Poems (1816-1823)

Lord Byron

Table of Contents

A very Mournful Ballad[1] on the Siege and Conquest of Alhama.[2]

Which, in the Arabic language, is to the following purport[3]

1.

The Moorish King rides up and down.
Through Granada's royal town:
From Elvira's gates to those
Of Bivarambla on he goes.
Woe is me, Alhama![a4]

2.

Letters to the Monarch tell
How Alhama's city fell:
In the fire the scroll he threw,
And the messenger he slew.
Woe is me, Alhama!

3.

He quits his mule, and mounts his horse,
And through the street directs his course;
Through the street of Zacatin
To the Alhambra spurring in.
Woe is me, Alhama!

4.

When the Alhambra walls he gained,
On the moment he ordained
That the trumpet straight should sound

With the silver clarion round.

Woe is me, Alhama!

5.

And when the hollow drums of war
Beat the loud alarm afar,
That the Moors of town and plain
Might answer to the martial strain.

Woe is me, Alhama!

6.

Then the Moors, by this aware,
That bloody Mars recalled them there,
One by one, and two by two,
To a mighty squadron grew.

Woe is me, Alhama!

7.

Out then spake an aged Moor
In these words the king before,
“Wherefore call on us, oh King?
What may mean this gathering?”

Woe is me, Alhama!

8.

“Friends! ye have, alas! to know
Of a most disastrous blow—
That the Christians, stern and bold,
Have obtained Alhama’s hold.”

Woe is me, Alhama!

9.

Out then spake old Alfaqui,[5]
With his beard so white to see,
“Good King! thou art justly served,
Good King! this thou hast deserved.
Woe is me, Alhama!

10.

“By thee were slain, in evil hour,
The Abencerrage, Granada’s flower;
And strangers were received by thee,
Of Cordova the Chivalry.
Woe is me, Alhama!

11.

“And for this, oh King! is sent
On thee a double chastisement;
Thee and thine, thy crown and realm,
One last wreck shall overwhelm.
Woe is me, Alhama!

12.

“He who holds no laws in awe,
He must perish by the law;
And Granada must be won,
And thyself with her undone.”
Woe is me, Alhama!

13.

Fire flashed from out the old Moor's eyes,
The Monarch's wrath began to rise,
Because he answered, and because
He spake exceeding well of laws.[6]
Woe is me, Alhama!

14.

"There is no law to say such things
As may disgust the ear of kings:"—
Thus, snorting with his choler, said
The Moorish King, and doomed him dead.
Woe is me, Alhama!

15.

Moor Alfaqui! Moor Alfaqui![7]
Though thy beard so hoary be,[b]
The King hath sent to have thee seized,
For Alhama's loss displeased.
Woe is me, Alhama!

16.

And to fix thy head upon
High Alhambra's loftiest stone;
That this for thee should be the law,
And others tremble when they saw.
Woe is me, Alhama!

17.

“Cavalier, and man of worth!
Let these words of mine go forth;
Let the Moorish Monarch know,
That to him I nothing owe.
Woe is me, Alhama!

18.

“But on my soul Alhama weighs,
And on my inmost spirit preys;
And if the King his land hath lost,
Yet others may have lost the most.
Woe is me, Alhama!

19.

“Sires have lost their children, wives
Their lords, and valiant men their lives!
One what best his love might claim
Hath lost, another wealth, or fame.
Woe is me, Alhama!

20.

“I lost a damsel in that hour,
Of all the land the loveliest flower;
Doubloons a hundred I would pay,
And think her ransom cheap that day.”
Woe is me, Alhama!

21.

And as these things the old Moor said,

They severed from the trunk his head;

And to the Alhambra's wall with speed

'Twas carried, as the King decreed.

Woe is me, Alhama!

22.

And men and infants therein weep

Their loss, so heavy and so deep;

Granada's ladies, all she rears

Within her walls, burst into tears.

Woe is me, Alhama!

23.

And from the windows o'er the walls

The sable web of mourning falls;

The King weeps as a woman o'er

His loss, for it is much and sore.

Woe is me, Alhama!

[First Published, Childe Harold, Canto IV., 1818.]

[1] [Byron does not give his authority for the Spanish original of his *Romance Muy Doloroso*. In default of any definite information, it may be surmised that his fancy was caught by some broadside or chap-book which chanced to come into his possession, and that he made his translation without troubling himself about the origin or composition of the ballad. As it stands, the "Romance" is a cento of three or more ballads which are included in the *Guerras Civiles de Granada* of Ginès Perez de Hita, published at Saragossa in 1595 (see ed. "En Alcala de Henares," 1601, pp. 249–252). Stanzas 1–11, "Passeavase el Rey Moro," etc., follow the text which De Hita gives as a translation from the Arabic; stanzas

12–14 are additional, and do not correspond with any of the Spanish originals; stanzas 15–21, with numerous deviations and omissions, follow the text of a second ballad, "Moro Alcayde, Moro Alcayde," described by De Hita as "antiguo Romance," and portions of stanzas 21–23 are imbedded in a ballad entitled "Muerte dada á Los Abencerrajes" (Duran's *Romancero General*, 1851, ii. 89).

The ballad as a whole was not known to students of Spanish literature previous to the publication of Byron's translation (1818), (see *Ancient Ballads from the Civil Wars of Granada*, by Thomas Rodd, 1801, pp. 93, 98; Southey's *Common–Place Book*, iv. 262–266, and his *Chronicle of the Cid*, 1808, pp. 371–374), and it has not been included by H. Duran in his *Romancero General*, 1851, ii. 89–91, or by F. Wolf and C. Hofmann in their *Primavera y Flor de Romances*, 1856, i. 270–278. At the same time, it is most improbable that Byron was his own "Centonista," and it may be assumed that the Spanish text as printed (see *Childe Harold,* Canto IV., 1818, pp. 240–254, and *Poetical Works*, 1891, pp. 566, 567) was in his possession or within his reach. (For a correspondence on the subject, see *Notes and Queries*, Third Series, vol. xii. p. 391, and Fourth Series, vol. i. p. 162.)

A MS. of the Spanish text, sent to England for "copy," is in a foreign handwriting. Two MSS. (A, B) of the translation are in Mr. Murray's possession: A, a rough draft; B, a fair copy. The watermark of A is 1808, of B (dated January 4, 1817) 1800. It is to be noted that the refrain in the Spanish text is *Ay de mi Alhama*, and that the insertion of the comma is a printer's or reader's error.]

[2] [In A.D. 886, during the reign of Muley Abul Hacen, King of Granada, Albania was surprised and occupied by the Christians under Don Rodrigo Ponce de Leon.]

[3] The effect of the original ballad—which existed both in Spanish and Arabic—was such, that it was forbidden to be sung by the Moors, on pain of death, within Granada. ["This ballad was so dolorous in the original Arabic language, that every time it was sung it acted as an incitement to grief and despair, and for this reason it was at length finally prohibited in Granada."—*Historia . . . de las Guerras Civiles*, translated from the Arabic of Abenhamim, by Ginès Perez de Hita, and from the Spanish by Thomas Rodd, 1803, p. 334. According to Ticknor (*Hist. of Spanish Literature*, 1888, iii. 139), the "Arabic origin" of De Hita's work is not at all probable. "He may have obtained Arabic materials for parts of his story."]

