

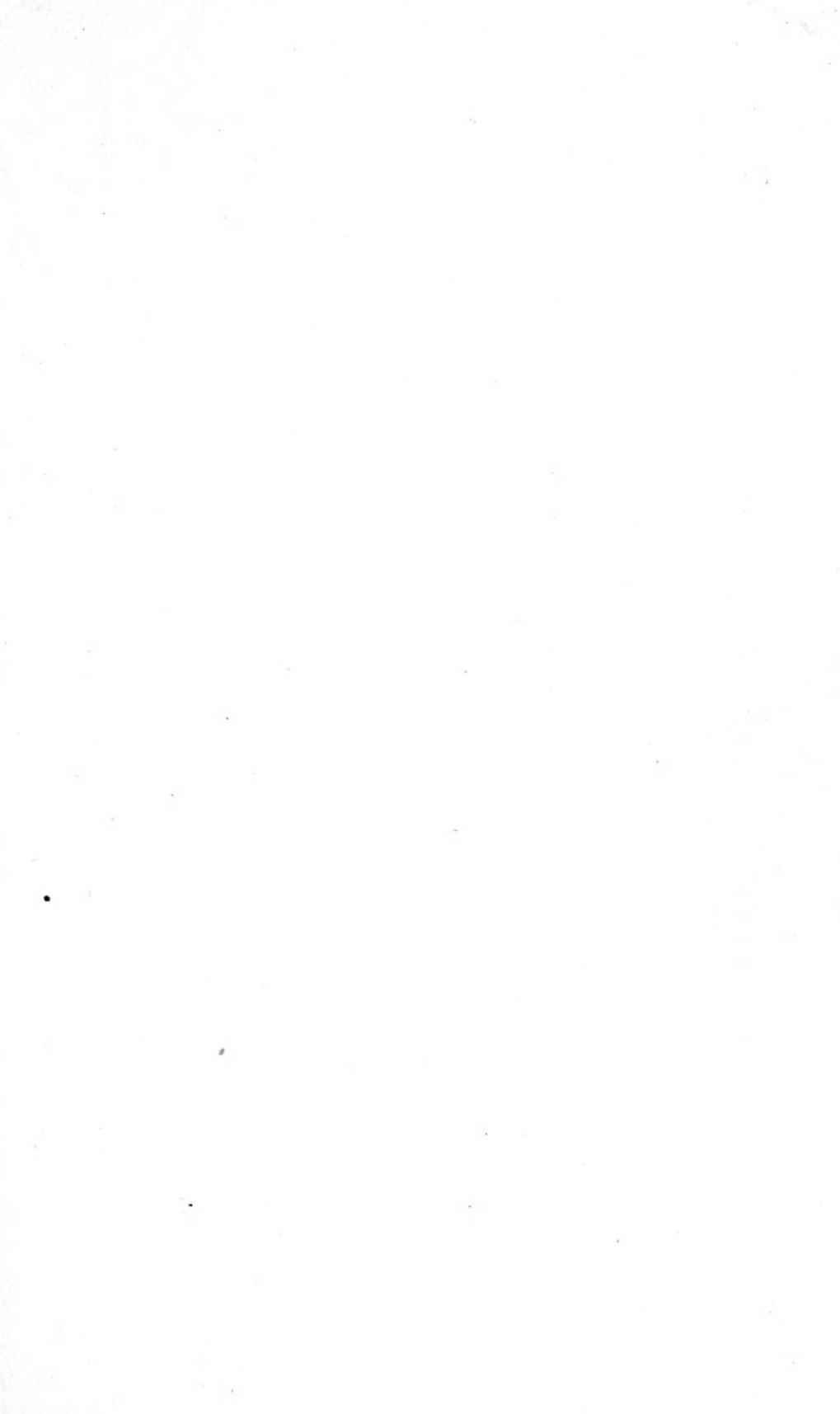
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THE

**SIEGE OF CORINTH.**

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**PARISINA.**

**T. DAVISON, Lombard-street,  
Whitefriars, London.**

THE  
**SIEGE OF CORINTH.**

A POEM.

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**P A R I S I N A.**

A POEM.

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*LONDON:*

PRINTED FOR JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

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1816.



THE

# SIEGE OF CORINTH.

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"Guns, Trumpets, Blunderbusses, Drums, and Thunder."



TO  
JOHN HOBHOUSE, ESQ.

THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED

BY HIS

FRIEND.

*Jan. 22, 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 coun-  
“try\*, 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 impos-  
“sible to hold out against so mighty a force, thought 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

\* 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, Aegina, Poro, &c. and the coast of the continent.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

“ 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 gover-  
“ nor, to the sword. The rest, with Antonio Bembo,  
“ provedor extraordinary, were made prisoners of war.”

*History of the Turks*, vol. iii. p. 151.

THE  
SIEGE OF CORINTH.

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I.

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, 5  
Have left untouched her hoary rock,  
The keystone of a land, which still,  
Though fall'n, looks proudly on that hill,  
The land-mark to the double tide  
That purpling rolls on either side, 10  
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,

Or baffled Persia's despot fled, 15  
 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, 20  
 Who perished there, be piled again,  
 That rival pyramid would rise  
 More mountain-like, through those clear skies,  
 Than yon tower-capt Acropolis  
 Which seems the very clouds to kiss. 25

## 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 30  
 Along the Moslem's leaguering lines ;  
 And the dusk Spahi's bands advance  
 Beneath each bearded pasha's glance ;  
 And far and wide as eye can reach  
 The turban'd cohorts throng the beach ; 35

And there the Arab's camel kneels,  
And there his steed the Tartar wheels ;  
The Turcoman hath left his herd<sup>1</sup>,  
The sabre round his loins to gird ;  
And there the volleying thunders pour, 40  
Till waves grow smoother to the roar.  
The trench is dug, the cannon's breath  
Wings the far hissing globe of death ;  
Fast whirl the fragments from the wall,  
Which crumbles with the ponderous ball ; 45  
And from that wall the foe replies,  
O'er dusty plain and smoky skies,  
With fires that answer fast and well  
The summons of the Infidel.

