

Except mere breath; and since the silent shore
 Awaits at last even those who longest miss
 The old archer's shafts, perhaps the early grave
 Which men weep over may be meant to save.
 The gentle pressure, and the thrilling touch,
 The least glance better understood than words,
 Which still said all, and ne'er could say too much;
 A language, too, but like to that of birds,
 Known but to them, at least appearing such
 As but to lovers a true sense affords;
 Sweet playful phrases, which would seem absurd
 To those who have ceased to hear such, or ne'er heard:

All these were theirs, for they were children still,
 And children still they should have ever been;
 They were not made in the real world to fill
 A busy character in the dull scene,
 But like two beings born from out a rill,
 A nymph and her beloved, all unseen
 To pass their lives in fountains and on flowers,
 And never know the weight of human hours.

Moons changing had roll'd on, and changeless found
 Those their bright rise had lighted to such joys
 As rarely they beheld throughout their round;
 And these were not of the vain kind which cloy,
 For theirs were buoyant spirits, never bound
 By the mere senses; and that which destroys
 Most love, possession, unto them appear'd
 A thing which each endearment more endear'd.

A DREAM.

SHE dream'd of being alone on the sea-shore,
 Chain'd to a rock; she knew not how, but stir
 She could not from the spot, and the loud roar
 Grew, and each wave rose roughly, threatening her;
 And o'er her upper lip they seem'd to pour,
 Until she sobb'd for breath, and soon they were
 Foaming o'er her lone head, so fierce and high—
 Each broke to drown her, yet she could not die.

Anon—she was released, and then she stray'd
 O'er the sharp shingles with her bleeding feet,
 And stumbled almost every step she made;
 And something roll'd before her in a sheet,
 Which she must still pursue howe'er afraid;
 'Twas white and indistinct, nor stopp'd to meet
 Her glance nor grasp, for still she gazed and grasp'd,
 And ran, but it escaped her as she clasp'd.

The dream changed:—in a cave she stood, its walls
 Were hung with marble icicles; the work

Of ages on its water-fretted halls,
 Where waves might wash, and seals might breed and lurk
 Her hair was dripping, and the very balls
 Of her black eyes seem'd turn'd to tears, and mirk
 The sharp rocks, look'd below each drop they caught,
 Which froze to marble as it fell,—she thought.

And wet, and cold, and lifeless at her feet,
 Pale as the foam that froth'd on his dead brow,
 Which she essay'd in vain to clear, (how sweet
 Were once her cares, how idle seem'd they now!)
 Lay he—nor could aught renew the beat
 Of his quench'd heart: and the sea dirges low
 Rang in her sad ears like a mermaid's song,
 And that brief dream appear'd a life too long.

THE MANIAC.

A VEIN had burst, and her sweet lips' pure dyes
 Were dabbled with the deep blood which ran o'er;
 And her head droop'd as when the lily lies
 O'ercharged with rain: her summon'd handmaids bore
 Their lady to her couch with gushing eyes;
 Of herbs and cordials they produced their store,
 But she defied all means they could employ,
 Like one life could not hold, nor death destroy

Days lay she in that state unchanged, though chill—
 With nothing livid, still her lips were red;
 She had no pulse, but death seem'd absent still;
 No hideous sign proclaim'd her surely dead;
 Corruption came not in each mind to kill
 All hope; to look upon her sweet face bred
 New thoughts of life, for it seem'd full of soul—
 She had so much, earth could not claim the whole.

The ruling passion, such as marble shows
 When exquisitely chisell'd, still lay there,
 But fix'd as marble's unchanged aspect throws
 O'er the fair Venus, but for ever fair;
 O'er the Laocoon's all eternal throes,
 And ever-dying Gladiator's air,
 Their energy like life forms all their tame,
 Yet looks not life, for they are still the same.—

She woke at length, but not as sleepers wake,
 Rather the dead, for life seem'd something new,
 A strange sensation which she must partake
 Perforce, since whatsoever met her view
 Struck not her memory, though a heavy ache
 Lay at her heart, whose earliest beat still true
 Brought back the sense of pain without the cause,
 For, for a while the furies made a pause.

She look'd on many a face with vacant eye,
 On many a token without knowing what;
 She saw them watch her without asking why;
 And reck'd not who around her pillow sat;
 Not speechless, though she spoke not; not a sigh
 Relieved her thoughts; dull silence and quick chat
 Were tried in vain by those who served; she gave
 No sign, save breath, of having left the grave.

Her handmaids tended, but she heeded not;
 Her father watch'd, she turn'd her eyes away;
 She recognised no being, and no spot,
 However dear or cherish'd in their day;
 They changed from room to room, but all forgot,
 Gentle, but without memory she lay;
 At length those eyes, which they would fain be weaning
 Back to old thoughts, waxed full of fearful meaning.

And then a slave bethought her of a harp,
 The harper came, and tuned his instrument;
 At the first notes, irregular and sharp,
 On him her flashing eyes a moment bent,
 Then to the wall she turn'd as if to warp
 Her thoughts from sorrow through her heart resent;
 And he begun a long low island song
 Of ancient days, ere tyranny grew strong.

Anon her thin wan fingers beat the wall
 In time to his old tune; he changed the theme,
 And sung of love; the fierce name struck through all
 Her recollection; on her flash'd the dream
 Of what she was, and is, if ye could call
 To be so being; in a gushing stream
 The tears rush'd forth from her o'erclouded brain,
 Like mountain mists at length dissolved in rain.

Short solace, vain relief!—thought came too quick,
 And whirl'd her brain to madness; she arose
 As one who ne'er had dwelt among the sick,
 And flew at all she met, as on her foes;
 But no one ever heard her speak or shriek,
 Although her paroxysm drew towards its close;—
 Hers was a frenzy which disdain'd to rave,
 Even when they smote her in the hope to save.

Yet she betray'd at times a gleam of sense;
 Nothing could make her meet her father's face,
 Though on all other things with looks intense
 She gazed, but none she ever could retrace;
 Food she refused, and raiment; no pretence
 Avail'd for either; neither change of place,
 Nor time, nor skill, nor remedy, could give her
 Senses to sleep—the power seem'd gone for ever.

Twelve days and nights she wither'd thus; at last,
 Without a groan, or sigh, or glance, to show

A parting pang, the spirit from her past:
 And they who watch'd her nearest could not know
 The very instant, till the change that cast
 Her sweet face into shadow, dull and slow,
 Glazed o'er her eyes—the beautiful, the black—
 Oh! to possess such lustre—and then lack!