[4] [Byron's *Ay de mi, Alhama*, which should be printed *Ay de mi Alhama*, must be rendered "Woe for my Alhama!" "Woe is me, Alhama!" is the equivalent of "*Ay de mi Alhama!*"]

[5] ["Un viejo Alfaqui" is "an old Alfaqui," *i.e.* a doctor of the Mussulman law, not a proper name.]

[6] ["De leyes tambien hablava" should be rendered "He spake 'also' of the laws," not *tan bien*, "so well," or "exceeding well."]

[7] [The Alcaide or "governor" of the original ballad is converted into the Alfaqui of stanza 9. It was the "Alcaide," in whose absence Alhama was taken, and who lost children, wife, honour, and his own head in consequence (*Notes and Queries*, iv. i. 162).]

[a] *Alas—alas—Alhama!*—[MS. M.]

[b] ——*so white to see*.—[MS. M.]

SONETTO DI VITTORELLI.[1]

PER MONACA.

Sonetto composto in nome di un genitore, a cui era motta poco innanzi una figlia appena maritata: e diretto al genitore della sacra sposa.

Di due vaghe donzelle, oneste, accorte
Lieti e miseri padri il ciel ne feo,
Il ciel, die degne di più nobil sorte
L' una e l' altra veggendo, ambe chiedeo.
La mia fu tolta da veloce morte
A le fumanti tede d' Imeneo:
La tua, Francesco, in suggellate porte
Eterna prigioniera or si rendeo.
Ma tu almeno potrai dalla gelosa
Irremeabil soglia, ove s' asconde,
La sua tenera udir voce pietosa.
Io verso un flume d' amarissim' onde,
Corro a quel marmo, in cui la figlia or posa:
Batto, e ribatto, ma nessun risponde.

[*OPERE EDITE E POSTUME* DI J. VITTORELLI, BASSANO, 1841, P. 294.]

[1] [Jacopo Vittorelli (1749–1835) was born at Bassano, in Venetian territory. Under the Napoleonic "kingdom of Italy" he held office as a subordinate in the Ministry of Education at Milan, and was elected a member of the college of "Dotti." At a later period of his life he returned to Bassano, and received an appointment as censor of the press. His poetry,

which is sweet and musical, but lacking in force and substance, recalls and embodies the style and spirit of the dying literature of the eighteenth century. “He lived and died,” says Luigi Carrer, “the poet of Irene and Dori,” unmoved by the hopes and fears, the storms and passions, of national change and development.—See *Manuale della Letteratura Italiana*, by A. d’Ancona and O. Bacci, 1894, iv. 585.]

Translation From Vittorelli.

On A Nun.

Sonnet composed in the name of a father, whose daughter had recently died shortly after her marriage; and addressed to the father of her who had lately taken the veil.

Of two fair virgins, modest, though admired,
Heaven made us happy; and now, wretched sires,
Heaven for a nobler doom their worth desires,
And gazing upon *either, both* required.
Mine, while the torch of Hymen newly fired
Becomes extinguished,—soon—too soon expires;
But thine, within the closing grate retired,
Eternal captive, to her God aspires.
But *thou* at least from out the jealous door,
Which shuts between your never-meeting eyes,
May'st hear her sweet and pious voice once more:
I to the marble, where *my* daughter lies,
Rush,—the swoln flood of bitterness I pour,
And knock, and knock, and knock—but none replies.

[First Published, Childe Harold, Canto IV., 1818.]

On the Bust of Helen by Canova.[1]

In this belovéd marble view
    Above the works and thoughts of Man,
What Nature *could* but *would not* do,
    And Beauty and Canova *can!*
Beyond Imagination's power,
    Beyond the Bard's defeated art,
With Immortality her dower,
    Behold the *Helen* of the heart.

November 23, 1816.

[First Published, Letters And Journals, 1830, Ii. 61.]

[1] ["The Helen of Canova (a bust which is in the house of Madame the Countess d'Albrizzi, whom I know) is without exception, to my mind, the most perfectly beautiful of human conceptions, and far beyond my ideas of human execution,"—Letter to Murray, November 25, 1816. In the works of Antonio Canova, engraved in outline by Henry Moses (London, 1873), the bust of Helen is figured (to face p. 58), and it is stated that it was executed in 1814, and presented to the Countess Albrizzi. (See *Letters*, 1900, iv. 14, 15, note.)]

[Venice. A Fragment.][1]

’Tis midnight—but it is not dark
Within thy spacious place, St. Mark!
The Lights within, the Lamps without,
Shine above the revel rout.
The brazen Steeds are glittering o’er
The holy building’s massy door,
Glittering with their collars of gold,
The goodly work of the days of old—
And the wingéd Lion stern and solemn
Frowns from the height of his hoary column,
Facing the palace in which doth lodge
The ocean-city’s dreaded Doge.
The palace is proud—but near it lies,
Divided by the “Bridge of Sighs,”
The dreary dwelling where the State
Enchains the captives of their hate:
These—they perish or they pine;
But which their doom may none divine:
Many have passed that Arch of pain,
But none retraced their steps again.
It is a princely colonnade!
And wrought around a princely place,
When that vast edifice displayed
Looks with its venerable face
Over the far and subject sea,

Which makes the fearless isles so free!
And ’tis a strange and noble pile,
Pillared into many an aisle:
Every pillar fair to see,
Marble—jasper—and porphyry—
The Church of St. Mark—which stands hard by
With fretted pinnacles on high,
And Cupola and minaret;
More like the mosque of orient lands,
Than the fanes wherein we pray,
And Mary’s blesséd likeness stands.—

Venice, December 6, 1816.

[1] [From an autograph MS. in the possession of Mr. Murray, now for the first time printed.]

So we'll go no more a-roving.[1]

1.

So we'll go no more a-roving
So late into the night,
Though the heart be still as loving,
And the moon be still as bright.

2.

For the sword outwears its sheath,
And the soul wears out the breast,
And the heart must pause to breathe,
And Love itself have rest.

3.

Though the night was made for loving,
And the day returns too soon,
Yet we'll go no more a-roving
By the light of the moon.

Feb. 28, 1817.

[First Published, Letters And Journals, 1830, Ii. 79.]

[1] ["The mumming closed with a masked ball at the Fenice, where I went, as also to most of the ridottos, etc., etc.; and, though I did not dissipate much upon the whole, yet I find 'the sword wearing out the scabbard,' though I have but just turned the corner of twenty-nine."—Letter to Moore, February 28, 1817. The verses form part of the letter. (See *Letters*, 1900, iv. 59, 60.)]

[Lord Byron's Verses on Sam Rogers.][1]

Question.

Nose and Chin that make a knocker,[a]
Wrinkles that would puzzle Cocker;
Mouth that marks the envious Scorner,
With a Scorpion in each corner
Curling up his tail to sting you,[b]
In the place that most may wring you;
Eyes of lead-like hue and gummy,
Carcase stolen from some mummy,
Bowels—(but they were forgotten,
Save the Liver, and that's rotten),
Skin all sallow, flesh all sodden,
Form the Devil would frighten G—d in.
Is't a Corpse stuck up for show,[2]
Galvanized at times to go?
With the Scripture has't connection,[c]
New proof of the Resurrection?
Vampire, Ghost, or Goul (*sic*), what is it?
I would walk ten miles to miss it.

Answer.