### III.

But near and nearest to the wall 50  
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 ; 55  
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, 60  
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, 65  
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 !

## IV.

From Venice—once a race of worth 70  
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. 75  
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 80  
 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;" 85  
 And in the palace of St. Mark  
 Unnamed accusers in the dark  
 Within the "Lion's mouth" had placed  
 A charge against him uneffaced:  
 He fled in time, and saved his life, 90  
 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. 95

## V.

- Coumouri<sup>2</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, 100  
 But curst 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 ? 105  
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 110  
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, 115  
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 120  
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, 125  
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 130  
To one wide sky of sulphurous hue.

## VII.

But not for vengeance, long delayed,  
Alone, did Alp, the renegade, 135  
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, 140  
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 ; 145

And tuned the softest serenade  
That e'er on Adria's waters played  
At midnight to Italian maid.

## VIII.

And many deemed her heart was won ;  
For sought by numbers, given to none, 150  
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, 155  
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 : 160  
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 165  
Breaks, yet unsated with the dance.

## IX.

Sent by the state to guard the land,  
 (Which, wrested from the Moslem's hand,  
 While Sobieski tamed his pride  
 By Buda's wall and Danube's side, 170  
 The chiefs of Venice wrung away  
 From Patra to Eubœa's bay,  
 Minotti held in Corinth's towers  
 The Doge's delegated powers,  
 While yet the pitying eye of Peace 175  
 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 ;  
 Nor there, since Menelaus' dame 180  
 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 ; 185  
 And, with to-morrow'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, 190  
 The full of hope, misnamed "forlorn,"  
 Who hold the thought of death in scorn,  
 And win their way with falchions' force,  
 Or pave the path with many a corse,  
 O'er which the following brave may rise, 195  
 Their stepping-stone—the last who dies !

## XI.

"Tis midnight : on the mountain's brown  
 The cold, round moon shines deeply down ;  
 Blue roll the waters, blue the sky  
 Spreads like an ocean hung on high, 200  
 Bespangled with those isles of light,  
 So wildly, spiritually bright ;  
 Who ever gazed upon them shining,  
 And turned to earth without repining,  
 Nor wished for wings to flee away, 205  
 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. 210  
The winds were pillow'd on the waves;  
The banners droop'd along their staves,  
And, as they fell around them furling,  
Above them shone the crescent curling;  
And that deep silence was unbroke, 215  
Save where the watch his signal spoke,  
Save where the steed neigh'd oft and shrill,  
And echo answered from the hill,  
And the wide hum of that wild host  
Rustled like leaves from coast to coast, 220  
As rose the Muezzin's voice in air  
In midnight call to wonted prayer;  
It rose, that chaunted mournful strain,  
Like some lone spirit's o'er the plain:  
'Twas musical, but sadly sweet, 225  
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: 230  
It struck even the besieger's ear  
With something ominous and drear,

An undefined and sudden thrill,  
Which makes the heart a moment still,  
Then beat with quicker pulse, ashamed 235  
Of that strange sense it's silence framed ;  
Such as a sudden passing-bell  
Wakes, though but for a stranger's knell.

## XII.

The tent of Alp was on the shore ;  
The sound was hushed, the prayer was o'er ; 240  
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, 245  
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. 250  
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 255  
 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. 260
- 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, 265  
 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. 270
- They envied even the faithless fame  
 He earned beneath a Moslem name ;  
 Since he, their mightiest chief, had been  
 In youth a bitter Nazarene.  
 They did not know how pride can stoop, 275  
 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. 280  
He ruled them—man may rule the worst,  
By ever daring to be first :  
So lions o'er the jackal sway ;  
The jackal points, he fells the prey,  
Then on the vulgar yelling press, 285  
To gorge the relics of success.

## 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 ; 290  
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 295  
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. 300

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 pillow'd them? and why should he 305  
More wakeful than the humblest be?  
Since more their peril, worse their toil,  
And yet they fearless dream of spoil;  
While he alone, where thousands passed  
A night of sleep, perchance their last, 310  
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, 315  
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, 320  
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; 325  
Less formed to wear before the ray;  
But that white veil, the lightest, frailest,  
Which on the mighty mount thou hailest,  
While tower and tree are torn and rent,  
Shines o'er its craggy battlement; 330  
In form a peak, in height a cloud,  
In texture like a hovering shroud,  
Thus high by parting Freedom spread,  
As from her fond abode she fled,  
And lingered on the spot, where long 335  
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. 340  
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.

## XV.

Not mindless of these mighty times. 345  
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, 350  
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, 355  
Whose best success were sacrilege.  
Not so had those his fancy numbered,  
The chiefs whose dust around him slumbered ;  
Their phalanx marshalled on the plain,  
Whose bulwarks were not then in vain. 360  
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 gray, 365  
Claimed kindred with their sacred clay ;

Their spirits wrapt the dusky mountain,  
Their memory sparkled o'er the fountain ;  
The meanest rill, the mightiest river  
Rolled mingling with their fame for ever. .... 370  
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,        375  
So sanctioned, on the tyrant's head :  
He looks to her, and rushes on  
Where life is lost, or freedom won.

## XVI.

Still by the shore Alp mutely mused,  
And wooed the freshness Night diffused.        380  
There shrinks no ebb in that tideless sea<sup>3</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,     385  
Hedless 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; 390  
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  
Between it and the greener land.

