed, as he bent no more to rise,  
And then eternal darkness sunk  
Through all the palpitating trunk;  
Nought of life left, save a quivering  
Where his limbs were slightly shivering:  
They turned him on his back; his breast  
And brow were stained with gore and dust,  
And through his lips the life-blood oozed,  
From its deep veins lately loosed;

870

880

But in his pulse there was no throb,  
Nor on his lips one dying sob;  
Sigh, nor word, nor struggling breath  
Heralded his way to death:  
Ere his very thought could pray,  
Unaneled he passed away,  
Without a hope from Mercy's aid,—  
To the last a Renegade.<sup>66</sup>

890

XXVIII.

Fearfully the yell arose  
Of his followers, and his foes;  
These in joy, in fury those:  
Then again in conflict mixing,  
Clashing swords, and spears transfixing,  
Interchanged the blow and thrust,  
Hurling warriors in the dust.  
Street by street, and foot by foot,  
Still Minotti dares dispute  
The latest portion of the land  
Left beneath his high command;  
With him, aiding heart and hand,  
The remnant of his gallant band.  
Still the church is tenable,

900

910

Whence issued late the fated ball  
That half avenged the city's fall,  
When Alp, her fierce assailant, fell:

Thither bending sternly back,  
They leave before a bloody track;  
And, with their faces to the foe,  
Dealing wounds with every blow,<sup>67</sup>  
The chief, and his retreating train,  
Join to those within the fane;  
There they yet may breathe awhile,  
Sheltered by the massy pile.

920

XXIX.

Brief breathing-time! the turbaned host,  
With added ranks and raging boast,  
Press onwards with such strength and heat,  
Their numbers balk their own retreat;  
For narrow the way that led to the spot  
Where still the Christians yielded not;  
And the foremost, if fearful, may vainly try  
Through the massy column to turn and fly;  
They perforce must do or die.  
They die; but ere their eyes could close,  
Avengers o'er their bodies rose;  
Fresh and furious, fast they fill  
The ranks unthinned, though slaughtered still;  
And faint the weary Christians wax  
Before the still renewed attacks:  
And now the Othmans gain the gate;  
Still resists its iron weight,

930

And still, all deadly aimed and hot,  
From every crevice comes the shot;  
From every shattered window pour  
The volleys of the sulphurous shower:  
But the portal wavering grows and weak—  
The iron yields, the hinges creak—  
It bends—it falls—and all is o'er;  
Lost Corinth may resist no more!

940

XXX.

Darkly, sternly, and all alone,  
Minotti stood o'er the altar stone:  
Madonna's face upon him shone,<sup>68</sup>  
Painted in heavenly hues above,  
With eyes of light and looks of love;  
And placed upon that holy shrine  
To fix our thoughts on things divine,  
When pictured there, we kneeling see  
Her, and the boy-God on her knee,  
Smiling sweetly on each prayer  
To Heaven, as if to waft it there.  
Still she smiled; even now she smiles,  
Though slaughter streams along her aisles:  
Minotti lifted his agéd eye,  
And made the sign of a cross with a sigh,  
Then seized a torch which blazed thereby;  
And still he stood, while with steel and flame,

950

960

Inward and onward the Mussulman came.

XXXI.

The vaults beneath the mosaic stone  
Contained the dead of ages gone;  
Their names were on the graven floor,  
But now illegible with gore;  
The carved crests, and curious hues  
The varied marble's veins diffuse,  
Were smeared, and slippery—stained, and strown  
With broken swords, and helms o'erthrown:  
There were dead above, and the dead below  
Lay cold in many a confined row;  
You might see them piled in sable state,  
By a pale light through a gloomy grate;  
But War had entered their dark caves,  
And stored along the vaulted graves  
Her sulphurous treasures, thickly spread  
In masses by the fleshless dead:  
Here, throughout the siege, had been  
The Christians' chiefest magazine;  
To these a late formed train now led,  
Minotti's last and stern resource  
Against the foe's o'erwhelming force.

970

980

XXXII.