Many passengers arrest one,
To demand the same free question.
Shorter's my reply and franker,—

That's the Bard, and Beau, and Banker:
Yet, if you could bring about
Just to turn him inside out,
Satan's self would seem less sooty,
And his present aspect—Beauty.
Mark that (as he masks the bilious)
Air so softly supercilious,
Chastened bow, and mock humility,
Almost sickened to Servility:
Hear his tone (which is to talking
That which creeping is to walking—
Now on all fours, now on tiptoe):
Hear the tales he lends his lip to—
Little hints of heavy scandals—
Every friend by turns he handles:
All that women or that men do
Glides forth in an inuendo (*sic*)—
Clothed in odds and ends of humour,
Herald of each paltry rumour—
From divorces down to dresses,
Woman's frailties, Man's excesses:
All that life presents of evil
Make for him a constant revel.
You're his foe—for that he fears you,
And in absence blasts and sears you:
You're his friend—for that he hates you,
First obliges, and then baits you,

Darting on the opportunity
When to do it with impunity:
You are neither—then he'll flatter,
Till he finds some trait for satire;
Hunts your weak point out, then shows it,
Where it injures, to expose it
In the mode that's most insidious,
Adding every trait that's hideous—
From the bile, whose blackening river
Rushes through his Stygian liver.
Then he thinks himself a lover—[3]
Why? I really can't discover,
In his mind, age, face, or figure;
Viper broth might give him vigour:
Let him keep the cauldron steady,
He the venom has already.
For his faults—he has but *one*;
'Tis but Envy, when all's done:
He but pays the pain he suffers,
Clipping, like a pair of Snuffers,
Light that ought to burn the brighter
For this temporary blighter.
He's the Cancer of his Species,
And will eat himself to pieces,—
Plague personified and Famine,—
Devil, whose delight is damning.[4]
For his merits—don't you know 'em?[d]

Once he wrote a pretty Poem.

1818.

[First Published, Fraser's Magazine, January, 1833, Vol. Vii. Pp. 88–84.]

[1] [Lady Blessington told Crabb Robinson (Diary, 1869, in. 17) that the publication of the *Question and Answer* would "kill Rogers." The MS. is dated 1818, and it is probable that the lines were written in the early spring of that year. Moore or Murray had told Byron that Rogers was in doubt whether to praise or blame him in his poem on "Human Life" now approaching completion; and he had heard, from other sources, that it was Rogers who was the author or retailer of certain scandalous stories which were current in the "whispering-gallery of the world." He had reason to believe that everybody was talking about him, and it was a relief to be able to catch and punish so eminent a scandal-monger. It was in this spirit that he wrote to Murray (February 20, 1818), "What you tell me of Rogers, . . . is like him. He cannot say that I have not been a sincere and warm friend to him, till the black drop of his liver oozed through too palpably to be overlooked. Now if I once catch him at any of his jugglery with me or mine, let him look to it," etc., etc., and in all probability the "poem on Rogers" was then in existence, or was working in his brain. The lines once written, Byron swallowed his venom, and, when Rogers visited Italy in the autumn of 1821, he met him at Bologna, travelled with him across the Apennines to Florence, and invited him "to stay as long as he liked" at Pisa. Thither Rogers came, presumably, in November, 1821, and, if we may trust the *Table Talk* (1856, p. 238), remained at the Palazzo Lanfranchi for several days.

Byron seems to have been more than usually provocative and cross-grained, and, on one occasion (see Medwin, *Angler in Wales*, 1834, i. 26, *sq*.; and *Records of Shelley, etc*., by E. T. Trelawney, 1878, i. 53), when he was playing billiards, and Rogers was in the lobby outside, secretly incited his bull-dog, "Faithful Moretto," to bark and show his teeth; and, when Medwin had convoyed the terror-stricken bard into his presence, greeted him with effusion, but contrived that he should sit down on the very sofa which hid from view the MS. of "Question and Answer." *Longa est injuria, longæ ambages*; but the story rests on the evidence of independent witnesses.

By far the best comment on satire and satirist is to be found in the noble lines in *Italy*, in which Rogers commemorates his last meeting with the "Youth who swam from Sestos to Abydos"—

"If imagined wrongs

Pursued thee, urging thee sometimes to do

Things long regretted, oft, as many know,

None more than I, thy gratitude would build

On slight foundations; and, if in thy life

Not happy, in thy death thou surely wert,

Thy wish accomplished."

Poems by Samuel Rogers, 1852, ii. 119.]

[2] ["'De mortuis nihil nisi bonum!' There is Sam Rogers [No. IV. of the Maclise Caricatures] a mortal likeness—painted to the very death!" A string of jests upon Rogers's corpse-like appearance accompanied the portrait.]

[3] [Among other "bogus" notes (parodies of the notes in Murray's new edition of Byron's *Works* in seventeen volumes), is one signed Sir E. Brydges, which enumerates a string of heiresses, beauties, and blues, whom Rogers had wooed in vain. Among the number are Mrs. Apreece (Lady Davy), Mrs. Coutts, "beat by the Duke of St. Albans," and the Princess Olive of Cumberland. "We have heard," the note concludes, "that he proposed for the Duchess of Cleveland, and was cut out by Beau Fielding, but we think that must have been before his time a little."]

[4] ["If '*the* person' had not by many little dirty sneaking traits provoked it, I should have been silent, though I *had observed* him. Here follows an alteration. Put—

"Devil with such delight in damning

That if at the resurrection

Unto him the free selection

Of his future could be given

'Twould be rather Hell than Heaven.

You have a discretionary power about showing."—Letter to Murray, November 9, 1820, *Letters*, 1901, v. 113.]

[a] ——*would shame a knocker*.—[*Fraser's Magazine*, 1833.]

[b] *Turning its quick tail*——.—[*Fraser's*, etc.]

[c] *With the Scripture in connexion*.—[*Fraser's*, etc.]

[d] ——*would you know 'em?*—[*Fraser's*, etc.]

The Duel.[1]

1.

'Tis fifty years, and yet their fray
To us might seem but yesterday.
Tis fifty years, and three to boot,
Since, hand to hand, and foot to foot,
And heart to heart, and sword to sword,
One of our Ancestors was gored.
I've seen the sword that slew him;[2] he,
The slain, stood in a like degree
To thee, as he, the Slayer, stood
(Oh had it been but other blood!)
In kin and Chieftainship to me.
Thus came the Heritage to thee.

2.

To me the Lands of him who slew
    Came through a line of yore renowned;
For I can boast a race as true
    To Monarchs crowned, and some discrowned,
As ever Britain's Annals knew:
For the first Conqueror gave us Ground,[3]
    And the last Conquered owned the line
    Which was my mother's, and is mine.

3.

I loved thee—I will not say *how*,

Since things like these are best forgot:
Perhaps thou may'st imagine now
Who loved thee, and who loved thee not.
And thou wert wedded to another,[4]
And I at last another wedded:
I am a father, thou a mother,
To Strangers vowed, with strangers bedded.
For land to land, even blood to blood—
Since leagued of yore our fathers were—
Our manors and our birthright stood;
And not unequal had I wooed,
If to have wooed thee I could dare.
But this I never dared—even yet
When naught is left but to forget.
I feel that I could only love:
To sue was never meant for me,
And least of all to sue to thee;
For many a bar, and many a feud,
Though never told, well understood
Rolled like a river wide between—
And then there was the Curse of blood,
Which even my Heart's can not remove.
Alas! how many things have been!
Since we were friends; for I alone
Feel more for thee than can be shown.