He wandered on, along the beach, 395  
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? 400

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 sea-ward gate of the town;  
Though he heard the sound, and could almost tell  
The sullen words of the sentinel, 406  
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, 410

Gorging and growling o'er carcase 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 ;      414  
And their white tusks crunched o'er the whiter skull \*,  
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. 420  
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>b</sup>,  
All the rest was shaven and bare.      425  
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, 430  
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.

## XVII.

Alp turned him from the sickening sight :  
Never had shaken his nerves in fight ; 435  
But he better could brook to behold the dying,  
Deep in the tide of their warm blood lying,  
Scorched with the death-thirst, and writhing in vain,  
Than the perishing dead who are past all pain.  
There is something of pride in the perilous hour, 440  
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 !  
But when all is past, it is humbling to tread  
O'er the weltering field of the tombless dead, 445  
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, 450  
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 ! 455  
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, 460  
Fragments of stone, reared by creatures of clay !

## XIX.

He sate him down at a pillar's base,  
And passed his hand athwart his face ;  
Like one in dreary musing mood,  
Declining was his attitude ; 465  
His head was drooping on his breast,  
Fevered, throbbing, and opprest ;  
And o'er his brow, so downward bent,  
Oft his beating fingers went,  
Hurriedly, as you may see 470  
Your own run over the ivory key,  
Ere the measured tone is taken  
By the chords you would awaken.

There he sate all heavily,  
As he heard the night-wind sigh. 475  
 Was it the wind, through some hollow stone<sup>6</sup>,  
Sent that soft and tender moan?  
 He lifted his head, and he looked on the sea,  
But it was unripled as glass may be;  
 He looked on the long grass—it waved not a blade;  
How\* was that gentle sound conveyed? 481  
 He looked to the banners—each flag lay still,  
So did the leaves on Cithæron's hill,  
 And he felt not a breath come over his cheek;  
 What did that sudden sound bespeak? 485  
 He turned to the left—is he sure of sight?  
 There sate a lady, youthful and bright!

## XX.

He started up with more of fear  
Than if an armed foe were near.  
 “ God of my fathers! what is here? 490  
 “ 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, 495  
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 ! 500

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, 505  
Beside her eye had less of blue;  
But like that cold wave it stood still,  
And its glance, though clear, was chill.  
Around her form a thin robe twining,  
Nought concealed her bosom shining; 510  
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; 515  
It was so wan, and transparent of hue,  
You might have seen the moon shine through.

## XXI.

- “ I come from my rest to him I love best,  
“ That I may be happy, and he may be blest.  
“ I have passed the guards, the gate, the wall; 520  
“ Sought thee in safety through foes and all.  
“ ’Tis said the lion will turn and flee  
“ 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, 525  
“ 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 530  
“ In falling away from thy father’s creed:  
“ But dash that turban to earth, and sign  
“ The sign of the cross, and for ever be mine;  
“ Wring the black drop from thy heart,  
“ And to-morrow unites us no more to part.” 535  
“ And where should our bridal couch be spread?  
“ In the ’midst of the dying and the dead?

- “ For to-morrow we give to the slaughter and flame  
“ The sons and the shrines of the Christian name.  
“ None, save thou and thine, I've sworn                    540  
“ 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 shalt be my bride,  
“ When once again I've quelled the pride                545  
“ 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—                    550  
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;                555  
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, 560  
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 565  
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, 571  
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 575  
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.

581

“ 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,  
“ Or thou art lost; and never shalt see  
“ Not earth—that’s past—but heaven or me.

585

“ 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:  
“ But pause one moment more, and take  
“ The curse of him thou didst forsake;

590

“ And look once more to heaven, and see  
“ Its love for ever shut from thee.

“ There is a light cloud by the moon—<sup>7</sup>

“ ’Tis passing, and will pass full soon—

“ If, by the time its vapoury sail

595

“ Hath ceased her shaded orb to veil,

“ Thy heart within thee is not changed,

“ Then God and man are both avenged;

600

" Dark will thy doom be, darker still

" Thine immortality of ill."

605

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

610

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 !

615

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 :

620

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.

625

“ 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.      630  
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.  
Lightly and brightly breaks away      635  
The Morning from her mantle grey,  
And the Noon will look on a sultry day.  
Hark to the trump, and the drum,  
And the mournful sound of the barbarous horn,      639  
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>8</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, 645

Strike your tents, and throng to the van;

Mount ye, spur ye, skirr the plain,

That the fugitive may flee in vain,

When he breaks from the town; and none escape,

Aged or young, in the Christian shape; 650

While your fellows on foot, in a fiery mass,

Bloodstain the breach through which they pass.

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: 655

The spears are uplifted; the matches are lit;

The cannon are pointed, and ready to roar,

And crush the wall they have crumbled before:

Forms in his phalanx each Janizar;

Alp at their head; his right arm is bare, 660

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— 665

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 !  
 Up to the skies with that wild halloo !  
 “ There the breach lies for passage, the ladder to  
     scale ;    670  
 “ And your hands on your sabres, and how should ye  
     fail ?  
 “ He who first downs with the red cross may crave  
 “ His heart’s dearest wish ; let him ask it, and have !”  
 Thus uttered Coumourgi, the dauntless vizier ;  
 The reply was the brandish of sabre and spear,     675  
 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,                       680  
 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 ;                               685  
 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, 690  
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.

## XXIV.

As the spring-tides, with heavy splash,  
From the cliffs invading dash 695  
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, 700  
Corinth's sons were downward borne  
By the long and oft renewed  
Charge of the Moslem multitude.  
In firmness they stood, and in masses they fell,  
Heaped, by the host of the infidel, 705  
Hand to hand, and foot to foot :  
Nothing there, save death, was mute ;  
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  
 In that annihilating voice,  
 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.