The foe came on, and few remain  
To strive, and those must strive in vain:

For lack of further lives, to slake  
The thirst of vengeance now awake,  
With barbarous blows they gash the dead, 990  
And lop the already lifeless head,  
And fell the statues from their niche,  
And spoil the shrines of offerings rich,  
And from each other's rude hands wrest  
The silver vessels Saints had blessed.  
To the high altar on they go;  
Oh, but it made a glorious show!<sup>69</sup>  
On its table still behold  
The cup of consecrated gold;  
Massy and deep, a glittering prize, 1000  
Brightly it sparkles to plunderers' eyes:  
That morn it held the holy wine,  
Converted by Christ to his blood so divine,  
Which his worshippers drank at the break of day,  
To shrive their souls ere they joined in the fray.  
Still a few drops within it lay;  
And round the sacred table glow  
Twelve lofty lamps, in splendid row,  
From the purest metal cast;  
A spoil—the richest, and the last. 1010

XXXIII.

So near they came, the nearest stretched  
To grasp the spoil he almost reached

When old Minotti's hand  
Touched with the torch the train—  
    'Tis fired!<sup>70</sup>  
Spire, vaults, the shrine, the spoil, the slain,  
    The turbaned victors, the Christian band,  
All that of living or dead remain,  
Hurled on high with the shivered fane,  
    In one wild roar expired!<sup>71</sup> 1020  
The shattered town—the walls thrown down—  
The waves a moment backward bent—  
The hills that shake, although unrent,  
    As if an Earthquake passed—  
The thousand shapeless things all driven  
In cloud and flame athwart the heaven,  
    By that tremendous blast—  
Proclaimed the desperate conflict o'er  
On that too long afflicted shore:<sup>72</sup>  
Up to the sky like rockets go  
All that mingled there below:  
Many a tall and goodly man,  
Scorched and shrivelled to a span,  
When he fell to earth again  
Like a cinder strewed the plain:  
Down the ashes shower like rain;  
Some fell in the gulf, which received the sprinkles  
With a thousand circling wrinkles;  
Some fell on the shore, but, far away,

Scattered o'er the isthmus lay;

1040

Christian or Moslem, which be they?

Let their mothers see and say!

When in cradled rest they lay,

And each nursing mother smiled

On the sweet sleep of her child,

Little deemed she such a day

Would rend those tender limbs away.<sup>73</sup>

Not the matrons that them bore

Could discern their offspring more;<sup>74</sup>

That one moment left no trace

1050

More of human form or face

Save a scattered scalp or bone:

And down came blazing rafters, strown

Around, and many a falling stone,

Deeply dented in the clay,

All blackened there and reeking lay.

All the living things that heard

The deadly earth-shock disappeared:

The wild birds flew; the wild dogs fled,

And howling left the unburied dead;<sup>75</sup> 1060

The camels from their keepers broke;

The distant steer forsook the yoke—

The nearer steed plunged o'er the plain,

And burst his girth, and tore his rein;

The bull-frog's note, from out the marsh,

Deep-mouthed arose, and doubly harsh;<sup>76</sup>

The wolves yelled on the caverned hill  
Where Echo rolled in thunder still;  
The jackal's troop, in gathered cry,<sup>77</sup>  
Bayed from afar complainingly,  
With a mixed and mournful sound,  
Like crying babe, and beaten hound:<sup>78</sup>  
With sudden wing, and ruffled breast,  
The eagle left his rocky nest,  
And mounted nearer to the sun,  
The clouds beneath him seemed so dun;  
Their smoke assailed his startled beak,  
And made him higher soar and shriek—  
Thus was Corinth lost and won!<sup>79</sup>

1070

<sup>1</sup> [The introductory lines, 1–45, are not included in the copy of the poem in Lady Byron's handwriting, nor were they published in the First Edition. On Christmas Day, 1815, Byron, enclosing this fragment to Murray, says, "I send some lines written some time ago, and intended as an opening to the *Siege of Corinth*. I had forgotten them, and am not sure that they had not better be left out now;—on that you and your Synod can determine." They are headed in the MS., "The Stranger's Tale," October 23rd. First published in *Letters and Journals*, 1830, i. 638, they were included among the *Occasional Poems* in the edition of 1831, and first prefixed to the poem in the edition of 1832.]