That isle is now all desolate and bare,
 Its dwellings down, its tenants pass'd away;
 None but her own and father's grave is there,
 And nothing outward tells of human clay;
 Ye could not know where lies a thing so fair,
 No stone is there to show, no tongue to say
 What was; no dirge, except the hollow sea's,
 Mourns o'er the beauty of the Cyclades.

FAME.

OF poets who come down to us through distance
 Of time and tongues, the foster-babes of Fame,
 Life seems the smallest portion of existence;
 Where twenty ages gather o'er a name,
 'Tis as a snowball which derives assistance
 From every flake, and yet rolls on the same,
 Even till an iceberg it may chance to grow;
 But, after all, 'tis nothing but cold snow.

And so great names are nothing more than nominal,
 And love of glory's but an airy lust,
 Too often in its fury overcoming all
 Who would as 'twere identify their dust
 From out the wide destruction, which, entombing all,
 Leaves nothing till "the coming of the just"—
 Save change: I've stood upon Achilles' tomb,
 And heard Troy doubted; time will doubt of Rome.

The very generations of the dead
 Are swept away, and tomb inherits tomb,
 Until the memory of an age is fled,
 And, buried, sinks beneath its offspring's doom:
 Where are the epitaphs our fathers read?
 Save a few glean'd from the sepulchral gloom
 Which once-named myriads nameless lie beneath,
 And lose their own in universal death.

I canter by the spot each afternoon
 Where perish'd in his fame the hero-boy,
 Who lived too long for men, but died too soon
 For human vanity, the young De Foix!
 A broken pillar, not uncouthly hewn,
 But which neglect is hastening to destroy,
 Records Ravenna's carnage on its face,
 While weeds and ordure rankle round the base.

I pass each day where Dante's bones are laid :
 A little cupola, more neat than solemn,
 Protects his dust, but reverence here is paid
 To the bard's tomb, and not the warrior's column :
 The time must come, when both alike decay'd,
 The chieftain's trophy, and the poet's volume,
 Will sink where lie the songs and wars of earth,
 Before Pelides' death, or Homer's birth.

Yet there will still be bards : though fame is smoke,
 Its fumes are frankincense to human thought ;
 And the unquiet feelings, which first woke
 Song in the world, will seek what then they sought
 As on the beach the waves at last are broke,
 Thus to their extreme verge the passions brought
 Dash into poetry, which is but passion,
 Or at least was so ere it grew a fashion.

If in the course of such a life as was
 At once adventurous and contemplative,
 Men who partake all passions as they pass,
 Acquire the deep and bitter power to give
 Their images again as in a glass,
 And in such colours that they seem to live ;
 You may do right forbidding them to show 'em,
 But spoil (I think) a very pretty poem.

THE SLAVE MARKET.

'Twas a raw day of Autumn's bleak beginning,
 When nights are equal, but not so the days ;
 The Parca then cut short the further spinning
 Of seamen's fates, and the loud tempests raise
 The waters, and repentance for past sinning
 In all, who o'er the great deep take their ways .
 They vow to amend their lives, and yet they don't ;
 Because if drown'd, they can't—if spared, they won't

A crowd of shivering slaves of every nation,
 And age, and sex, were in the market ranged ;
 Each boy with the merchant in his station :
 Poor creatures ! their good looks were sadly changed .
 All save the blacks seem'd jaded with vexation,
 From friends, and home, and freedom far estranged ;
 The negroes more philosophy display'd,—
 Used to it, no doubt, as eels are to be flay'd.

Like a backgammon-board the place was dotted
 With whites and blacks, in groups on show for sale,
 Though rather more irregularly spotted :
 Some bought the jet, while others chose the pale
 It chanced amongst the other people lotted,
 A man of thirty, rather stout and hale,
 With resolution in his dark grey eye,
 Next Juan stood, till some might choose to buy

He had an English look ; that is, was square
 In make, of a complexion white and ruddy,
 Good teeth, with curling rather dark brown hair,
 And, it might be, from thought, or toil, or study,
 An open brow a little marked with care :
 One arm had on a bandage rather bloody ;
 And there he stood with such *sang-froid*, that greater
 Could scarce be shown even by a mere spectator

Just now a black old neutral personage
 Of the third sex stepp'd up, and peering over
 The captives seem'd to mark their looks and age,
 And capabilities, as to discover
 If they were fitted for the purposed cage :
 No lady e'er is ogled by a lover,
 Horse by a blackleg, broadcloth by a tailor,
 Fee by a counsel, felon by a jailor,

As is a slave by his intended bidder.
 'Tis pleasant purchasing our fellow-creatures ;
 And all are to be sold, if you consider
 Their passions, and are dext'rous ; some by features
 Are bought up, others by a warlike leader,
 Some by a place—as tend their years or natures ;
 The most by ready cash—but all have prices,
 From crowns to kicks, according to their vices.

The eunuch having eyed them o'er with care,
 Turn'd to the merchant, and began to bid
 First but for one, and after for the pair ;
 They haggled, wrangled, swore, too—so they did !
 As though they were in a mere Christian fair
 Cheapening an ox, an ass, a lamb, or kid ;
 So that their bargain sounded like a battle
 For this superior yoke of human cattle.

At last they settled into simple grumbling,
 And pulling out reluctant purses, and
 Turning each piece of silver o'er, and tumbling
 Some down, and weighing others in their hand,
 And by mistake sequins with paras jumbling,
 Until the sum was accurately scann'd,
 And then the merchant giving charge, and signing
 Receipts in full, began to think of dining.

I wonder if his appetite was good ?
 Or, if it were, if also his digestion ?
 Methinks at meals some odd thoughts might intrude,
 And conscience ask a curious sort of question,
 About the right divine how far we should
 Sell flesh and blood. When dinner has oppress'd one,
 I think it is perhaps the gloomiest hour
 Which turns up out of the sad twenty-four.

THE ASSASSINATION.