How many things! I loved thee—thou

Loved'st me not: another was

The Idol of thy virgin vow,

And I was, what I am, Alas!

And what he is, and what thou art,

And what we were, is like the rest:

We must endure it as a test,

And old Ordeal of the Heart.[5]

Venice, Dec. 29, 1818.

[1] [Addressed to Miss Chaworth, in allusion to a duel fought between two of their ancestors, D[ominus] B[yron] and Mr. C., January 26, 1765.

Byron and Mary Anne Chaworth were fourth cousins, both being fifth in descent from George, Viscount Chaworth, whose daughter Elizabeth was married to William, third Lord Byron (d. 1695), the poet's great-great-grandfather. The duel between their grand-uncles, William, fifth Lord Byron, and William Chaworth, Esq., of Annesley, was fought between eight and nine o'clock in the evening of Saturday, January 26, 1765 (see *The Gazetteer*, Monday, January 28, 1765), at the Star and Garter Tavern, Pall Mall. The coroner's jury brought in a verdict of wilful murder (see for the "Inquisition," and report of trial, *Journals of the House of Lords*, 1765, pp. 49, 126–135), and on the presentation of their testimony to the House of Lords, Byron pleaded for a trial "by God and his peers," whereupon he was arrested and sent to the Tower. The case was tried by the Lords Temporal (the Lords Spiritual asked permission to withdraw), and, after a defence had been read by the prisoner, 119 peers brought in a verdict of "Not guilty of murder, guilty of manslaughter, on my honour." Four peers only returned a verdict of "Not guilty." The result of this verdict was that Lord Byron claimed the benefit of the statute of Edward VI., and was discharged on paying the fees.

The defence, which is given in full (see Journal, etc., for April 17, 1765), is able and convincing. Whilst maintaining an air of chivalry and candour, the accused contrived to throw the onus of criminality on his antagonist. It was Mr. Chaworth who began the quarrel, by sneering at his cousin's absurd and disastrous leniency towards poachers. It was Chaworth who insisted on an interview, not on the stairs, but in a private room, who locked the door, and whose demeanour made a challenge "to draw" inevitable. The room was dimly lit, and when the table was pushed back, the space for the combatants was but

twelve feet by five. After two thrusts had been parried, and Lord Byron's shirt had been torn, he shifted a little to the right, to take advantage of such light as there was, came to close quarters with his adversary and, "as he supposed, gave the unlucky wound which he would ever reflect upon with the utmost regret."

If there was any truth in his plea, the "wicked Lord Byron" has been misjudged, and, at least in the matter of the duel, was not so black as he has been painted. For Byron's defence of his grand-uncle, see letter to M. J. J. Coulmann, Genoa, July 12, 1823, *Life*, by Karl Elze, 1872, pp. 443–446.]

[2] [In the coroner's "Inquisition," the sword is described as being "made of iron and steel, of the value of five shillings." Byron says that "so far from feeling any remorse for having killed Mr. Chaworth, who was a fire-eater (*spadassin*), . . . he always kept the sword . . . in his bed-chamber, where it still was when he died."—*Ibid.*, p. 445.]

[3] [Ralph de Burun held Horestan Castle and other manors from the Conqueror. Byron's mother was descended from James I. of Scotland.]

[4] [See *The Dream*, line 127, *et passim*, *vide ante*, p. 31, *et sq.*]

[5] [From an autograph MS. in the possession of Mr. Murray, now for the first time printed.]

Stanzas to the Po.[1]

1.

River, that rollest by the ancient walls,
Where dwells the Lady of my love, when she
Walks by thy brink, and there perchance recalls
A faint and fleeting memory of me:

2.

What if thy deep and ample stream should be
A mirror of my heart, where she may read
The thousand thoughts I now betray to thee,
Wild as thy wave, and headlong as thy speed!

3.

What do I say—a mirror of my heart?
Are not thy waters sweeping, dark, and strong?
Such as my feelings were and are, thou art;
And such as thou art were my passions long.

4.

Time may have somewhat tamed them,—not for ever;
Thou overflow'st thy banks, and not for aye
Thy bosom overboils, congenial river!
Thy floods subside, and mine have sunk away:

5.

But left long wrecks behind, and now again,[b]
Borne in our old unchanged career, we move:

Thou tendest wildly onwards to the main,
And I—to loving *one* I should not love.

6.

The current I behold will sweep beneath
Her native walls, and murmur at her feet;
Her eyes will look on thee, when she shall breathe
The twilight air, unharmed by summer's heat.

7.

She will look on thee,—I have looked on thee,
Full of that thought: and, from that moment, ne'er
Thy waters could I dream of, name, or see,
Without the inseparable sigh for her!

8.

Her bright eyes will be imaged in thy stream,—
Yes! they will meet the wave I gaze on now:
Mine cannot witness, even in a dream,
That happy wave repass me in its flow!

9.

The wave that bears my tears returns no more:
Will she return by whom that wave shall sweep?—
Both tread thy banks, both wander on thy shore,
I by thy source, she by the dark-blue deep.[c]

10.

But that which keepeth us apart is not
Distance, nor depth of wave, nor space of earth,

But the distraction of a various lot,

As various as the climates of our birth.

11.

A stranger loves the Lady of the land,[d]

Born far beyond the mountains, but his blood

Is all meridian, as if never fanned

By the black wind that chills the polar flood.[e]

12.

My blood is all meridian; were it not,

I had not left my clime, nor should I be,[f]

In spite of tortures, ne'er to be forgot,

A slave again of love,—at least of thee.

13.

'Tis vain to struggle—let me perish young—

Live as I lived, and love as I have loved;

To dust if I return, from dust I sprung,

And then, at least, my heart can ne'er be moved.

June, 1819.

[First Published, Conversations Of Lord Byron, 1824, 4º, Pp. 24–26.]

[1] [There has been some misunderstanding with regard to this poem. According to the statement of the Countess Guiccioli (see *Works of Lord Byron*, ed. 1832, xii. 14), "Stanzas to the Po" were composed about the middle of April, 1819, "while Lord Byron was actually sailing on the Po," *en route* from Venice to Ravenna. Medwin, who was the first to publish

the lines (*Conversations, etc.*, 1824, 410, pp. 24–26), says that they were written when Byron was about to "quit Venice to join" the Countess at Ravenna, and, in a footnote, explains that the river referred to is the Po. Now, if the Countess and Medwin (and Moore, who follows Medwin, *Life*, p. 396) are right, and the river is the Po, the "ancient walls" Ravenna, and the "Lady of the land" the Guiccioli, the stanzas may have been written in June (not April), 1819, possibly at Ferrara, and the river must be the Po di Primaro. Even so, the first line of the first stanza and the third and fourth lines of the ninth stanza require explanation. The Po does not "roll by the ancient walls" of Ravenna; and how could Byron be at one and the same time "by the source" (stanza 9, line 4), and sailing on the river, or on some canalized tributary or effluent? Be the explanation what it may—and it is possible that the lines were *not* originally designed for the Countess, but for another "Lady of the land" (see letter to Murray, May 18, 1819)—it may be surmised that "the lines written last year on crossing the Po," the "mere verses of society," which were given to Kinnaird (see letter to Murray, May 8, 1820, and *Conversations of Lord Byron with Lady Blessington*, 1834, p. 143), were not the sombre though passionate elegy, "River, that rollest," but the bitter and somewhat cynical rhymes, "Could Love for ever, Run like a river" (*vide post*, p. 549).]