<sup>2</sup> [The metrical rendering of the date (miscalculated from the death instead of the birth of Christ) may be traced to the opening lines of an old ballad (Kölbing's *Siege of Corinth*, p. 53)—

"Upon the sixteen hunder year  
Of God, and fifty-three,  
From Christ was born, that bought us dear,  
As writings testifie," etc.

See "The Life and Age of Man" (*Burns' Selected Poems*, ed. by J. L. Robertson, 1889, p. 191).]

<sup>3</sup> [Compare letter to Hodgson, July 16, 1809: "How merrily we lives that travellers be!"—*Letters*, 1898, i. 233.]

<sup>4</sup> [For "capote," compare *Childe Harold*, Canto II. stanza lii. line 7, and Byron's note (24.B.), *Poetical Works*, 1899, ii. 132, 181. Compare, too, letter to Mrs. Byron, November 12, 1809 (*Letters*, 1899, i. 253): "Two days ago I was nearly lost in a Turkish ship of war. . . . I wrapped myself up in my Albanian capote (an immense cloak), and lay down on deck to wait the worst."]

<sup>5</sup> The last tidings recently heard of Dervish (one of the Arnauts who followed me) state him to be in revolt upon the mountains, at the head of some of the bands common in that country in times of trouble.

<sup>6</sup> [Compare Kingsley's *Last Buccaneer*—

"If I might but be a sea-dove, I'd fly across the main—  
To the pleasant isle of Aves, to look at it once again."]

<sup>7</sup> [The MS. is dated J<sup>y</sup> (January) 31, 1815. Lady Byron's copy is dated November 2, 1815.]

<sup>8</sup> [Timoleon, who had saved the life of his brother Timophanes in battle, afterwards put him to death for aiming at the supreme power in Corinth. Warton says that Pope once intended to write an epic poem on the story, and that Akenside had the same design (*Works of Alexander Pope, Esq.*, 1806, ii. 83).]

<sup>9</sup> [Turkish holders of military fiefs.]

<sup>10</sup> The life of the Turcomans is wandering and patriarchal: they dwell in tents.

<sup>11</sup> [Compare *The Giaour*, line 639 (*vide ante*, p. 116)—"The deathshot hissing from afar."]

<sup>12</sup> [Professor Kolbing admits that he is unable to say how "Byron met with the name of Alp." I am indebted to my cousin, Miss Edith Coleridge, for the suggestion that the name is derived from Mohammed (Lhazed-Dyn-Abou-Choudja), surnamed Alp-Arslan (Arsslan), or "Brave Lion," the second of the Seljuk dynasty, in the eleventh century. "He conquered Armenia and Georgia . . . but was assassinated by Yussuf Cothuol, Governor of Berzem, and was buried at Merw, in Khorassan." His epitaph moralizes his fate: "O vous qui avez vu la grandeur d'Alparslan élevée jusqu'au ciel, regardez! le voici maintenant en poussière."—Hammer-Purgstall, *Histoire de l'Empire Othoman*, i. 13–15.]

<sup>13</sup> ["The *Lions' Mouths*, under the arcade at the summit of the Giants' Stairs, which gaped widely to receive anonymous charges, were no doubt far more often employed as vehicles of private malice than of zeal for the public welfare."—*Sketches from Venetian History*, 1832, ii. 380.]

<sup>14</sup> Ali Coumourgji [Damad Ali or Ali Cumurgji (i.e. son of the charcoal-burner)], the favourite of three sultans, and Grand Vizier to Achmet III., after recovering Peloponnesus from the Venetians in one campaign, was mortally wounded in the next, against the Germans, at the battle of Peterwaradin (in the plain of Carlowitz), in Hungary, endeavouring to rally his guards. He died of his wounds next day [August 16, 1716]. His last order was the decapitation of General Breuner, and some other German prisoners, and his last words, "Oh that I could thus serve all the Christian dogs!" a speech and act

not unlike one of Caligula. He was a young man of great ambition and unbounded presumption: on being told that Prince Eugene, then opposed to him, "was a great general," he said, "I shall become a greater, and at his expense."

[For his letter to Prince Eugene, "Eh bien! la guerre va décider entre nous," etc., and for an account of his death, see Hammer-Purgstall, *Historie de l'Empire Othoman*, xiii. 300, 312.]