THE other evening ('twas on Friday last)—
 This is a fact, and no poetic fable—
 Just as my great coat was about me cast,
 My hat and gloves still lying on the table,
 I heard a shot—'twas eight o'clock scarce past—
 And, running out as fast as I was able,
 I found the military commandant
 Stretch'd in the street, and able scarce to pant.
 Poor fellow! for some reason, surely bad,
 They had slain him with five slugs; and left him there
 To perish on the pavement: so I had
 Him borne into the house and up the stair,
 And stripp'd, and look'd to,—But why should I add
 More circumstances? vain was every care;
 The man was gone: in some Italian quarrel
 Kill'd by five bullets from an old gun-barrel.
 I gazed upon him, for I knew him well;
 And though I have seen many corpses, never
 Saw one, whom such an accident befell,
 So calm; though pierced through stomach, heart, and liver
 He seem'd to sleep,—for you could scarcely tell
 (As he bled inwardly, no hideous river
 Of gore divulged the cause) that he was dead:
 So as I gazed on him, I thought or said—
 "Can this be death? then what is life or death?
 Speak!" but he spoke not: "wake!" but still he slept:—
 "But yesterday and who had mightier breath?
 A thousand warriors by his word were kept
 In awe: he said, as the centurion saith,
 'Go,' and he goeth; 'come,' and forth he stepp'd.
 The trump and bugle till he spake were dumb—
 And now nought left him but the muffled drum,"
 And they who waited once and worshipp'd—they
 With their rough faces throng'd about the bed
 To gaze once more on the commanding clay
 Which for the last, though not the first time, bled:
 And such an end! that he who many a day
 Had faced Napoleon's foes until they fled,—
 The foremost in the charge or in the sally,
 Should now be butcher'd in a civic alley.

LOVE AND GLORY.

O LOVE! O Glory! what are ye who fly
 Around us ever, rarely to alight?
 There's not a meteor in the polar sky
 Of such transcendent and more fleeting flight.

Chill, and chained to cold earth, we lift on high
 Our eyes in search of either lovely light;
 A thousand and a thousand colours they
 Assume, then leave us on our freezing way.

AULD LANG SYNE.

AND all our little feuds, at least all *mine*,
 Dear Jeffrey, once my most redoubted foe
 (As far as rhyme and criticism combine
 To make such puppets of us things below),
 Are over: Here's a health to "Auld Lang Syne!"
 I do not know you, and may never know
 Your face—but you have acted on the whole
 Most nobly, and I own it from my soul.
 And when I use the phrase of "Auld Lang Syne!"
 'Tis not address'd to you—the more's the pity
 For me, for I would rather take my wine
 With you, than aught (save Scott) in your proud city.
 But somehow,—it may seem a schoolboy's whine,
 And yet I seek not to be grand nor witty,
 But I am half a Scot by birth, and bred
 A whole one, and my heart flies to my head,—
 As "Auld Lang Syne" brings Scotland, one and all,
 Scotch plaids, Scotch snoods, the blue hills, and clear streams
 The Dee, the Don, Balgounie's brig's *black wall*,
 All my boy feelings, all my gentler dreams
 Of what I *then dreamt*, clothed in their own pall,
 Like Banquo's offspring;—floating past me seems
 My childhood in this childishness of mine:
 I care not—'tis a glimpse of "Auld Lang Syne."
 And though, as you remember, in a fit
 Of wrath and rhyme, when juvenile and curly,
 I rail'd at Scots to show my wrath and wit,
 Which must be own'd was sensitive and surly,
 Yet 'tis in vain such sallies to permit,
 They cannot quench young feelings fresh and early.
 I "*scotch'd* not kill'd" the Scotchman in my blood,
 And love the land of "mountain and of flood."

THE BLACK FRIAR.

BEWARE! beware! of the Black Friar,
 Who sitteth by Norman stone,
 For he mutters his prayer in the midnight air,
 And his mass of the days that are gone.
 When the Lord of the Hill, Amundeville,
 Made Norman Church his prey,
 And expell'd the friars, one friar still
 Would not be driven away.

Though he came in his might, with King Henry's right,
 To turn church lands to lay,
 With sword in hand, and torch to light
 Their walls, if they said nay;
 A monk remained, unchased, unchained,
 And he did not seem form'd of clay,
 For he's seen in the porch, and he's seen in the church.
 Though he is not seen by day.

And whether for good, or whether for ill,
 It is not mine to say;
 But still with the house of Amundeville
 He abideth night and day.
 By the marriage-bed of their lords, 'tis said,
 He flits on the bridal eve;
 And 'tis held as faith, to their bed of death
 He comes—but not to grieve.

When an heir is born, he's heard to mourn,
 And when aught is to befall
 That ancient line, in the pale moonshine
 He walks from hall to hall.
 His form you may trace, but not his face,
 'Tis shadow'd by his cowl:
 But his eyes may be seen from the folds between,
 And they seem of a parted soul.

But beware! beware! of the Black Friar,
 He still retains his sway,
 For he is yet the church's heir,
 Whoever may be the lay.
 Amundeville is lord by day,
 But the monk is lord by night;
 Nor wine nor wassail could raise a vassal
 To question that friar's right.

Say nought to him as he walks the hall,
 And he'll say nought to you;
 He sweeps along in his dusky pall,
 As o'er the grass the dew.
 Then grammercy! for the Black Friar;
 Heaven sain him! fair or foul,
 And whatsoe'er may be his prayer,
 Let ours be for his soul.

NORMAN OR NEWSTEAD ABBEY.

To Norman Abbey whirl'd the noble pair,—
 An old, old monastery once, and now
 Still older mansion,—of a rich and rare
 Mix'd Gothic, such as artists all allow
 Few specimens yet left us can compare
 Withal: it lies perhaps a little low,

Because the monks preferr'd a hill behind,
 To shelter their devotion from the wind.

It stood embosom'd in a happy valley,
 Crown'd by high woodlands, where the Druid oak
 Stood like Caractacus in act to rally
 His host, with broad arms 'gainst the thunderstroke;
 And from beneath his boughs were seen to sally
 The dappled foresters—as day awoke,
 The branching stag swept down with all his herd,
 To quaff a brook which murmur'd like a bird.

Before the mansion lay a lucid lake,
 Broad as transparent, deep, and freshly fed
 By a river, which its soften'd way did take
 In currents through the calmer water spread
 Around: the wildfowl nestled in the brake
 And sedges, brooding in their liquid bed;
 The woods sloped downwards to its brink, and stood
 With their green faces fix'd upon the flood.

Its outlet dash'd into a deep cascade,
 Sparkling with foam, until again subsiding,
 Its shriller echoes—like an infant made
 Quiet—sank into softer ripples, gliding
 Into a rivulet; and thus allay'd,
 Pursued its course, now gleaming, and now hiding
 Its windings through the woods; now clear, now blue,
 According as the skies their shadows threw.