[b] *But left long wrecks behind them, and again*.
Borne on our old unchanged career, we move;
Thou tendest wildly onward to the main.—[Medwin.]

[c] *I near thy source*——.—[Medwin.]

[d] *A stranger loves a lady*——.—[Medwin.]

[e] *By the bleak wind*——.—[Medwin.]

[f] *I had not left my clime;—I shall not be*.—[Medwin.]

Sonnet on the Nuptials of the Marquis Antonio Cavalli with the Countess Clelia Rasponi of Ravenna.[1]

A noble Lady of the Italian shore
    Lovely and young, herself a happy bride,
    Commands a verse, and will not be denied,
From me a wandering Englishman; I tore
One sonnet, but invoke the muse once more
    To hail these gentle hearts which Love has tied,
    In Youth, Birth, Beauty, genially allied
And blest with Virtue's soul, and Fortune's store.
A sweeter language, and a luckier bard
    Were worthier of your hopes, Auspicious Pair!
And of the sanctity of Hymen's shrine,
    But,—since I cannot but obey the Fair,
To render your new state your true reward,
    May your Fate be like *Hers*, and unlike *mine*.

Ravenna, July 31, 1819.

[From an autograph MS. in the possession of the Lady Dorchester, now for the first time printed.]

[1] I wrote this sonnet (after tearing the first) on being repeatedly urged to do so by the Countess G. [It was at the house of the Marquis Cavalli, uncle to the countess, that Byron appeared in the part of a fully-recognized "Cicisbeo."—See letter to Hoppner, December 31, 1819, *Letters, 1900*, iv. 393.]

Sonnet to the Prince Regent.[A]

On The Repeal Of Lord Edward Fitzgerald's Forfeiture.

To be the father of the fatherless,
To stretch the hand from the throne's height, and raise
His offspring, who expired in other days
To make thy Sire's sway by a kingdom less,—[b]
This is to be a monarch, and repress
Envy into unutterable praise.
Dismiss thy guard, and trust thee to such traits,
For who would lift a hand, except to bless?[c]
Were it not easy, Sir, and is't not sweet
To make thyself belovéd? and to be
Omnipotent by Mercy's means? for thus
Thy Sovereignty would grow but more complete,
A despot thou, and yet thy people free,[d]
And by the heart—not hand—enslaving us.

Bologna, August 12, 1819.[1]

[First Published, Letters And Journals, Ii. 234, 235.]

[1] ["So the prince has been repealing Lord Fitzgerald's forfeiture? *Ecco un' Sonetto!* There, you dogs! there's a Sonnet for you: you won't have such as that in a hurry from Mr. Fitzgerald. You may publish it with my name, an ye wool. He deserves all praise, bad and

good; it was a very noble piece of principality.”—Letter to Murray, August 12, 1819.

For [William Thomas] Fitgerald, see *Poetical Works*, 1898, i. 297, note 3; for Lord Edward Fitzgerald (1763–1798), see *Letters*, 1900, iv. 345, note 1. The royal assent was given to a bill for “restoring Edward Fox Fitzgerald and his sisters Pamela and Lucy to their blood,” July 13, 1819. The sonnet was addressed to George IV. when Prince Regent. The title, “To George the Fourth,” affixed in 1831, is incorrect.]

[a] *To the Prince Regent on the repeal of the bill of attainder against Lord E. Fitzgerald, June, 1819.*

[b] *To leave*——.—[MS. M.]

[c] *Who* NOW *would lift a hand*——.—[MS. M.]

[d] ——*becomes but more complete*
Thyself a despot——.—[MS. M.]

STANZAS.[1]

1.

Could Love for ever
Run like a river,
And Time's endeavour
Be tried in vain—
No other pleasure
With this could measure;
And like a treasure[a]
We'd hug the chain.
But since our sighing
Ends not in dying,
And, formed for flying,
Love plumes his wing;
Then for this reason
Let's love a season;
But let that season be only Spring.

2.

When lovers parted
Feel broken-hearted,
And, all hopes thwarted,
Expect to die;
A few years older,
Ah! how much colder
They might behold her

For whom they sigh!
When linked together,
In every weather,[b]
They pluck Love's feather
From out his wing—
He'll stay for ever,[c]
But sadly shiver
Without his plumage, when past the Spring.[d]

3.

Like Chiefs of Faction,
His life is action—
A formal paction
That curbs his reign,
Obscures his glory,
Despot no more, he
Such territory
Quits with disdain.
Still, still advancing,
With banners glancing,
His power enhancing,
He must move on—
Repose but cloys him,
Retreat destroys him,
Love brooks not a degraded throne.

4.

Wait not, fond lover!

Till years are over,
And then recover
As from a dream.
While each bewailing
The other's failing.
With wrath and railing,
All hideous seem—
While first decreasing,
Yet not quite ceasing,
Wait not till teasing,
All passion blight:
If once diminished
Love's reign is finished—
Then part in friendship,—and bid good-night.[e]

5.

So shall Affection
To recollection
The dear connection
Bring back with joy:
You had not waited[f]
Till, tired or hated,
Your passions sated
Began to cloy.
Your last embraces
Leave no cold traces—
The same fond faces

As through the past:

And eyes, the mirrors

Of your sweet errors,

Reflect but rapture—not least though last.

6.

True, separations[g]

Ask more than patience;

What desperations

From such have risen!

But yet remaining,

What is't but chaining

Hearts which, once waning,

Beat 'gainst their prison?

Time can but cloy love,

And use destroy love:

The wingéd boy, Love,

Is but for boys—

You'll find it torture

Though sharper, shorter,

To wean, and not wear out your joys.

December 1, 1819.

[First Published, New Monthly Magazine, 1832, Vol. Xxxv. Pp. 310–312.]

[1] ["A friend of Lord Byron's, who was with him at Ravenna when he wrote these stanzas, says, They were composed, like many others, with no view of publication, but merely to relieve himself in a moment of suffering. He had been painfully excited by some circumstances which appeared to make it necessary that he should immediately quit Italy; and in the day and the hour that he wrote the song was labouring under an access of fever" (*Works*, 1832, xii. 317, note 1). Here, too, there is some confusion of dates and places. Byron was at Venice, not at Ravenna, December 1, 1819, when these lines were composed. They were sent, as Lady Blessington testifies, to Kinnaird, and are probably identical with the "mere verses of society," mentioned in the letter to Murray of May 8, 1820. The last stanza reflects the mood of a letter to the Countess Guiccioli, dated November 25 (1819), "I go to save you, and leave a country insupportable to me without you" (*Letters*, 1900, iv. 379, note 2).]

[a] *And as a treasure*.—[MS. Guiccioli.]

[b]

Through every weather

We pluck.—[MS. G.]

[c]

He'll sadly shiver

And droop for ever,

Shorn of the plumage which sped his spring.—[MS. G.]

[d] ——*that sped his Spring*.—[MS. G.]

[e]

His reign is finished

One last embrace, then, and bid good-night.—[MS. G.]

[f]

You have not waited

Till tired and hated

All passions sated.—[MS. G.]

[g] *True separations*.—[MS. G.]

Ode to a Lady whose Lover was Killed by a Ball, Which at the same time shivered a portrait next his heart.