710

715

720

725

730

## XXV.

From the point of encountering blades to the hilt,  
 Sabres and swords with blood were gilt :  
 But the rampart is won, and the spoil begun,  
 And all but the after carnage done.  
 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. 735

There stood an old man—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; 740  
Still he combated unwounded,  
Though retreating, unsurrounded.  
Many a scar of former fight  
Lurked beneath his corslet bright;  
But of every wound his body bore, 745  
Each and all had been ta'en before:  
Though aged 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 of silver gray. 750  
From right to left his sabre swept:  
Many an Othman mother wept  
Sons that were unborn, when dipped

His weapon first in Moslem gore,  
Ere his years could count a score. 755  
 Of all he might have been the sire  
 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>o</sup> 760  
 His only boy had met his fate,  
 His parent's iron hand did doom  
 More than a human hecatomb.  
 If shades by carnage be appeased,  
 Patroclus' spirit less was pleased 765  
 Than his, Minotti's son, who died  
 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 770  
 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.

## XXVI.

Hark to the Allah shout ! a band  
 Of the Mussulman bravest and best is at hand : 775

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,                           780  
 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 ;                   785  
 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 ;                           790  
 It glances like a falling star !  
 Where'er that mighty arm is seen,  
 The bravest be, or late have been ;  
 There the craven cries for quarter  
 Vainly to the vengeful Tartar ;                           795  
 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; 800  
 Grappling on the gory ground.

## 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." 805

" 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 ; 810  
 " 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. 815  
 " Oh God ! when died she?"—" Yesternight—  
 " 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— 820  
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, 825  
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 ; 830  
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, 835  
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 840  
And brow were stained with gore and dust,

And through his lips the life-blood oozed,  
From its deep veins lately loosed;  
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,  
Unanealed he passed away,  
Without a hope from mercy's aid,—  
To the last a renegade.

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,

865

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;

870

And, with their faces to the foe,

Dealing wounds with every blow,

The chief, and his retreating train,

Join to those within the fane:

There they yet may breathe awhile,

875

Sheltered by the massy pile.

### 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 ;

880

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.

885

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                           890  
Before the still renewed attacks :  
And now the Othmans gain the gate ;  
Still resists its iron weight,  
And still, all deadly aimed and hot,  
From every crevice comes the shot ;                           895  
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 ;                           900  
Lost Corinth may resist no more !

## XXX.

Darkly, sternly, and all alone,  
Minotti stood o'er the altar stone :  
Madonna's face upon him shone,  
Painted in heavenly hues above,                           905  
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, 910  
 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 aged eye, 915  
 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,  
 Inward and onward the Mussulman came.

## XXXI.

The vaults beneath the mosaic stone 920  
 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, 925  
 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 coffined row ;  
You might see them piled in sable state, 930  
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 : 935  
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. 940

## 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, 945  
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. 950

To the high altar on they go;  
 Oh, but it made a glorious show!  
 On its table still behold  
 The cup of consecrated gold;  
 Massy and deep, a glittering prize, 955

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 shrieve their souls ere they joined in the fray. 960

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. 965

## 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! 970

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!

975

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

980

In cloud and flame athwart the heaven,

By that tremendous blast—

Proclaimed the desperate conflict o'er

On that too long afflicted shore :

Up to the sky like rockets go

985

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 :

990

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 ; 995  
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, 1000  
Little deemed she such a day  
Would rend those tender limbs away.  
Not the matrons that them bore  
Could discern their offspring more ;  
That one moment left no trace 1005  
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 dinted in the clay, 1010  
All blackened there and reeking lay.  
All the living things that heard  
That deadly earth shock disappeared :  
The wild birds flew ; the wild dogs fled,  
And howling left the unburied dead ; 1015  
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, 1020  
Deep-mouthing arose, and doubly harsh ;  
The wolves yelled on the caverned hill,  
Where echo rolled in thunder still ;  
The jackal's troop, in gathered cry,<sup>10</sup>  
Bayed from afar complainingly, 1025  
With a mixed and mournful sound,  
Like crying babe, and beaten hound :  
With sudden wing, and ruffled breast,  
The eagle left his rocky nest,  
And mounted nearer to the sun, 1030  
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 !

## N O T E S.

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Note 1, page 9, line 3.

*The Turcoman hath left his herd.*

The life of the Turcomans is wandering and patriarchal : they dwell in tents.

Note 2, page 11, line 17.

*Coumourgi—he whose closing scene.*

Ali Coumourgi, 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. 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."

Note 3, page 24, line 15.

*There shrinks no ebb in that tideless sea.*

The reader need hardly be reminded that there are no perceptible tides in the Mediterranean.

## Note 4, page 26, line 5.

*And their white tusks crunched o'er the whiter skull.*

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. The bodies were probably those of some refractory Janizaries.

## Note 5, page 26, line 14.

*And each scalp had a single long tuft of hair.*

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

## Note 6, page 29, line 3.

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.

## Note 7, page 34, line 18.

*There is a light cloud by the moon—*

I have been told that the idea expressed from lines 597 to

603 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.

Note 8, page 36, line 18.

*The horsetails are plucked from the ground, and the sword.*

The horsetail, fixed upon a lance, a Pasha's standard.

Note 9, page 42, line 7.

*And since the day, when in the strait.*

In the naval battle at the mouth of the Dardanelles, between the Venetians and the Turks.

Note 10, page 54, line 7.

*The jackal's troop, in gathered cry.*

I believe I have taken a poetical license 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.



P A R I S I N A.

177

**TO**

**SCROPE BEARDMORE DAVIES, Esq.**

**THE FOLLOWING POEM**

**IS INSCRIBED**

**BY ONE WHO HAS LONG ADMIRED HIS TALENTS  
AND VALUED HIS FRIENDSHIP.**

*Jan. 22, 1816.*

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The following poem is grounded on a circumstance mentioned in Gibbon's "Antiquities of the House of Brunswick."—I am aware, that in modern times the delicacy or fastidiousness of the reader may deem such subjects unfit for the purposes of poetry. The Greek dramatists, and some of the best of our old English writers, were of a different opinion: as Alfieri and Schiller have also been, more recently, upon the continent. The following extract will explain the facts on which the story is founded. The name of *Azo* is substituted for Nicholas, as more metrical.