A glorious remnant of the Gothic pile
 (While yet the church was Rome's) stood half apart
 In a grand arch, which once screen'd many an aisle.
 These last had disappear'd—a loss to art:
 The first yet frown'd superbly o'er the soil,
 And kindled feelings in the roughest heart,
 Which mourn'd the power of time's or tempest's march,
 In gazing on that venerable arch.

Within a niche, nigh to its pinnacle,
 Twelve saints had once stood sanctified in stone;
 But these had fallen, not when the friars fell,
 But in the war which struck Charles from his throne,
 When each house was a fortalice—as tell
 The annals of full many a line undone,—
 The gallant cavaliers, who fought in vain
 For those who knew not to resign or reign.

But in a higher niche, alone, but crown'd,
 The Virgin Mother of the God-born Child,
 With her Son in her blessed arms, look'd round,
 Spared by some chance when all beside was spoil'd;
 She made the earth below seem holy ground.
 This may be superstition, weak or wild,
 But even the faintest relics of a shrine
 Of any worship wake some thoughts divine.

A mighty window, hollow in the centre,
 Shorn of its glass of thousand colourings,
 Through which the deepen'd glories once could enter,
 Streaming from off the sun like seraph's wings,
 Now yawns all desolate: now loud, now fainter,
 The gale sweeps through its fretwork, and oft sings
 The owl his anthem, where the silenced quire
 Lie with their hallelujahs quench'd like fire.

But in the noontide of the moon, and when
 The wind is winged from one point of heaven,
 There moans a strange unearthly sound, which then
 Is musical—a dying accent driven
 Through the huge arch, which soars and sings again.
 Some deem it but the distant echo given
 Back to the night wind by the waterfall,
 And harmonized by the old choral wall:

Others, that some original shape, or form
 Shaped by decay perchance, hath given the power
 (Though less than that of Memnon's statue, warm
 In Egypt's rays, to harp at a fix'd hour)
 To this grey ruin, with a voice to charm.
 Sad, but serene, it sweeps o'er tree or tower;
 The cause I know not, nor can solve; but such
 The fact—I've heard it,—once perhaps too much.

Amidst the court a Gothic fountain play'd,
 Symmetrical, but deck'd with carvings quaint—
 Strange faces, like to men in masquerade,
 And here perhaps a monster, there a saint:
 The spring gush'd through grim mouths of granite made
 And sparkled into basins, where it spent
 Its little torrent in a thousand bubbles,
 Like man's vain glory, and his vainer troubles.

The mansion's self was vast and venerable,
 With more of the monastic than has been
 Elsewhere preserved: the cloisters still were stable,
 The cells, too, and refectory, I ween;
 An exquisite small chapel had been able,
 Still unimpair'd, to decorate the scene;
 The rest had been reform'd, replaced, or sunk,
 And spoke more of the baron than the monk.

Huge halls, long galleries, spacious chambers, join'd
 By no quite lawful marriage of the arts,
 Might shock a connoisseur; but when combined,
 Form'd a whole, which, irregular in parts,
 Yet left a grand impression on the mind,
 At least of those whose eyes are in their hearts.

MAZEPPA

I.

'Twas after dread Pultowa's day,
 When fortune left the royal Swede,
 Around a slaughter'd army lay,
 No more to combat and to bleed.
 The power and glory of the war,
 Faithless as their vain votaries, men,
 Had pass'd to the triumphant Czar,
 And Moscow's walls were safe again,
 Until a day more dark and drear,
 And a more memorable year,
 Should give to slaughter and to shame
 A mightier host and haughtier name;
 A greater wreck, a deeper fall,
 A shock to one—a thunderbolt to all.

II.

Such was the hazard of the die;
 The wounded Charles was taught to fly,
 By day and night, through field and flood,
 Stain'd with his own and subjects' blood;
 For thousands fell that fight to aid:
 And not a voice was heard t' upbraid
 Ambition in his humbled hour,
 When truth had nought to dread from power
 His horse was slain, and Gieta gave
 His own—and died the Russians' slave.
 This too sinks after many a league
 Of well sustain'd, but vain fatigue;
 And in the depth of forests, darkling,
 The watch-fires in the distance sparkling—
 The beacons of surrounding foes—
 A king must lay his limbs at length.
 Are these the laurels and repose
 For which the nations strain their strength
 They laid him by a savage tree,
 In outworn nature's agony;
 His wounds were stiff—his limbs were stark—
 The heavy hour was chill and dark;
 The fever in his blood forbade
 A transient slumber's fitful aid:
 And thus it was; but yet, through all,
 Kinglike the monarch bore his fall,

And made, in this extreme of ill,
His pangs the vassals of his will:
All silent and subdued were they,
As once the nations round him lay.

III.

A band of chiefs!—alas! how few,
Since but the fleeting of a day
Had thinn'd it; but this wreck was true
And chivalrous: upon the clay
Each sate him down, all sad and mute,
Beside his monarch and his steed,
For danger levels man and brute,
And all are fellows in their need.
Among the rest, Mazeppa made
His pillow in an old oak's shade,—
Himself as rough, and scarce less old,
The Ukraine's hetman, calm and bold:
But first, outspent with this long course,
The Cossack prince rubb'd down his horse,
And made for him a leafy bed,
And smooth'd his fetlocks and his mane,
And slack'd his girth, and stripp'd his rein,
And joy'd to see how well he fed;
For until now he had the dread
His wearied courser might refuse
To browse beneath the midnight dews
But he was hardy as his lord,
And little cared for bed and board:
But spirited and docile too;
Whate'er was to be done, would do.
Shaggy and swift, and strong of limb,
All Tartar-like he carried him;
Obey'd his voice, and came to call,
And knew him in the midst of all:
Though thousands were around,—and Night
Without a star, pursued her flight,—
That steed from sunset until dawn
His chief would follow like a fawn.