<sup>15</sup> [The siege of Vienna was raised by John Sobieski, King of Poland (1629–1696), September 12, 1683. Buda was retaken from the Turks by Charles VII., Duke of Lorraine, Sobieski's ally and former rival for the kingdom of Poland, September 2, 1686. The conquest of the Morea was begun by the Venetians in 1685, and completed in 1699.]

<sup>16</sup> [For Byron's use of the phrase, "Forlorn Hope," as an equivalent of the Turkish Delhis, or Delis, see *Childe Harold*, Canto II. ("The Albanian War-Song"), *Poetical Works*, 1899, ii. 149, note 1.]

<sup>17</sup> ["Brown" is Byron's usual epithet for landscape seen by moonlight. Compare *Childe Harold*, Canto II. stanza xxii. line 6, etc., *Poetical Works*, 1899, ii. 113, note 3.]

<sup>18</sup> ["Stars" are likened to "isles" by Campbell, in *The Pleasures of Hope*, Part II.—

"The seraph eye shall count the starry train,  
Like distant isles embosomed on the main."

And "isles" to "stars" by Byron, in *The Island*, Canto II. stanza xi. lines 14, 15—

"The studded archipelago,  
O'er whose blue bosom rose the starry isles."

For other "star-similes," see *Childe Harold*, Canto III. stanza lxxxviii. line 9, *Poetical Works*, 1899, ii. 270, note 2.]

<sup>19</sup> [Compare Scott's *Marmion*, III. xvi. 4—

"And that strange Palmer's boding say,  
That fell so ominous and drear."]

<sup>20</sup> [Lines 329–331 are inserted in the copy. They are in Byron's handwriting. Compare *Don Juan*, Canto IX. stanza xxvii. line 1, *seq.*—"That's an appropriate simile, *that jackal.*"]

<sup>21</sup> [Compare *The Giaour*, line 566 (*vide ante*, p. 113)—

"For where is he that hath beheld  
The peak of Liakura unveiled?"

The reference is to the almost perpetual "cap" of mist on Parnassus (Mount Likéri or Liakura), which lies some thirty miles to the north-west of Corinth.]

<sup>22</sup> [Compare *The Giaour*, lines 103, *seq.* (*vide ante*, p. 91)—"Clime of the unforgotten brave!" etc.]

<sup>23</sup> The reader need hardly be reminded that there are no perceptible tides in the Mediterranean.

<sup>24</sup> [Compare *The Island*, Canto IV. sect. ii. lines 11, 12—

"A narrow segment of the yellow sand

On one side forms the outline of a strand.”]

<sup>25</sup> [Gifford has drawn his pen through lines 456–478. If, as the editor of *The Works of Lord Byron*, 1832 (x. 100), maintains, “Lord Byron gave Mr. Gifford *carte blanche* to strike out or alter anything at his pleasure in this poem as it was passing through the press,” it is somewhat remarkable that he does not appear to have paid any attention whatever to the august “reader’s” suggestions and strictures. The sheets on which Gifford’s corrections are scrawled are not proof-sheets, but pages torn out of the first edition; and it is probable that they were made after the poem was published, and with a view to the inclusion of an emended edition in the collected works. See letter to Murray, January 2, 1817.]

<sup>26</sup> This spectacle I have seen, such as described, beneath the wall of the Seraglio at Constantinople, in the little cavities worn by the Bosphorus in the rock, a narrow terrace of which projects between the wall and the water. I think the fact is also mentioned in Hobhouse’s *Travels [in Albania]*, 1855, ii. 215]. The bodies were probably those of some refractory Janizaries.

<sup>27</sup> This tuft, or long lock, is left from a superstition that Mahomet will draw them into Paradise by it.

<sup>28</sup> [“Than the mangled corpse in its own blood lying.”—Gifford.]

<sup>29</sup> [Strike out—

“Scorch’d with the death-thirst, and writhing in vain,

Than the perishing dead who are past all pain.”

What is a “perishing dead”?—Gifford.]

<sup>30</sup> [Lines 487, 488 are inserted in the copy in Byron’s handwriting.]

<sup>31</sup> [“O’er the weltering *limbs* of the tombless dead.”—Gifford.]