"Under the reign of Nicholas III. Ferrara was polluted  
"with a domestic tragedy. By the testimony of an  
"attendant, and his own observation, the Marquis of  
"Este discovered the incestuous loves of his wife Pa-  
"risina, and Hugo his bastard son, a beautiful and  
"valiant youth. They were beheaded in the castle by  
"the sentence of a father and husband, who published  
"his shame, and survived their execution. He was  
"unfortunate, if they were guilty; if they were inno-  
"cent, he was still more unfortunate: nor is there any  
"possible situation in which I can sincerely approve the  
"last act of the justice of a parent."—Gibon's *Mis-*  
*cellaneous Works*, vol. 3d. p. 470, new edition.

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## PARISINA.

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### I.

IT is the hour when from the boughs  
The nightingale's high note is heard ;  
It is the hour when lovers' vows  
Seem sweet in every whisper'd word ;  
And gentle winds, and waters near, 5  
Make music to the lonely ear.  
Each flower the dews have lightly wet,  
And in the sky the stars are met,  
And on the wave is deeper blue,  
And on the leaf a browner hue, 10  
And in the heaven that clear obscure,  
So softly dark, and darkly pure,  
Which follows the decline of day,  
As twilight melts beneath the moon away.

III.

But it is not to list to the waterfall

16

## That Parisina leaves her hall,

And it is not to gaze on the heavenly light

That the lady walks in the shadow of night;

And if she sits in Este's bower,

'Tis not for the sake of its full-blown flower-

**She listens—but not for the nightingale—**

Though her ear expects as soft a tale.

**There glides a step through the foliage thick,**

And her cheek grows pale—and her heart beats quick

There whispers a voice through the rustling leaves,

And her blush returns, and her bosom heaves

A moment more—and they shall meet—

'Tis past—her lover's at her feet.

III.

And what unto them is the world beside

**With all its change of time and tide**

30

## Its living things—its earth and sky—

**Are nothing to their mind and eye.**

**And heedless as the dead are they.**

**Of** aught around, above, beneath;

As if all else had passed away, 35  
 They only for each other breathe ;  
 Their very sighs are full of joy  
 So deep, that did it not decay,  
 That happy madness would destroy  
 The hearts which feel its fiery sway : 40  
 Of guilt, of peril, do they deem  
 In that tumultuous tender dream ?  
 Who that have felt that passion's power,  
 Or paused, or feared in such an hour ?  
 Or thought how brief such moments last : 45  
 But yet—they are already past !  
 Alas ! we must awake before  
 We know such vision comes no more.

## IV.

With many a lingering look they leave 50  
 The spot of guilty gladness past ;  
 And though they hope, and vow, they grieve,  
 As if that parting were the last.  
 The frequent sigh—the long embrace—  
 The lip that there would cling for ever,  
 While gleams on Parisina's face 55  
 The Heaven she fears will not forgive her.

As if each calmly conscious star  
 Beheld her frailty from afar—  
 The frequent sigh, the long embrace,  
 Yet binds them to their trysting-place.  
 But it must come, and they must part  
 In fearful heaviness of heart,  
 With all the deep and shuddering chill  
 Which follows fast the deeds of ill.

60

## V.

And Hugo is gone to his lonely bed,  
 To covet there another's bride ;  
 But she must lay her conscious head  
 A husband's trusting heart beside.  
 But fevered in her sleep she seems,  
 And red her cheek with troubled dreams,  
 And mutters she in her unrest  
 A name she dare not breathe by day,  
 And clasps her Lord unto the breast  
 Which pants for one away :  
 And he to that embrace awakes,  
 And, happy in the thought, mistakes  
 That dreaming sigh, and warm caress,  
 For such as he was wont to bless ;

65

70

75

And could in very fondness weep.  
O'er her who loves him even in sleep.

80

## VI.

He clasped her sleeping to his heart,  
And listened to each broken word :  
He hears—Why doth Prince Azo start,  
As if the Archangel's voice he heard?  
And well he may—a deeper doom  
Could scarcely thunder o'er his tomb,  
When he shall wake to sleep no more,  
And stand the eternal throne before.  
And well he may—his earthly peace  
Upon that sound is doomed to cease.

85

That sleeping whisper of a name  
Bespeaks her guilt and Azo's shame.  
And whose that name? that o'er his pillow  
Sounds fearful as the breaking billow,  
Which rolls the plank upon the shore,  
And dashes on the pointed rock  
The wretch who sinks to rise no more,—  
So came upon his soul the shock.  
And whose that name? 'tis Hugo's,—his—  
In sooth he had not deemed of this!—

90

95

100

"Tis Hugo's,—he, the child of one  
He loved—his own all-evil son—  
The offspring of his wayward youth,  
When he betrayed Bianca's truth,  
The maid whose folly could confide  
In him who made her not his bride.

105

## VII.

He plucked his poignard in its sheath,  
But sheathed it ere the point was bare—  
Howe'er unworthy now to breathe,  
He could not slay a thing so fair—  
At least, not smiling—sleeping—there—  
Nay, more :—he did not wake her then,  
But gazed upon her with a glance  
Which, had she roused her from her trance,  
Had frozen her sense to sleep again—  
And o'er his brow the burning lamp  
Gleamed on the dew-drops big and damp.  
She spake no more—but still she slumbered—  
While, in his thought, her days are numbered.