IV

This done, Mazeppa, spread his cloak,
And laid his lance beneath his oak,
Felt if his arms in order good
The long day's march had well withstood—
If still the powder fill'd the pan,
And flints unloosen'd kept their lock—
His sabre's hilt and scabbard felt,
And whether they had chafed his belt—
And next the venerable man,
From out his havresack and can,
Prepared and spread his slender stock,
And to the monarch and his men
The whole or portion offer'd then,
With far less of inquietude

Than courtiers at a banquet would.
And Charles of this his slender share
With smiles partook a moment there,
To force of cheer a greater show,
And seem above both wounds and woe;—
And then he said—"Of all our band,
Though firm of heart and strong of hand,
In skirmish, march, or forage none
Can less have said or more have done
Than thee, Mazeppa? On the earth
So fit a pair had never birth,
Since Alexander's days till now,
As thy Bucephalus and thou:
All Scythia's fame to thine should yield
For pricking on o'er flood and field."
Mazeppa answer'd—"Ill betide
The school wherein I learn'd to ride!"
Quoth Charles—"Old Hetman, wherefore so,
Since thou hast learn'd the art so well?"
Mazeppa said—"Twere long to tell;
And we have many a league to go,
With every now and then a blow,
And ten to one at least the foe,
Before our steeds may graze at ease
Beyond the swift Borysthenes:
And, sire, your limbs have need of rest,
And I will be the sentinel
Of this your troop."—"But I request,"
Said Sweden's monarch, "thou wilt tell
This tale of thine, and I may reap,
Perchance, from this the boon of sleep;
For at this moment from my eyes
The hope of present slumber flies."

"Well, sire, with such a hope, I'll track
My seventy years of memory back:
I think 'twas in my twentieth spring,—
Ay, 'twas when Casimir was king—
John Casimir,—I was his page
Six summers, in my earlier age:
A learned monarch, faith! was he,
And most unlike your majesty:
He made no wars, and did not gain
New realms to lose them back again;
And (save debates in Warsaw's Diet)
He reign'd in most unseemly quiet;
Not that he had no cares to vex,
He loved the muses and the sex;
And sometimes these so froward are,
They made him wish himself at war;
But soon his wrath being o'er, he took
Another mistress, or new book;
And then he gave prodigious fêtes—
All Warsaw gather'd round his gates
To gaze upon his splendid court.

And dames, and chiefs, of princely port :
 He was the Polish Solomon,
 So sung his poets, all but one,
 Who, being unpension'd, made a satire,
 And boasted that he could not flatter.
 It was a court of jousts and mimes,
 Where every courtier tried at rhymes ;
 Even I for once produced some verses,
 And sign'd my odes ' Despairing Thyrsis.'
 There was a certain Palatine,
 A count of far and high descent,
 Rich as a salt or silver mine ;
 And he was proud, ye may divine,
 As if from heaven he had been sent :
 He had such wealth in blood and ore
 As few could match beneath the throne
 And he would gaze upon his store,
 And o'er his pedigree would pore,
 Until by some confusion led,
 Which almost look'd like want of head,
 He thought their merits were his own.
 His wife was not of his opinion—
 His junior she by thirty years—
 Grew daily tired of his dominion ;
 And, after wishes, hopes, and fears,
 To virtue a few farewell tears,
 A restless dream or two, some glances
 At Warsaw's youth, some songs and dances
 Awaited but the usual chances,
 Those happy accidents which render
 The coldest dames so very tender,
 To deck her Count with titles given,
 'Tis said, as passports into heaven ;
 But, strange to say, they rarely boast
 Of these, who have deserved them most.

v.

"I was a goodly stripling then ;
 At seventy years I so may say,
 That there were few, or boys or men,
 Who, in my dawning time of day,
 Of vassal or of knight's degree,
 Could vie in vanities with me ;
 For I had strength, youth, gaiety,
 A port, not like to this ye see,
 But smooth, as all is rugged now ;
 For time, and care, and war, have plough'd
 My very soul from out my brow ;
 And thus I should be disavow'd
 By all my kind and kin, could they
 Compare my day and yesterday ;
 This change was wrought, too, long ere age
 Had ta'en my features for his page :
 With years, ye know, have not declined
 My strength, my courage, or my mind,

Or at this hour I should not be
 Telling old tales beneath a tree,
 With starless skies my canopy.
 But let me on : Theresa's form—
 Methinks it glides before me now,
 Between me and yon chestnut's bough,
 The memory is so quick and warm ;
 And yet I find no words to tell
 The shape of her I loved so well :
 She had the Asiatic eye,
 Such as our Turkish neighbourhood,
 Hath mingled with our Polish blood,
 Dark as above us is the sky ;
 But through it stole a tender light,
 Like the first moonrise of midnight ;
 Large, dark, and swimming in the stream,
 Which seem'd to melt to its own beam ;
 All love, half languor, and half fire,
 Like saints that at the stake expire,
 And lift their raptur'd looks on high,
 As though it were a joy to die.
 A brow like a midsummer lake,
 Transparent with the sun therein,
 When waves no murmur dare to make,
 And heaven beholds her face within.
 A cheek and lip—but why proceed ?
 I loved her then—I love her still ;
 And such as I am love indeed
 In fierce extremes—in good and ill.
 But still we love even in our rage,
 And haunted to our very age
 With the vain shadow of the past,
 As is Mazeppa to the last.

vi.

"We met—we gazed—I saw, and sigh'd—
 She did not speak, and yet replied ;
 There are ten thousand tones and signs
 We hear and see, but none defines—
 Involuntary sparks of thought,
 Which strike from out the heart o'erwrought
 And form a strange intelligence,
 Alike mysterious and intense,
 Which link the burning chain that binds,
 Without their will, young hearts and minds ;
 Conveying, as the electric wire,
 We know not how, the absorbing fire.—
 I saw, and sigh'd—in silence wept,
 And still reluctant distance kept,
 Until I was made known to her,
 And we might then and there confer
 Without suspicion—then, even then,
 I long'd, and was resolved to speak ;
 But on my lips they died again,
 The accents tremulous and weak.

Until one hour.—There is a game,
 A frivolous and foolish play,
 Wherewith we while away the day;
 It is—I have forgot the name—
 And we to this, it seems, were set,
 By some strange chance, which I forgot:
 I reck'd not if I won or lost,
 It was enough for me to be
 So near to hear, and oh! to see
 The being whom I loved the most.—
 I watch'd her as a sentinel,
 (May ours this dark night watch as well!)
 Until I saw, and thus it was,
 That she was pensive, nor perceived
 Her occupation, nor was grieved
 Nor glad to lose or gain; but still
 Play'd on for hours, as if her will
 Yet bound her to the place, though not
 That hers might be the winning lot.
 Then through my brain the thought did pass
 Even as a flash of lightning there,
 That there was something in her air
 Which would not doom me to despair;
 And on the thought my words broke forth,
 All incoherent as they were—
 Their eloquence was little worth,
 But yet she listen'd—'tis enough—
 Who listens once will listen twice;
 Her heart, be sure, is not of ice,
 And one refusal no rebuff.