<sup>32</sup> [Omit this couplet.—Gifford.]

<sup>33</sup> [From this all is beautiful to—“He saw not—he knew not—but nothing is there.”—Gifford. For “pillar’s base,” compare *Childe Harold*, Canto II. stanza x. line 2, *Poetical Works*, 1899, ii. 105.]

<sup>34</sup> I must here acknowledge a close, though unintentional, resemblance in these twelve lines to a passage in an unpublished poem of Mr. Coleridge, called “Christabel.” It was not till after these lines were written that I heard that wild and singularly original and beautiful poem recited; and the MS. of that production I never saw till very recently, by the kindness of Mr. Coleridge himself, who, I hope, is convinced that I have not been a wilful plagiarist. The original idea undoubtedly pertains to Mr. Coleridge, whose poem has been composed above fourteen years. Let me conclude by a hope that he will not longer delay the publication of a production, of which I can only add my mite of approbation to the applause of far more competent judges.

[The lines in *Christabel*, Part the First, 43–52, 57, 58, are these—

“The night is chill; the forest bare;

Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?

There is not wind enough in the air

To move away the ringlet curl

From the lovely lady's cheek—  
There is not wind enough to twirl  
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,  
That dances as often as dance it can,  
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,  
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky."

" . . . What sees she there?  
There she sees a damsel bright,  
Drest in a silken robe of white."

Byron (*vide ante*, p. 443), in a letter to Coleridge, dated October 27, 1815, had already expressly guarded himself against a charge of plagiarism, by explaining that lines 521–532 of stanza xix. were written before he heard Walter Scott repeat *Christabel* in the preceding June. Now, as Byron himself perceived, perhaps for the first time, when he had the MS. of *Christabel* before him, the coincidence in language and style between the two passages is unquestionable; and, as he hoped and expected that Coleridge's fragment, when completed, would issue from the press, he was anxious to avoid even the semblance of pilfering, and went so far as to suggest that the passage should be cancelled. Neither in the private letter nor the published note does Byron attempt to deny or explain away the coincidence, but pleads that his lines were written before he had heard Coleridge's poem recited, and that he had not been guilty of a "wilful plagiarism." There is no difficulty in accepting his statement. Long before the summer of 1815 *Christabel* "had a pretty general circulation in the literary world" (Medwin, *Conversations*, 1824, p. 261), and he may have heard without heeding this and other passages quoted by privileged readers; or, though never a line of *Christabel* had sounded in his ears, he may (as Kölbing points out) have caught its lilt at second hand from the published works of Southey, or of Scott himself.

Compare *Thalaba the Destroyer*, v. 20 (1838, iv. 187)—

"What sound is borne on the wind?

Is it the storm that shakes  
The thousand oaks of the forest?

. . . . .

Is it the river's roar  
Dashed down some rocky descent?" etc.

Or compare *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, I. xii. 5. *seq.* (1812, p. 24)—

"And now she sits in secret bower  
In old Lord David's western tower,  
And listens to a heavy sound,  
That moans the mossy turrets round.  
Is it the roar of Teviot's tide,  
That chafes against the scaur's red side?

Is it the wind that swings the oaks?

Is it the echo from the rocks?" etc.

Certain lines of Coleridge's did, no doubt, "find themselves" in the *Siege of Corinth*, having found their way to the younger poet's ear and fancy before the Lady of the vision was directly and formally introduced to his notice.]

<sup>35</sup> [Contemporary critics fell foul of these lines for various reasons. The *Critical Review* (February, 1816, vol. iii. p. 151) remarks that "the following couplet [i.e. lines 531, 532] reminds us of the *persiflage* of Lewis or the pathos of a vulgar ballad;" while the *Dublin Examiner* (May, 1816, vol. i. p. 19) directs a double charge against the founders of the schism and their proselyte: "If the Cumberland *Lakers* were not well known to be personages of the most pious and saintly temperament, we would really have serious apprehensions lest our noble Poet should come to any harm in consequence of the envy which the two following lines and a great many others through the poems, might excite by their successful rivalship of some of the finest effects of babyism that these Gentlemen can boast."]

<sup>36</sup> ["And its *thrilling* glance, etc."—Gifford.]