110

115

## VIII.

And with the morn he sought, and found,      120  
In many a tale from those around,  
The proof of all he feared to know,  
Their present guilt, his future woe;  
The long-conniving damsels seek  
To save themselves, and would transfer      125  
The guilt—the shame—the doom—to her :  
Concealment is no more—they speak  
All circumstance which may compel  
Full credence to the tale they tell :  
And Azo's tortured heart and ear      130  
Have nothing more to feel or hear.

## IX.

He was not one who brooked delay :  
Within the chamber of his state,  
The chief of Este's ancient sway.  
Upon his throne of judgment sate ;      135  
His nobles and his guards are there,—  
Before him is the sinful pair ;  
Both young,—and *one* how passing fair !

With swordless belt, and fettered hand,  
Oh, Christ ! that thus a son should stand  
Before a father's face!

140

Yet thus must Hugo meet his sire,  
And hear the sentence of his ire,  
The tale of his disgrace !

And yet he seems not overcome,  
Although, as yet, his voice be dumb.

145

## X.

And still, and pale, and silently  
Did Parisina wait her doom ;  
How changed since last her speaking eye

Glanced gladness round the glittering room, 150  
Where high-born men were proud to wait—  
Where Beauty watched to imitate  
Her gentle voice—her lovely mien—  
And gather from her air and gait

The graces of it's queen :  
Then,—had her eye in sorrow wept,  
A thousand warriors forth had leapt,  
A thousand swords had sheathless shone,  
And made her quarrel all their own.

155

Now,—what is she? and what are they? 160  
Can she command, or these obey?  
All silent and unheeding now,  
With downcast eyes and knitting brow,  
And folded arms, and freezing air,  
And lips that scarce their scorn forbear, 165  
Her knights and dames, her court—is there:  
And he, the chosen one, whose lance  
Had yet been couched before her glance,  
Who—were his arm a moment free—  
Had died or gained her liberty; 170  
The minion of his father's bride,—  
He, too, is fettered by her side;  
Nor sees her swoln and full eye swim  
Less for her own despair than him:  
Those lids o'er which the violet vein— 175  
Wandering, leaves a tender stain,  
Shining through the smoothest white  
That e'er did softest kiss invite—  
Now seemed with hot and livid glow  
To press, not shade, the orbs below; 180  
Which glance so heavily, and fill,  
As tear on tear grows gathering still.

## XI.

And he for her had also wept,

But for the eyes that on him gazed :

His sorrow, if he felt it, slept ;

185

Stern and erect his brow was raised.

Whate'er the grief his soul avowed,

He would not shrink before the crowd ;

But yet he dared not look on her :

Remembrance of the hours that were—

190

His guilt—his love—his present state—

His father's wrath—all good men's hate—

His earthly, his eternal fate—

And hers,—oh, hers !—he dared not throw

One look upon that deathlike brow !

195

Else had his rising heart betrayed

Remorse for all the wreck it made.

## XII.

And Azo spake :—“ But yesterday

“ I gloried in a wife and son ;

“ That dream this morning passed away ;

200

“ Ere day declines, I shall have none.

- " My life must linger on alone ;  
" Well,—let that pass,—there breathes not one  
" Who would not do as I have done:  
" Those ties are broken—not by me; 205  
" Let that too pass ;—the doom's prepared !  
" Hugo, the priest awaits on thee,  
" And then—thy crime's reward !  
" Away ! address thy prayers to Heaven,  
" Before its evening stars are met— 210  
" Learn if thou there canst be forgiven ;  
" It's mercy may absolve thee yet.  
" But here, upon the earth beneath,  
" There is no spot where thou and I  
" Together, for an hour, could breathe : 215  
" Farewell ! I will not see thee die—  
" But thou, frail thing ! shalt view his head—  
" Away ! I cannot speak the rest :  
" Go ! woman of the wanton breast ;  
" Not I, but thou his blood dost shed : 220  
" Go ! if that sight thou canst outlive,  
" And joy thee in the life I give."

## XIII.

And here stern Azo hid his face—

For on his brow the swelling vein  
Throbbed as if back upon his brain 225

The hot blood ebbed and flowed again ;

And therefore bowed he for a space,

And passed his shaking hand along

His eye, to veil it from the throng ;

While Hugo raised his chained hands, 230

And for a brief delay demands

His father's ear : the silent sire

Forbids not what his words require.

“ It is not that I dread the death—

“ For thou hast seen me by thy side 235

“ All redly through the battle ride,

“ And that not once a useless brand

“ Thy slaves have wrested from my hand,

“ Hath shed more blood in cause of thine,

“ Than e'er can stain the axe of mine : 240

“ Thou gav'st, and may'st resume my breath,

“ A gift for which I thank thee not ;

“ Nor are my mother's wrongs forgot,

- “ Her slighted love and ruined name,  
“ Her offspring’s heritage of shame; 245  
“ But she is in the grave, where he,  
“ Her son; thy rival, soon shall be.  
“ Her broken heart—my severed head—  
“ Shall witness for thee from the dead  
“ How trusty and how tender were  
“ Thy youthful love—paternal care. 250  
“ ’Tis true, that I have done thee wrong—  
“ But wrong for wrong—this deemed thy bride,  
“ The other victim of thy pride,  
“ Thou know’st for me was destined long. 255  
“ Thou saw’st, and coveted’st her charms—  
“ And with thy very crime—my birth,  
“ Thou taunted’st me—as little worth;  
“ A match ignoble for her arms,  
“ Because, forsooth, I could not claim 260  
“ The lawful heirship of thy name,  
“ Nor sit on Este’s lineal throne:  
“ Yet, were a few short summers mine,  
“ My name should more than Este’s shine  
“ With honours all my own. 265  
“ I had a sword—and have a breast  
“ That should have won as haught<sup>2</sup> a crest