On peut trouver des femmes qui n'ont jamais eu de galanterie, mais il est rare d'en trouver qui n'en aient jamais eu qu'une.—*[*Réflexions . . . *du Duc de la Rochefoucauld, No. lxxiii.]*

1.

Lady! in whose heroic port
And Beauty, Victor even of Time,
And haughty lineaments, appear
Much that is awful, more that's dear—
Wherever human hearts resort
There must have been for thee a Court,
And Thou by acclamation Queen,
Where never Sovereign yet had been.
That eye so soft, and yet severe,
Perchance might look on Love as Crime;
And yet—regarding thee more near—
The traces of an unshed tear
Compressed back to the heart,
And mellowed Sadness in thine air,
Which shows that Love hath once been there,
To those who watch thee will disclose
More than ten thousand tomes of woes
Wrung from the vain Romancer's art.
With thee how proudly Love hath dwelt!
His full Divinity was felt,

Maddening the heart he could not melt,
Till Guilt became Sublime;
But never yet did Beauty's Zone
For him surround a lovelier throne,
Than in that bosom once his own:
And he the Sun and Thou the Clime
Together must have made a Heaven
For which the Future would be given.

2.

And thou hast loved—Oh! not in vain!
And not as common Mortals love.
The Fruit of Fire is Ashes,
The Ocean's tempest dashes
Wrecks and the dead upon the rocky shore:
True Passion must the all-searching changes prove,
The Agony of Pleasure and of Pain,
Till Nothing but the Bitterness remain;
And the Heart's Spectre flitting through the brain
Scoffs at the Exorcism which would remove.

3.

And where is He thou lovedst? in the tomb,
Where should the happy Lover be!
For him could Time unfold a brighter doom,
Or offer aught like thee?
He in the thickest battle died,
Where Death is Pride;

And *Thou* his widow—not his bride,
Wer't not more free—
Here where all love, till Love is made
A bondage or a trade,
Here—thou so redolent of Beauty,
In whom Caprice had seemed a duty,
Thou, who could'st trample and despise
The holiest chain of human ties
For him, the dear One in thine eyes,
Broke it no more.
Thy heart was withered to it's Core,
It's hopes, it's fears, it's feelings o'er:
Thy Blood grew Ice when *his* was shed,
And Thou the Vestal of the Dead.

4.

Thy Lover died, as All
Who truly love should die;
For such are worthy in the fight to fall
Triumphantly.
No Cuirass o'er that glowing heart
The deadly bullet turned apart:
Love had bestowed a richer Mail,
Like Thetis on her Son;
But hers at last was vain, and thine could fail—
The hero's and the lover's race was run.
Thy worshipped portrait, thy sweet face,

Without that bosom kept it's place

As Thou *within*.

Oh! enviously destined Ball!

Shivering thine imaged charms and all

Those Charms would win:

Together pierced, the fatal Stroke hath gored

Votary and Shrine, the adoring and the adored.

That Heart's last throb was thine, that blood

Baptized thine Image in it's flood,

And gushing from the fount of Faith

O'erflowed with Passion even in Death,

Constant to thee as in it's hour

Of rapture in the secret bower.

Thou too hast kept thy plight full well,

As many a baffled Heart can tell.

[From an autograph MS. in the possession of Mr. Murray, now for the first time printed.]

THE IRISH AVATAR.[A1]

"And Ireland, like a bastinadoed elephant, kneeling to receive the paltry rider."—
[*Life of Curran*, ii. 336.]

1.

Ere the daughter of Brunswick is cold in her grave,[2]
And her ashes still float to their home o'er the tide,
Lo! George the triumphant speeds over the wave,
To the long-cherished Isle which he loved like his—
bride.

2.

True, the great of her bright and brief Era are gone,
The rain-bow-like Epoch where Freedom could
pause
For the few little years, out of centuries won,
Which betrayed not, or crushed not, or wept not her
cause.

3.

True, the chains of the Catholic clank o'er his rags,
The Castle still stands, and the Senate's no more,
And the Famine which dwelt on her freedomless crags
Is extending its steps to her desolate shore.

4.

To her desolate shore—where the emigrant stands
For a moment to gaze ere he flies from his hearth;
Tears fall on his chain, though it drops from his hands,

For the dungeon he quits is the place of his birth.

5.

But he comes! the Messiah of Royalty comes!
Like a goodly Leviathan rolled from the waves;
Then receive him as best such an advent becomes,[b]
With a legion of cooks,[3] and an army of slaves!

6.

He comes in the promise and bloom of threescore,
To perform in the pageant the Sovereign's part—[c]
But long live the Shamrock, which shadows him o'er!
Could the Green in his *hat* be transferred to his *heart!*

7.

Could that long-withered spot but be verdant again,
And a new spring of noble affections arise—
Then might Freedom forgive thee this dance in thy chain,
And this shout of thy slavery which saddens the skies.

8.

Is it madness or meanness which clings to thee now?
Were he God—as he is but the commonest clay,
With scarce fewer wrinkles than sins on his brow—
Such servile devotion might shame him away.

9.

Aye, roar in his train![4] let thine orators lash

Their fanciful spirits to pamper his pride—
Not thus did thy Grattan indignantly flash
His soul o'er the freedom implored and denied.

10.

Ever glorious Grattan! the best of the good!
So simple in heart, so sublime in the rest!
With all which Demosthenes wanted endued,
And his rival, or victor, in all he possessed.

11.

Ere Tully arose in the zenith of Rome,
Though unequalled, preceded, the task was begun—
But Grattan sprung up like a god from the tomb
Of ages, the first, last, the saviour, the *one!*[5]

12.

With the skill of an Orpheus to soften the brute;
With the fire of Prometheus to kindle mankind;
Even Tyranny, listening, sate melted or mute,
And Corruption shrunk scorched from the glance of his mind.

13.

But back to our theme! Back to despots and slaves![d]
Feasts furnished by Famine! rejoicings by Pain!
True Freedom but *welcomes*, while Slavery still *raves*,
When a week's Saturnalia hath loosened her chain.

14.

Let the poor squalid splendour thy wreck can afford,
(As the bankrupt's profusion his ruin would hide)
Gild over the palace, Lo! Erin, thy Lord!
Kiss his foot with thy blessing—his blessings denied![e]

15.

Or *if* freedom past hope be extorted at last,[f]
If the idol of brass find his feet are of clay,
Must what terror or policy wring forth be classed
With what monarchs ne'er give, but as wolves yield their prey?

16.

Each brute hath its nature; a King's is to *reign*,—
To *reign!* in that word see, ye ages, comprised
The cause of the curses all annals contain,
From Cæsar the dreaded to George the despised!

17.

Wear, Fingal, thy trapping![6] O'Connell, proclaim[g]
His accomplishments! *His!!!* and thy country convince
Half an age's contempt was an error of fame,
And that "Hal is the rascaliest, sweetest *young* prince!"[h]

18.

Will thy yard of blue riband, poor Fingal, recall
The fetters from millions of Catholic limbs?
Or, has it not bound thee the fastest of all

The slaves, who now hail their betrayer with hymns?

19.

Aye! “Build him a dwelling!” let each give his mite![7]
Till, like Babel, the new royal dome hath arisen![i]
Let thy beggars and helots their pittance unite—
And a palace bestow for a poor-house and prison!

20.

Spread—spread for Vitellius, the royal repast,
Till the gluttonous despot be stuffed to the gorge!
And the roar of his drunkards proclaim him at last
The Fourth of the fools and oppressors called “George!”