<sup>37</sup> [Warton (*Observations en the Fairy Queen*, 1807, ii. 131), commenting on Spenser's famous description of "Una and the Lion" (*Faëry Queene*, Book I. canto iii. stanzas 5, 6, 7), quotes the following passage from *Seven Champions of Christendom*: "Now, Sabra, I have by this sufficiently proved thy true virginity: for it is the nature of a lion, be he never so furious, not to harme the unspotted virgin, but humbly to lay his bristled head upon a maiden's lap."]

Byron, according to Leigh Hunt (*Lord Byron and some of his Contemporaries*, 1828, i. 77), could not "see anything" in Spenser, and was not familiar with the *Fairy Queen*; but he may have had in mind Scott's allusion to Spenser's Una—

"Harpers have sung and poets told  
That he, in fury uncontrolled,  
The shaggy monarch of the wood,  
Before a virgin, fair and good,  
Hath pacified his savage mood."

MARMION, CANTO II. STANZA VII. LINE 3, SEQ.

(See Kölbing's note to *Siege of Corinth*, 1893, pp. 110–112.)]

<sup>38</sup> [Compare Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, act v. sc. 1, line 30—

"You see, her eyes are open,  
Aye, but their sense is shut."

Compare, too, *Christabel*, Conclusion to Part the First (lines 292, 293)—

"With open eyes (ah, woe is me!)  
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully."]

<sup>39</sup> [In the summer of 1803, Byron, then turned fifteen, though offered a bed at Annesley, used at first to return every night to Newstead; alleging that he was afraid of the family

pictures of the Chaworths, which he fancied "had taken a grudge to him on account of the duel, and would come down from their frames to haunt him." Moore thinks this passage may have been suggested by the recollection (*Life*, p. 27). Compare *Lara*, Canto I. stanza xi. line 1, *seq.* (*vide ante*, p. 331, note 1).]

<sup>40</sup> [Compare Southey's *Roderick*, Canto XXI. (ed. 1838, ix. 195)—

". . . and till the grave

Open, the gate of mercy is not closed."]

<sup>41</sup> I have been told that the idea expressed in this and the five following lines has been admired by those whose approbation is valuable. I am glad of it; but it is not original—at least not mine; it may be found much better expressed in pages 182–3–4 of the English version of "Vathek" (I forget the precise page of the French), a work to which I have before referred; and never recur to, or read, without a renewal of gratification.—[The following is the passage: "'Deluded prince!' said the Genius, addressing the Caliph . . . 'This moment is the last, of grace, allowed thee: . . . give back Nouronihar to her father, who still retains a few sparks of life: destroy thy tower, with all its abominations: drive Carathis from thy councils: be just to thy subjects: respect the ministers of the Prophet: compensate for thy impieties by an exemplary life; and, instead of squandering thy days in voluptuous indulgence, lament thy crimes on the sepulchres of thy ancestors. Thou beholdest the clouds that obscure the sun: at the instant he recovers his splendour, if thy heart be not changed, the time of mercy assigned thee will be past for ever.'"

"Vathek, depressed with fear, was on the point of prostrating himself at the feet of the shepherd . . . but, his pride prevailing . . . he said, 'Whoever thou art, withhold thy useless admonitions. . . . If what I have done be so criminal . . . there remains not for me a moment of grace. I have traversed a sea of blood to acquire a power which will make thy equals tremble; deem not that I shall retire when in view of the port; or that I will relinquish her who is dearer to me than either my life or thy mercy. Let the sun appear! let him illumine my career! it matters not where it may end!' On uttering these words . . . Vathek . . . commanded that his horses should be forced back to the road.

"There was no difficulty in obeying these orders; for the attraction had ceased; the sun shone forth in all his glory, and the shepherd vanished with a lamentable scream" (ed. 1786, pp. 183–185).]

<sup>42</sup> [Leave out this couplet.—Gifford.]

<sup>43</sup> [Compare—"While the still morn went out with sandals grey." *Lycidas*, line 187.]

<sup>44</sup> [Strike out—"And the Noon will look on a sultry day."—Gifford.]

<sup>45</sup> The horsetails, fixed upon a lance, a pacha's standard.