- “ As ever waved along the line  
 “ Of all these sovereign sires of thine.  
 “ Not always knightly spurs are worn 270  
 “ The brightest by the better born;  
 “ And mine have lanced my courser’s flank  
 “ Before proud chiefs of princely rank,  
 “ When charging to the cheering cry  
 “ Of ‘ Este and of Victory !’ ” 275
- “ I will not plead the cause of crime,  
 “ Nor sue thee to redeem from time  
 “ A few brief hours or days that must  
 “ At length roll o’er my reckless dust;—  
 “ Such maddening moments as my past, 280  
 “ They could not, and they did not, last—  
 “ Albeit, my birth and name be base,  
 “ And thy nobility of race  
 “ Disdained to deck a thing like me—  
 “ Yet in my lineaments they trace 285  
 “ Some features of my father’s face,  
 “ And in my spirit—all of thee.  
 “ From thee—this tamelessness of heart—  
 “ From thee—nay, wherefore dost thou start?—



“ As erred the sire, so erred the son—  
 “ And thou must punish both in one.  
 “ My crime seems worst to human view,  
 “ But God must judge between us too !”

315

## XIV.

He ceased—and stood with folded arms,  
 On which the circling fetters sounded ;  
 And not an ear but felt as wounded,  
 Of all the chiefs that there were ranked,  
 When those dull chains in meeting clanked :  
 Till Parisina’s fatal charms  
 Again attracted every eye—  
 Would she thus hear him doomed to die !  
 She stood, I said, all pale and still,  
 The living cause of Hugo’s ill :  
 Her eyes unmoved, but full and wide,  
 Not once had turned to either side—  
 Nor once did those sweet eyelids close,  
 Or shade the glance o’er which they rose,  
 But round their orbs of deepest blue  
 The circling white dilated grew—  
 And there with glassy gaze she stood  
 As ice were in her curdled blood ;

320

325

330

335

But every now and then a tear  
So large and slowly gathered slid  
From the long dark fringe of that fair lid,  
It was a thing to see, not hear !  
And those who saw, it did surprise, 340  
Such drops could fall from human eyes.  
To speak she thought—the imperfect note  
Was choked within her swelling throat,  
Yet seemed in that low hollow groan  
Her whole heart gushing in the tone. 345  
It ceased—again she thought to speak,  
Then burst her voice in one long shriek,  
And to the earth she fell like stone  
Or statue from its base o'erthrown,  
More like a thing that ne'er had life,— 350  
A monument of Azo's wife,—  
Than her, that living guilty thing,  
Whose every passion was a sting,  
Which urged to guilt, but could not bear  
That guilt's detection and despair. 355  
But yet she lived—and all too soon  
Recovered from that death-like swoon—  
But scarce to reason—every sense  
Had been o'erstrung by pangs intense;

And each frail fibre of her brain 36  
(As bow-strings, when relaxed by rain,  
The erring arrow launch aside)  
Sent forth her thoughts all wild and wide—  
The past a blank, the future black,  
With glimpses of a dreary track, 365  
Like lightning on the desert path,  
When midnight storms are mustering wrath.  
She feared—she felt that something ill  
Lay on her soul, so deep and chill—  
That there was sin and shame she knew ; 370  
That some one was to die—but who?  
She had forgotten :—did she breathe ?  
Could this be still the earth beneath ?  
The sky above, and men around ;  
Or were they fiends who now so frowned 375  
On one, before whose eyes each eye  
Till then had smiled in sympathy ?  
All was confused and undefined,  
To her all-jarred and wandering mind ;  
A chaos of wild hopes and fears : 380  
And now in laughter, now in tears,  
But madly still in each extreme,  
She strove with that convulsive dream ;

For so it seemed on her to break :

Oh ! vainly must she strive to wake !

385

## XV.

The Convent bells are ringing,

But mournfully and slow ;

In the grey square turret swinging,

With a deep sound, to and fro.

Heavily to the heart they go !

390

Hark ! the hymn is singing—

The song for the dead below,

Or the living who shortly shall be so !

For a departing being's soul

The death-hymn peals and the hollow bells knoll :

He is near his mortal goal ;

396

Kneeling at the Friar's knee ;

Sad to hear—and piteous to see—

Kneeling on the bare cold ground,

With the block before and the guards around—

400

And the headsman with his bare arm ready,

That the blow may be both swift and steady,

Feels if the axe be sharp and true—

Since he set its edge anew :

While the crowd in a speechless circle gather

405

To see the Son fall by the doom of the Father.

## XVI.

It is a lovely hour as yet  
Before the summer sun shall set,  
Which rose upon that heavy day,  
And mocked it with his steadiest ray ; 410  
And his evening beams are shed  
Full on Hugo's fated head,  
As his last confession pouring  
To the monk, his doom deplored  
In penitential holiness, 415  
He bends to hear his accents bless  
With absolution such as may  
Wipe our mortal stains away.  
That high sun on his head did glisten  
As he there did bow and listen— 420  
And the rings of chesnut hair  
Curled half down his neck so bare ;  
But brighter still the beam was thrown  
Upon the axe which near him shone  
With a clear and ghastly glitter—  
Oh ! that parting hour was bitter ! 425  
Even the stern stood chilled with awe :  
Dark the crime, and just the law—  
Yet they shuddered as they saw.