21.

Let the tables be loaded with feasts till they groan!
Till they *groan* like thy people, through ages of woe!
Let the wine flow around the old Bacchanal’s throne,
Like their blood which has flowed, and which yet has to flow.

22.

But let not *his* name be thine idol alone—
On his right hand behold a Sejanus appears!
Thine own Castlereagh! let him still be thine own!
A wretch never named but with curses and jeers!

23.

Till now, when the Isle which should blush for his birth,

Deep, deep as the gore which he shed on her soil,
Seems proud of the reptile which crawled from her earth,
And for murder repays him with shouts and a smile.[8]

24.

Without one single ray of her genius,—without
The fancy, the manhood, the fire of her race—
The miscreant who well might plunge Erin in doubt[j]
If *she* ever gave birth to a being so base.

25.

If she did—let her long-boasted proverb be hushed,
Which proclaims that from Erin no reptile can spring
—
See the cold-blooded Serpent, with venom full flushed,
Still warming its folds in the breast of a King![k]

26.

Shout, drink, feast, and flatter! Oh! Erin, how low
Wert thou sunk by misfortune and tyranny, till
Thy welcome of tyrants hath plunged thee below
The depth of thy deep in a deeper gulf still.

27.

My voice, though but humble, was raised for thy right;[9]
My vote, as a freeman's, still voted thee free;
This hand, though but feeble, would arm in thy fight,[l]
And this heart, though outworn, had a throb still for
thee!

28.

Yes, I loved thee and thine, though thou art not my
land;[m]

I have known noble hearts and great souls in thy
sons,

And I wept with the world, o'er the patriot band

Who are gone, but I weep them no longer as once.

29.

For happy are they now reposing afar,—

Thy Grattan, thy Curran, thy Sheridan,[10] all

Who, for years, were the chiefs in the eloquent war,

And redeemed, if they have not retarded, thy fall.

30.

Yes, happy are they in their cold English graves!

Their shades cannot start to thy shouts of today—

Nor the steps of enslavers and chain-kissing slaves[n]

Be stamped in the turf o'er their fetterless clay.

31.

Till now I had envied thy sons and their shore,

Though their virtues were hunted, their liberties
fled;[p]

There was something so warm and sublime in the core

Of an Irishman's heart, that I envy—thy *dead*.[q]

32.

Or, if aught in my bosom can quench for an hour

My contempt for a nation so servile, though sore,

Which though trod like the worm will not turn upon

power,

'Tis the glory of Grattan, and genius of Moore![r11]

Ravenna September 16, 1821.

[First Published, Conversations Of Lord Byron, 1824, Pp. 331–338.]

[1] [A few days before Byron enclosed these lines in a letter to Moore (September 17, 1821) he had written to Murray (September 12): "If ever I *do* return to England . . . I will write a poem to which *English Bards, etc.*, shall be New Milk, in comparison. Your present literary world of mountebanks stands in need of such an Avatar." Hence the somewhat ambiguous title. The word "Avatar" is not only applied ironically to George IV. as the "Messiah of Royalty," but metaphorically to the poem, which would descend in the "Capacity of Preserver" (see Sir W. Jones, *Asiatic Research*, i. 234).

The "fury" which sent Byron into this "lawless conscription of rhythmus," was inspired partly by an ungenerous attack on Moore, which appeared in the pages of *John Bull* ("Thomas Moore is not likely to fall in the way of knighthood . . . being public defaulter in his office to a large amount. . . . [August 5]. It is true that we cannot from principle esteem the writer of the *Twopenny Postbag*. . . . It is equally true that we shrink from the profligacy," etc., August 12, 1821); and, partly, by the servility of the Irish, who had welcomed George IV. with an outburst of enthusiastic loyalty, when he entered Dublin in triumph within ten days of the death of Queen Caroline. The *Morning Chronicle*, August 8-August 18, 1821, prints effusive leading articles, edged with black borders, on the Queen's illness, death, funeral procession, etc., over against a column (in small type) headed "The King in Dublin." Byron's satire is a running comment on the pages of the *Morning Chronicle*. Moore was in Paris at the time, being, as *John Bull* said, "obliged to live out of England," and Byron gave him directions that twenty copies of the *Irish Avatar* "should be carefully and privately printed off." Medwin says that Byron gave him "a printed copy," but his version (see *Conversations*, 1824, pp. 332–338), doubtless for prudential reasons, omits twelve of the more libellous stanzas. The poem as a whole was not published in England till 1831, when "George the despised" was gone to his account. According to Crabb Robinson (*Diary*, 1869, ii. 437), Goethe said that "Byron's verses on George IV. (*Query? The Irish Avatar*) were the sublime of hatred."]

[2] [The Queen died on the night (10.20 p.m.) of Tuesday, August 7. The King entered Dublin in state Friday, August 17. The vessel bearing the Queen's remains sailed from Harwich on the morning of Saturday, August 18, 1821.]

[3] ["Seven covered waggons arrived at the Castle (August 3). They were laden with plate. . . . Upwards of forty men cooks will be employed."—*Morning Chronicle*, August 8.]

[4] ["Never did I witness such enthusiasm. . . . Cheer followed cheer—and shout followed

shout . . . accompanied by exclamation of 'God bless King George IV.!' 'Welcome, welcome, ten thousand times to these shores!'"—*Morning Chronicle*, August 16.]

[5] ["After the stanza on Grattan, . . . will it please you to cause insert the following Addenda, which I dreamed of during today's Siesta."—Letter to Moore, September 20, 1821.]

[6] ["The Earl of Fingall (Arthur James Plunkett, K.P., eighth earl, d. 1836), the leading Catholic nobleman, is to be created a Knight of St. Patrick."—*Morning Chronicle*, August 18.]

[7] [There was talk of a testimonial being presented to the King. O'Connell suggested that if possible it should take the form of "a palace, to which not only the rank around him could contribute, but to the erection of which every peasant could from his cottage contribute his humble mite."—*Morning Chronicle*, August 18.]

[8] ["The Marquis of Londonderry was cheered in the Castle-yard." "He was," says the correspondent of the *Morning Chronicle*, "the instrument of Ireland's degradation—he broke down her spirit, and prostrated, I fear, for ever her independence. To see the author of this measure cheered near the very spot," etc.]

[9] [Byron spoke and voted in favour of the Earl of Donoughmore's motion for a Committee on the Roman Catholic claims, April 21, 1812. (See "Parliamentary Speeches," Appendix II., *Letters*, 1898, ii. 431–443.)]

[10] [For Grattan and Curran, see letter to Moore, October 2, 1813, *Letters*, 1898, ii. 271, note 1; for Sheridan, see "Introduction to *Monody*," etc., *ante*, pp. 69, 70.]

[11] ["Signed W. L. B——, M.A., and written with a view to a Bishoprick."—*Letters and Journals*, 1830, ii. 527, note.

Endorsed, "MS. Lord Byron. The King's visit to Ireland; a very seditious and horrible libel, which never was intended to be published, and which Lord B. called, himself, silly, being written in a moment of ill nature.—C. B."]

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[a] *The enclosed lines, as you will directly perceive, are written by the Rev. W. L. Bowles. Of course it is for him to deny them, if they are not*.—[*Letter to Moore, September* 17, 1821, *Letters*, 1901, v. 364.]

[b] *——such a hero becomes*.—[MS. M.]

[c] *To enact in the pageant*——.-[MS. M.]