VII.

"I loved, and was beloved again—
 They tell me, sire, you never knew
 Those gentle frailties; if 'tis true,
 I shorten all my joy or pain;
 To you 'twould seem absurd as vain,
 But all men are not born to reign,
 Or o'er their passions, or as you
 Thus o'er themselves and nations too.
 I am—or rather *was*—a prince,
 A chief of thousands, and could lead
 Them on where each would foremost bleed:
 But could not o'er myself evince
 The like control—but to resume:
 I loved, and was beloved again;
 In sooth, it is a happy doom,
 But yet where happiest ends in pain.—
 We met in secret, and the hour
 Which led me to that lady's bower
 Was fiery Expectation's dower.
 My days and nights were nothing—all
 Except that hour which doth recall
 In the long lapse from youth to age
 No other like itself—I'd give

The Ukraine back again to live
 It o'er once more—and be a page,
 The happy page, who was the lord
 Of one soft heart, and his own sword,
 And had no other gem nor wealth
 Save nature's gift of youth and health.—
 We met in secret—doubly sweet,
 Some say, they find it so to meet;
 I know not that—I would have given
 My life but to have call'd her mine
 In the full view of earth and heaven;
 For I did oft and long repine
 That we could only meet by stealth.

VIII.

"For lovers there are many eyes,
 And such there were on us;—the devil
 On such occasions should be civil—
 The devil!—I'm lothe to do him wrong,
 It might be some untoward saint,
 Who would not be at rest too long,
 But to his pious bile gave vent—
 But one fair night, some lurking spies
 Surprised and seized us both.
 The Count was something more than wroth—
 I was unarm'd; but if in steel,
 All cap-à-pie from head to heel.
 What 'gainst their numbers could I do?—
 'Twas near his castle, far away
 From city or from succour near,
 And almost on the break of day;
 I did not think to see another,
 My moments seem'd reduced to few
 And with one prayer to Mary Mother,
 And, it may be, a saint or two,
 As I resign'd me to my fate,
 They led me to the castle gate:
 Theresa's doom I never knew,
 Our lot was henceforth separate.—
 An angry man, ye may opine,
 Was he, the proud Count Palatine;
 And he had reason good to be,
 But he was most enraged lest such
 An accident should chance to touch
 Upon his future pedigree;
 Nor less amazed, that such a blot
 His noble 'scutcheon should have got.
 While he was highest of his line;
 Because unto himself he seem'd
 The first of men, nor less he deem'd
 In other's eyes, and most in mine.
 'Sdeath! with a *page*—perchance a king
 Had reconciled him to the thing;
 But with a stripling of a page—
 I felt—but cannot paint his rage.

IX.

"Bring forth the horse!"—the horse was brought
 In truth, he was a noble steed,
 A Tartar of the Ukraine breed,
 Who look'd as though the speed of thought
 Were in his limbs; but he was wild,
 Wild as the wild deer, and untaught,
 With spur and bridle undefiled—
 'Twas but a day he had been caught
 And snorting, with erected mane,
 And struggling fiercely, but in vain,
 In the full foam of wrath and dread
 To me the desert-born was led:
 They bound me on, that menial throng,
 Upon his back with many a thong;
 They loosed him with a sudden lash—
 Away!—away!—and on we dash!—
 Torrents less rapid and less rash.

X.

"Away!—away!—My breath was gone—
 I saw not where he hurried on:
 'Twas scarcely yet the break of day,
 And on he foam'd—away!—away!—
 The last of human sounds which rose,
 As I was darted from my foes,
 Was the wild shout of savage laughter,
 Which on the wind came roaring after
 A moment from that rabble rout:
 With sudden wrath I wrench'd my head,
 And snapp'd the cord, which to the mane
 Had bound my neck in lieu of rein,
 And writhing half my form about,
 Howl'd back my curse; but 'midst the tread,
 The thunder of my courser's speed,
 Perchance they did not hear nor heed.
 It vexes me—for I would fain
 Have paid their insult back again.
 I paid it well in after days:
 There is not of that castle gate,
 Its drawbridge and portcullis' weight,
 Stone, bar, moat, bridge, or barrier left;
 Nor of its fields a blade of grass,
 Save what grows on a ridge of wall,
 Where stood the hearth-stone of the hall
 And many a time ye there might pass,
 Nor dream that e'er that fortress was:
 I saw its turrets in a blaze,
 Their crackling battlements all cleft,
 And the hot lead pour down like rain
 From off the scorch'd and blackening roof,
 Whose thickness was not vengeance-proof.
 They little thought that day of pain,
 When launch'd, as on the lightning's flash,

They bade me to destruction dash.
 That one day I should come again,
 With twice five thousand horse, to thank
 The Count for his uncourteous ride.
 They play'd me then a bitter prank,
 When, with the wild horse for my guide,
 They bound me to his foaming flank:
 At length I play'd them one as frank—
 For time at last sets all things even—
 And if we do but watch the hour,
 There never yet was human power
 Which could evade, if unforgiven,
 The patient search and vigil long
 Of him who treasures up a wrong.

XI.

"Away, away, my steed and I,
 Upon the pinions of the wind,
 All human dwellings left behind;
 We sped like meteors through the sky,
 When with its crackling sound the night
 Is chequer'd with the northern light:
 Town—village—none were on our track,
 But a wild plain of far extent,
 And bounded by a forest black;
 And, save the scarce seen battlement
 On distant heights of some strong hold,
 Against the Tartars built of old,
 No trace of man. The year before
 A Turkish army had march'd o'er;
 And where the Spahi's hoof hath trod,
 The verdure flies the bloody sod:—
 The sky was dull, and dim, and gray,
 And a low breeze crept moaning by—
 I could have answer'd with a sigh—
 But fast we fled, away, away—
 And I could neither sigh nor pray;
 And my cold sweat-drops fell like rain
 Upon the courser's bristling mane;
 But, snorting still with rage and fear,
 He flew upon his far career:
 At times I almost thought, indeed,
 He must have slacken'd in his speed;
 But no—my bound and slender frame
 Was nothing to his angry might,
 And merely like a spur became:
 Each motion which I made to free
 My swollen limbs from their agony
 Increased his fury and affright:
 I tried my voice,—'twas faint and low,
 But yet he swerved as from a blow;
 And, starting to each accent, sprang
 As from a sudden trumpet's clang:
 Meantime my cords were wet with gore,
 Which oozing through my limbs, ran o'er:

And in my tongue the thirst became
A something fierier far than flame.