["When the vizir appears in public, three *thoughts*, or horse-tails, fastened to a long staff, with a large gold ball at top, is borne before him."—*Moeurs des Ottomans*, par A. L. Castellan (Translated, 1821), iv. 7.

Compare *Childe Harold*, Canto II., "Albanian War-Song," stanza 10, line 2; and *Bride of Abydos*, line 714 (*vide ante*, p. 189).]

<sup>46</sup> [Compare—"Send out moe horses, skirr the country round." *Macbeth*, act v. sc. 3, line 35.]

<sup>47</sup> [Omit—

"While your fellows on foot, in a fiery mass,  
Bloodstain the breach through which they pass."

—Gifford.]

<sup>48</sup> ["And crush the wall they have *shaken* before."—Gifford.]

<sup>49</sup> [Compare *The Giaour*, line 734 (*vide ante*, p. 120)—"At solemn sound of 'Alla Hu!'" And *Don Juan*, Canto VIII. stanza viii.]

<sup>50</sup> ["He who first *downs* with the red cross may crave," etc. What vulgarism is this!—"He who *lowers*,—or *plucks down*," etc.—Gifford.]

<sup>51</sup> [The historian, George Finlay, who met and frequently conversed with Byron at Mesalonghi, with a view to illustrating "Lord Byron's *Siege of Corinth*," subjoins in a note the full text of "the summons sent by the grand vizier, and the answer." (See Finlay's *Greece under Othoman and Venetian Domination*, 1856, p. 266, note 1; and, for the original authority, see Brue's *Journal de la Campagne*, . . . en 1715, Paris, 1871, p. 18.)]

<sup>52</sup>

["Thus against the wall they *bent*,  
Thus the first were backward *sent*."

—Gifford.]

<sup>53</sup> ["Such was the fall of the foremost train."—Gifford.]

<sup>54</sup> [Compare *The Deformed Transformed*, Part I. sc. 2 ("Song of the Soldiers")—

"Our shout shall grow gladder,  
And death only be mute."]

<sup>55</sup> [Compare *Macbeth*, act ii. sc. 2, line 55—

"If he do bleed,  
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal."]

<sup>56</sup> ["There stood a man," etc.—Gifford.]

<sup>57</sup> ["*Lurked*"—a bad word—say "*was hid*."—Gifford.]

<sup>58</sup> ["Outnumbered his hairs," etc.—Gifford.]

<sup>59</sup> ["Sons that were unborn, when *he* dipped."—Gifford.]

<sup>60</sup> [Bravo!—this is better than King Priam's fifty sons.—Gifford.]

<sup>61</sup> In the naval battle at the mouth of the Dardanelles, between the Venetians and Turks.

<sup>62</sup> [There can be no such thing; but the whole of this is poor, and spun out.—Gifford. The solecism, if such it be, was repeated in *Marino Faliero*, act iii. sc. I, line 38.]

<sup>63</sup> [Compare *Childe Harold*, Canto II. stanza xxix. lines 5–8 (*Poetical Works*, 1899, ii. 125)

—

"Dark Sappho! could not Verse immortal save? . . .

If life eternal may await the lyre."]

<sup>64</sup> ["Hark to the Alia Hu!" etc.—Gifford.]

<sup>65</sup> [Gifford has erased lines 839–847.]

<sup>66</sup> [The Spanish “renegado” and the Anglicized “renegade” were favourite terms of reprobation with politicians and others at the beginning of the century. When Southey’s *Wat Tyler* was reprinted in 1817, William Smith, the Member for Norwich, denounced the Laureate as a “renegado,” an attack which Coleridge did his best to parry by contributing articles to the *Courier* on “Apostasy and Renegadoism” (Letter to Murray, March 26, 1817, *Memoir of John Murray*, 1891, i. 306). Byron himself, in *Don Juan* (“Dedication,” stanza i. line 5), hails Southey as “My Epic Renegade!” Compare, too, stanza xiv. of “*Lines addressed to a Noble Lord* (His Lordship will know why), By one of the small Fry of the Lakes” (i.e. Miss Barker, the “Bhow Begum” of Southey’s *Doctor*)—

“And our Ponds shall better please thee,  
Than those now dishonoured seas,  
With their shores and Cyclades  
Stocked with Pachas, Seraskiers,  
Slaves and turbaned Buccaneers;  
Sensual Mussulmans atrocious,  
Renegadoes more ferocious,” etc.]