[d] *Aye! back to our theme*——.—[Medwin]

[e] *Kiss his foot, with thy blessing, for blessings denied!*—[Medwin.]

[f] *Or if freedom*——.—[Medwin.]

[g] *Wear Fingal thy ribbon*——.—[MS. M.]

[h] *And the King is no scoundrel—whatever the Prince*.—[MS. M.]

[i] *Till proudly the new*——.—[MS. M.]

[j] *——might make Humanity doubt*.—[MS. M.]

[k] *——in the heart of a king*.—[Medwin. MS. M. erased.]

[l] *My arm, though but feeble*——.—[Medwin.]

[m] ——*though thou wert not my land*.—[Medwin.]

[n] *Nor the steps of enslavers, and slave-kissing slaves*
Be damp'd in the turf——.—[Medwin.]

[p] *Though their virtues are blunted*——.—[Medwin.]

[q] ——*that I envy their dead*.—[Medwin.]

[r] *They're the heart—the free spirit—the genius of Moore*.—[MS. M.]

Stanzas Written on the Road between Florence and Pisa.[1]

1.

Oh, talk not to me of a name great in story—
The days of our Youth are the days of our glory;
And the myrtle and ivy of sweet two-and-twenty
Are worth all your laurels, though ever so plenty.[2]

2.

What are garlands and crowns to the brow that is
wrinkled?
Tis but as a dead flower with May-dew besprinkled:
Then away with all such from the head that is hoary,
What care I for the wreaths that can *only* give glory?

3.

Oh Fame!—if I e'er took delight in thy praises,
'Twas less for the sake of thy high-sounding phrases,
Than to see the bright eyes of the dear One discover,
She thought that I was not unworthy to love her.

4.

There chiefly I sought thee, *there* only I found thee;
Her Glance was the best of the rays that surround thee,
When it sparkled o'er aught that was bright in my story,
I knew it was Love, and I felt it was Glory.

November 6, 1821.

First Published, Letters And Journals Of Lord Byron, 1830, Ii. 366, Note.]

[1] ["I composed these stanzas (except the fourth, added now) a few days ago, on the road from Florence to Pisa."—Pisa, 6th November, 1821, *Detached Thoughts*, No. 118, *Letters*, 1901, v. 466.]

[2] ["I told Byron that his poetical sentiments of the attractions of matured beauty had, at the moment, suggested four lines to me; which he begged me to repeat, and he laughed not a little when I recited the following lines to him:—

"Oh! talk not to me of the charms of Youth's dimples,

There's surely more sentiment center'd in wrinkles.

They're the triumphs of Time that mark Beauty's decay,

Telling tales of years past, and the few left to stay."

Conversations of Lord Byron, 1834, pp. 255, 256.]

Stanzas to a Hindoo Air.[1]

1.

Oh! my lonely—lonely—lonely—Pillow!
Where is my lover? where is my lover?
Is it his bark which my dreary dreams discover?
Far—far away! and alone along the billow?

2.

Oh! my lonely—lonely—lonely—Pillow!
Why must my head ache where his gentle brow lay?
How the long night flags lovelessly and slowly,
And my head droops over thee like the willow!

3.

Oh! thou, my sad and solitary Pillow!
Send me kind dreams to keep my heart from breaking,
In return for the tears I shed upon thee waking;
Let me not die till he comes back o'er the billow.

4.

Then if thou wilt—no more my *lonely* Pillow,
In one embrace let these arms again enfold him,
And then expire of the joy—but to behold him!
Oh! my lone bosom!—oh! my lonely Pillow!

[First Published, Works Of Lord Byron, 1832, Xiv. 357.]

[1] [These verses were written by Lord Byron a little before he left Italy for Greece. They were meant to suit the Hindostanee air, "Alia Malla Punca," which the Countess Guiccioli was fond of singing.—Editor's note, *Works, etc.*, xiv. 357, Pisa, September, 1821.]

To——[1]

1.

But once I dared to lift my eyes—
To lift my eyes to thee;
And since that day, beneath the skies,
No other sight they see.

2.

In vain sleep shuts them in the night—
The night grows day to me;
Presenting idly to my sight
What still a dream must be.

3.

A fatal dream—for many a bar
Divides thy fate from mine;
And still my passions wake and war,
But peace be still with thine.

[First Published, New Monthly Magazine, 1833, Vol. 37, P. 308.]

[1] [Probably "To Lady Blessington," who includes them in her *Conversations of Lord Byron*.]

To The Countess Of Blessington.

1.

You have asked for a verse:—the request
In a rhymer 'twere strange to deny;
But my Hippocrene was but my breast,
And my feelings (its fountain) are dry.

2.

Were I now as I was, I had sung
What Lawrence has painted so well;[1]
But the strain would expire on my tongue,
And the theme is too soft for my shell.

3.

I am ashes where once I was fire,
And the bard in my bosom is dead;
What I loved I now merely admire,
And my heart is as grey as my head.

4.

My Life is not dated by years—
There are *moments* which act as a plough,
And there is not a furrow appears
But is deep in my soul as my brow.

5.

Let the young and the brilliant aspire
To sing what I gaze on in vain;

For Sorrow has torn from my lyre

The string which was worthy the strain.

B.

[First Published, Letters And Journals, 1830, Ii. 635, 636.]

[1] [For reproduction of Lawrence's portrait of Lady Blessington, see "List of Illustrations," *Letters*, 1901, v. [xv.].]

ARISTOMENES.[1]

CANTO FIRST.

1.

The Gods of old are silent on the shore.
Since the great Pan expired, and through the roar
Of the Ionian waters broke a dread
Voice which proclaimed "the Mighty Pan is dead."
How much died with him! false or true—the dream
Was beautiful which peopled every stream
With more than finny tenants, and adorned
The woods and waters with coy nymphs that scorned
Pursuing Deities, or in the embrace
Of gods brought forth the high heroic race
Whose names are on the hills and o'er the seas.

Cephalonia, Sept^r 10^th^ 1823.

[From an autograph MS. in the possession of the Lady Dorchester, now for the first time printed.]

[1] [Aristomenes, the Achilles of the Alexandrian poet Rhianus (Grote's *History of Greece*, 1869, ii. 428), is the legendary hero of the second Messenian War (B.C. 685–668). Thrice he slew a hundred of the Spartan foe, and thrice he offered the Hekatomphonia on Mount Ithome. His name was held in honour long after "the rowers on their benches" heard the wail, "Pan, Pan is dead!" At the close of the second century of the Christian era, Pausanias (iv. 16. 4) made a note of Messenian maidens hymning his victory over the Lacedæmonians—

"From the heart of the plain he drove them,

And he drove them back to the hill:

To the top of the hill he drove them,

As he followed them, followed them still!”

Byron was familiar with Thomas Taylor’s translation of the *Periegesis Græciæ* (*vide ante*, p. 109, and “Observations,” etc., *Letters*, v. Appendix III. p. 574), and with Mitford’s *Greece* (*Don Juan*, Canto XII. stanza xix. line 7). Hence his knowledge of Aristomenes. The thought expressed in lines 5–11 was, possibly, suggested by Coleridge’s translation of the famous passage in Schiller’s *Piccolomini* (act ii. sc. 4, lines 118, *sq.*, “For fable is Love’s world, his home,” etc.), which is quoted by Sir Walter Scott, in the third chapter of *Guy Mannering*.]