XII.

"We near'd the wild wood—'twas so wide,
I saw no bounds on either side:
'Twas studded with old sturdy trees,
That bent not to the roughest breeze
Which howls down from Siberia's waste,
And strips the forest in its haste,—
But these were few, and far between
Set thick with shrubs more young and green,
Luxuriant with their annual leaves,
Ere strown by those autumnal eves
That nip the forest's foliage dead,
Discolour'd with a lifeless red,
Which stands thereon like stiffen'd gore
Upon the slain when battle's o'er,
And some long winter's night hath shed
Its frost o'er every tombless head,
So cold and stark the raven's beak
May peck unpierced each frozen cheek:
'Twas a wild waste of underwood,
And here and there a chestnut stood,
The strong oak, and the hardy pine;
But far apart—and well it were,
Or else a different lot were mine—
The boughs gave way, and did not tear
My limbs; and I found strength to bear
My wounds, already scarr'd with cold—
My bonds forbade to loose my hold,
We rustled through the leaves like wind,
Left shrubs, and trees, and wolves behind.
By night I heard them on the track,
Their troop came hard upon our back,
With their long gallop, which can tire
The hound's deep hate, and hunter's fire:
Where'er we flew they followed on,
Nor left us with the morning sun;
Behind I saw them, scarce a rood,
At daybreak winding through the wood,
And through the night had heard their feet
Their stealing, rustling step repeat.
Oh! how I wish'd for spear or sword,
At least to die amidst the horde,
And perish—if it must be so—
At bay, destroying many a foe.
When first my courser's race begun,
I wish'd the goal already won;
But now I doubted strength and speed.
Vain doubt! his swift and savage breed
Had nerved him like the mountain-roe;
Nor faster falls the blinding snow
Which whelms the peasant near the door
Whose threshold he shall cross no more,

Bewilder'd with the dazzling blast,
Than through the forest-paths he pass'd—
Untired, untamed, and worse than wild;
All furious as a favour'd child
Balk'd of its wish; or fiercer still—
A woman piqued—who has her will.

XIII.

"The wood was past; 'twas more than noon,
But chill the air, although in June;
Or it might be my veins ran cold—
Prolong'd endurance tames the bold;
And I was then not what I seem,
But headlong as a wintry stream,
And wore my feelings out before
I well could count their causes o'er:
And what with fury, fear, and wrath,
The tortures which beset my path,
Cold, hunger, sorrow, shame, distress,
Thus bound in nature's nakedness;
Sprung from a race whose rising blood
When stir'd beyond its calmer mood,
And trodden hard upon, is like
The rattlesnake's, in act to strike,
What marvel if this worn-out trunk
Beneath its woes a moment sunk?
The earth gave way, the skies roll'd round,
I seem'd to sink upon the ground;
But err'd, for I was fastly bound.
My heart turned sick, my brain grew sore,
And throbb'd awhile, then beat no more:
The skies spun like a mighty wheel;
I saw the trees like drunkards reel,
And a slight flash sprang o'er my eyes,
Which saw no further: he who dies
Can die no more than then I died.
O'er-tortured by that ghastly ride,
I felt the blackness come and go,
And strove to wake; but could not make
My senses climb up from below;
I felt as on a plank at sea,
When all the waves that dash o'er thee,
At the same time upheave and whelm,
And hurl thee towards a desert realm.
My undulating life was as
The fancied lights that flitting pass
Our shut eyes in deep midnight, when
Fever begins upon the brain;
But soon it pass'd, with little pain,
But a confusion worse than such:
I own that I should deem it much,
Dying, to feel the same again;
And yet I do suppose we must
Feel far more ere we turn to dust:

No matter; I have bared my brow
Fail in Death's face—before—and now.

XIV.

“My thoughts came back; where was I? Cold,
And numb, and giddy: pulse by pulse
Life reassumed its lingering hold
And throb by throb: till grown a pang
Which for a moment would convulse,
My blood reflow'd though thick and chill
My ear with uncouth noises rang,
My heart began once more to thrill;
My sight return'd, though dim; alas!
And thicken'd, as it were, with glass.
Methought the dash of waves was nigh;
There was a gleam too of the sky,
Studded with stars;—it is no dream;
The wild horse swims the wilder stream.
The bright broad river's gushing tide
Sweeps, winding onward, far and wide,
And we are half-way, struggling o'er
To yon unknown and silent shore.
The waters broke my hollow trance,
And with a temporary strength
My stiffen'd limbs were rebaptized.
My courser's broad breast proudly braves,
And dashes off the ascending waves,
And onward we advance!
We reach the slippery shore at length,
A haven I but little prized,
For all behind was dark and drear
And all before was night and fear.
How many hours of night or day
In those suspended pangs I lay,
I could not tell; I scarcely knew
If this were human breath I drew,

XV.

“With glossy skin, and dripping mane,
And reeling limbs, and reeking flank,
The wild steed's sinewy nerves still strain
Up the repelling bank.
We gain the top: a boundless plain
Spreads through the shadow of the night,
And onward, onward, onward, seems,
Like precipices in our dreams,
To stretch beyond the sight;
And here and there a speck of white,
Or scatter'd spot of dusky green,
In masses broke into the light,
As rose the moon upon my right.
But nought distinctly seen
In the dim waste would indicate
The omen of a cottage gate:
No twinkling taper from afar

Stood like a hospitable star;
Not even an ignis-fatuus rose
To make him merry with my woes:
That very cheat had cheer'd me then!
Although detected, welcome still,
Reminding me, through every ill,
Of the abodes of men.

XVI.

“Onward we went—but slack and slow;
His savage force at length o'erspent,
The drooping courser, faint and low,
All feebly foaming went.
A sickly infant had had power
To guide him forward in that hour;
But useless all to me.
His new-born tameness nought avail'd—
My limbs were bound; my force had fail'd
Perchance, had they been free.
With feeble effort still I tried
To rend the bonds so starkly tied—
But still it was in vain;
My limbs were only wrung the more,
And soon the idle strife gave o'er,
Which but prolonged their pain:
The dizzy race seem'd almost done,
Although no goal was nearly won:
Some streaks announced the coming sun—
How slow, alas! he came!
Methought that mist of dawning gray
Would never dapple into day;
How heavily it roll'd away—
Before the eastern flame
Rose crimson, and deposed the stars,
And call'd the radiance from their cars,
And fill'd the earth, from his deep throne,
With lonely lustre, all his own.