## XVII.

The parting prayers are said and over  
Of that false son—and daring lover! 430

His beads and sins are all recounted,  
His hours to their last minute mounted—  
His mantling cloak before was stripped,  
His bright brown locks must now be clipped,  
'Tis done—all closely are they shorn— 435

The vest which till this moment worn—  
The scarf which Parisina gave—  
Must not adorn him to the grave.  
Even that must now be thrown aside,  
And o'er his eyes the kerchief tied; 440

But no—that last indignity  
Shall ne'er approach his haughty eye.  
All feelings seemingly subdued,  
In deep disdain were half renewed,  
When headman's hands prepared to bind 445

Those eyes which would not brook such blind:  
As if they dared not look on death.  
“ No—yours my forfeit blood and breath—  
“ These hands are chained—but let me die  
“ At least with an unshackled eye— 450

“ Strike :”—and as the word he said,  
Upon the block he bowed his head ;  
These the last accents Hugo spoke :

“ Strike”—and flashing fell the stroke—

Rolled the head—and, gushing, sunk                  455  
Back the stained and heaving trunk,  
In the dust, which each deep vein.  
Slaked with its ensanguined rain ;  
His eyes and lips a moment quiver,  
Convulsed and quick—then fix for ever.                  460

He died, as erring man should die,  
Without display, without parade ;  
Meekly had he bowed and prayed,  
As not disdaining priestly aid,  
Nor desperate of all hope on high.                  465  
And while before the Prior kneeling,  
His heart was weaned from earthly feeling ;  
His wrathful sire—his paramour—  
What were they in such an hour ?  
No more reproach—no more despair ;                  470  
No thought but heaven—no word but prayer—  
Save the few which from him broke,  
When, bared to meet the headman’s stroke,

He claimed to die with eyes unbound,

His sole adieu to those around.

475

### XVIII.

Still as the lips that closed in death,

Each gazer's bosom held his breath :

But yet, afar, from man to man,

A cold electric shiver ran,

As down the deadly blow descended

480

On him whose life and love thus ended ;

And with a hushing sound comprest,

A sigh shrunk back on every breast ;

But no more thrilling noise rose there,

Beyond the blow that to the block

485

Pierced through with forced and sullen shock,

Save one :—what cleaves the silent air ..

So madly shrill—so passing wild ?

That, as a mother's o'er her child,

Done to death by sudden blow,

490

To the sky these accents go,

Like a soul's in endless woe.

Through Azo's palace-lattice driven,

That horrid voice ascends to heaven,

And every eye is turned thereon;                   495  
 But sound and sight alike are gone!  
 It was a woman's shriek—and ne'er  
 In madlier accents rose despair;  
 And those who heard it, as it past,  
 In mercy wished it were the last.                   500

## XIX.

Hugo is fallen; and, from that hour,  
 No more in palace, hall, or bower,  
 Was Parisina heard or seen:  
 Her name—as if she ne'er had been—  
 Was banished from each lip and ear,               505  
 Like words of wantonness or fear;  
 And from Prince Azo's voice, by none  
 Was mention heard 'of wife or son;  
 No tomb—no memory had they;  
 Theirs was unconsecrated clay;                   510  
 At least the knight's who died that day.  
 But Parisina's fate lies hid  
 Like dust beneath the coffin lid:  
 Whether in convent she abode,  
 And won to heaven her dreary road,               515

By blighted and remorseful years  
Of scourge, and fast, and sleepless tears ;  
Or if she fell by bowl or steel,  
For that dark love she dared to feel ;  
Or if, upon the moment smote, 520  
She died by tortures less remote ;  
Like him she saw upon the block,  
With heart that shared the headman's shock,  
In quickened brokenness that came,  
In pity, o'er her shattered frame, 525  
None knew—and none can ever know :  
But whatsoe'er its end below,  
Her life began and closed in woe !

## XX.

And Azo found another bride,  
And goodly sons grew by his side, 530  
But none so lovely and so brave  
As him who withered in the grave ;  
Or if they were—on his cold eye  
Their growth but glanced unheeded by,  
Or noticed with a smothered sigh. 535  
But never tear his cheek descended,  
And never smile his brow unbended ;

And o'er that fair broad brow were wrought  
The intersected lines of thought;  
Those furrows which the burning share      540  
Of Sorrow ploughs untimely there;  
Scars of the lacerating mind  
Which the Soul's war doth leave behind.  
He was past all mirth or woe:  
Nothing more remained below,      545  
But sleepless nights and heavy days,  
A mind all dead to scorn or praise,  
A heart which shunned itself—and yet  
That would not yield—nor could forget,  
Which when it least appeared to melt,      550  
Intently thought—intensely felt:  
The deepest ice which ever froze  
Can only o'er the surface close—  
The living stream lies quick below,  
And flows—and cannot cease to flow.      555  
Still was his sealed-up bosom haunted  
By thoughts which Nature hath implanted;  
Too deeply rooted thence to vanish,  
Howe'er our stifled tears we banish;  
When, struggling as they rise to start,      560  
We check those waters of the heart,

They are not dried—those tears unshed  
 But flow back to the fountain head,  
 And resting in their spring more pure,  
 For ever in its depth endure,

565

Unseen, unwept, but uncongealed,  
 And cherished most where least revealed.  
 With inward starts of feeling left,  
 To throb o'er those of life bereft;

Without the power to fill again

570

The desart gap which made his pain;  
 Without the hope to meet them where  
 United souls shall gladness share,  
 With all the consciousness that he  
 Had only passed a just decree;

575

That they had wrought their doom of ill,  
 Yet Azo's age was wretched still.

The tainted branches of the tree,  
 If lopped with care, a strength may give,  
 By which the rest shall bloom and live

580

All greenly fresh and wildly free.

But if the lightning, in its wrath,  
 The waving boughs with fury scathe,  
 The massy trunk the ruin feels,  
 And never more a leaf reveals.

585



## N O T E S.

---

Note 1, page 63, line 14.

*As twilight melts beneath the moon away.*

The lines contained in Section I. were printed as set to music some time since: but belonged to the poem where they now appear, the greater part of which was composed prior to "Lara" and other compositions since published.

Note 2, page 75, last line.

*That should have won as haught a crest.*

Haught—haughty—"Away haught man, thou art insulting me."

*Shakspeare, Richard II.*

THE END.

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