<sup>67</sup> [“Dealing *death* with every blow.”—Gifford.]

<sup>68</sup> [Compare *Don Juan*, Canto XIII. stanza lxi. lines 1, *seq.*—

“But in a higher niche, alone, but crowned,  
    The Virgin–Mother of the God-born Child,  
With her Son in her blessed arms, looked round . . .  
But even the faintest relics of a shrine  
Of any worship wake some thoughts divine.”]

<sup>69</sup> [“Oh, but it made a glorious show!!!” Gifford erases the line, and adds these marks of exclamation.]

<sup>70</sup> [Compare *Sardanapalus*, act v. sc. 1 (s.f.)—

“*Myr.* Art thou ready?

*Sard.* As the torch in thy grasp.

(*Myrrha fires the pile.*)

*Myr.* ‘Tis fired! I come.”]

<sup>71</sup> [A critic in the *Eclectic Review* (vol. v. N.S., 1816, p. 273), commenting on the “obvious carelessness” of these lines, remarks, “We know not how ‘all that of dead remained’ could *expire* in that wild roar.” To apply the word “expire” to inanimate objects is, no doubt, an archaism, but Byron might have quoted Dryden as an authority, “The ponderous ball expires.”]

<sup>72</sup> [Strike out from “Up to the sky,” etc., to “All blackened there and reeking lay.” Despicable stuff.—Gifford.]

<sup>73</sup> [Lines 1043–1047 are not in the Copy or MS. G., but were included in the text of the

First Edition.]

<sup>74</sup> [Compare *Don Juan*, Canto II. stanza cii. line 1, *seq.*—

“Famine, despair, cold, thirst, and heat, had done

    Their work on them by turns, and thinned them to

Such things a mother had not known her son

    Amidst the skeletons of that gaunt crew.”

Compare, too, *The Island*, Canto I. section ix. lines 13, 14.]

<sup>75</sup> [Omit the next six lines.—Gifford.]

<sup>76</sup> [“I have heard hyænas and jackalls in the ruins of Asia; and bull-frogs in the marshes; besides wolves and angry Mussulmans.”—*Journal*, November 23, 1813, *Letters*, 1898, ii. 340.]

<sup>77</sup> I believe I have taken a poetical licence to transplant the jackal from Asia. In Greece I never saw nor heard these animals; but among the ruins of Ephesus I have heard them by hundreds. They haunt ruins, and follow armies. [Compare *Childe Harold*, Canto IV. stanza cliii. line 6; and *Don Juan*, Canto IX. stanza xxvii. line 2.]

<sup>78</sup> [Leave out this couplet.—Gifford.]

<sup>79</sup> [With lines 1058–1079, compare Southey’s *Roderick* (Canto XVIII., ed. 1838, ix. 169)—

“Far and wide the thundering shout,

Rolling among reduplicating rocks,

Pealed o’er the hills, and up the mountain vales.

The wild ass starting in the forest glade

Ran to the covert; the affrighted wolf

Skulked through the thicket to a closer brake;

The sluggish bear, awakened in his den,

Roused up and answered with a sullen growl,

Low-breathed and long; and at the uproar scared,

The brooding eagle from her nest took wing.”

A sentence in a letter to Moore, dated January 10, 1815 (*Letters*, 1899, iii. 168), “I have tried the rascals (i.e. the public) with my Harrys and Larrys, Pilgrims and Pirates. Nobody but S. . . y has done any thing worth a slice of bookseller’s pudding, and *he* has not luck enough to be found out in doing a good thing,” implies that Byron had read and admired Southey’s *Roderick*—an inference which is curiously confirmed by a memorandum in Murray’s handwriting: “When Southey’s poem, *Don Roderick* (*sic*), was published, Lord Byron sent in the middle of the night to ask John Murray if he had heard any opinion of it, for he thought it one of the finest poems he had ever read.” The resemblance between the two passages, which is pointed out by Professor Kölbing, is too close to be wholly unconscious, but Byron’s expansion of Southey’s lines hardly amounts to a plagiarism.]