XVII.

“Up rose the sun; the mists were curl'd
Back from the solitary world
Which lay around—behind—before;
What boot'd it to traverse o'er
Plain, forest, river? Man nor brute,
Nor dint of hoof, nor print of foot,
Lay in the wild luxuriant soil;
No sign of travel—none of toil;
The very air was mute;
And not an insect's shrill small horn,
Nor matin bird's new voice was borne
From herb nor thicket. Many a werst
Panting as if his heart would burst,
The weary brute still stagger'd on;
And still we were—or seem'd alone:
At length, while reeling on our way.

Methought I heard a courser neigh,
From out yon tuft of blackening firs.
Is it the wind those branches stirs?
No, no! from out the forest prance

A trampling troop; I see them come!
In one vast squadron they advance!

I strove to cry—my lips were dumb.
The steeds rush on in plunging pride;
But where are they the reins to guide!
A thousand horse—and none to ride
With flowing tail, and flying mane,
Wide nostrils—never stretch'd by pain,
Mouths bloodless to the bit or rein,
And feet that iron never shod,
And flanks unscarr'd by spur or rod,
A thousand horse, the wild, the free,
Like waves that follow o'er the sea,

Came thickly thundering on,
As if our faint approach to meet;
The sight re-nerved my courser's feet,
A moment staggering, feebly fleet,
A moment, with a feint low neigh,
He answer'd, and then fell;

With gasps and glazing eyes he lay,
And reeking limbs immoveable,

His first and last career is done!

On came the troop—they saw him stoop,
They saw me strangely bound along

His back with many a bloody thong:
They stop—they start—they snuff the air,
Gallop a moment here and there,
Approach, retire, wheel round and round,
Then plunging back with sudden bound,
Headed by one black mighty steed,
Who seem'd the patriarch of his breed,
Without a single speck or hair
Of white upon his shaggy hide;
They snort—they foam—neigh—swerve aside
And backward to the forest fly,
By instinct, from a human eye.—

They left me there to my despair,
Link'd to the dead and stiffening wretch,
Whose lifeless limbs beneath me stretch,
Relieved from that unwonted weight,
From whence I could not extricate
Nor him nor me—and there we lay

The dying on the dead!
I little deem'd another day
Would see my houseless, helpless head.

“ And there from morn till twilight bound,
I felt the heavy hours toil round,
With just enough of life to see
My last of suns go down on me,
In hopeless certainty of mind,

That makes us feel at length resign'd
To that which our foreboding years
Presents the worst and last of fears
Inevitable—even a boon,
Nor more unkind for coming soon;
Yet shunn'd and dreaded with such care,
As if it only were a snare

That prudence might escape:
At times both wish'd for and implored,
At times sought with self-pointed sword,
Yet still a dark and hideous close
To even intolerable woes,

And welcome in no shape.
And, strange to say, the sons of pleasure,
They who have revell'd beyond measure
In beauty, wassail, wine, and treasure,
Die calm, or calmer, oft than he
Whose heritage was misery:

For he who hath in turn run through
All that was beautiful and new,

Hath nought to hope, and nought to leave;
And, save the future (which is view'd
Not quite as men are base or good,
But as their nerves may be endued),

With nought perhaps to grieve:—
The wretch still hopes his woes must end,
And Death, whom he should deem his friend,
Appears, to his distemper'd eyes,
Arrived to rob him of his prize,
The tree of his new Paradise.

To-morrow would have given him all,
Repaid his pangs, repair'd his fall;
To-morrow would have been the first
Of days no more deplored or curst,
But bright, and long, and beckoning years,
Seen dazzling through the mist of tears,
Guerdon of many a painful hour;
To-morrow would have given him power
To rule, to shine, to smite, to save—
And must it dawn upon his grave?

XVIII.

“ The sun was sinking—still I lay
Chain'd to the chill and stiffening steed,
I thought to mingle there our clay;
And my dim eyes of death hath need,
No hope arose of being freed:
I cast my last looks up the sky,
And there between me and the sun
I saw the expecting raven fly,
Who scarce would wait till both should die,
Ere his repast begun;
He flew and perch'd, then flew once more,
And each time nearer than before;
I saw his wing through twilight flit,

And once so near me he alit
 I could have smote, but lack'd the strength;
 But the slight motion of my hand,
 And feeble scratching of the sand,
 The exerted throat's faint struggling noise,
 Which scarcely could be call'd a voice,
 Together scared him off at length.—
 I know no more—my latest dream
 Is something of a lovely star
 Which fix'd my dull eyes from afar,
 And went and came with wandering beam
 And of the cold, dull, swimming, dense
 Sensation of recurring sense,
 And then subsiding back to death,
 And then again a little breath,
 A little thrill, a short suspense,
 An icy sickness curdling o'er
 My heart, and sparks than cross'd my brain—
 A gasp, a throb, a start of pain,
 A sigh, and nothing more.

XIX.

"I woke—Where was I?—Do I see
 A human face look down on me?
 And doth a roof above me close?
 Do these limbs on a couch repose?
 Is this a chamber where I lie?
 And is it mortal, yon bright eye,
 That watches me with gentle glance?
 I closed my own again once more,
 As doubtful that the former trance
 Could not as yet be o'er.
 A slender girl, long-hair'd, and tall,
 Sate watching by the cottage wall;
 The sparkle of her eye I caught,
 Even with my first return of thought;
 For ever and anon she threw
 A prying, pitying glance on me
 With her black eyes so wild and free:
 I gazed, and gazed, until I knew
 No vision it could be,—
 But that I lived, and was released
 From adding to the vulture's feast:
 And when the Cossack maid beheld
 My heavy eyes at length unseal'd,
 She smiled—and I essay'd to speak,
 But fail'd—and she approach'd, and made
 With lip and finger signs that said,
 I must not strive as yet to break
 The silence, till my strength should be
 Enough to leave my accents free;
 And then her hand on mine she laid,
 And smooth'd the pillow for my head,
 And stole along on tiptoe tread,
 And gently oped the door, and spake

In whispers—ne'er was voice so sweet!
 Even music follow'd her light feet;—
 But those she call'd were not awake,
 And she went forth; but, ere she pass'd,
 Another look on me she cast,
 Another sign she made, to say,
 That I had not to fear, that all
 Were near, at my command or call,
 And she would not delay
 Her due return:—while she was gone,
 Methought I felt too much alone.

XX.

"She came with mother and with sire—
 What need of more?—I will not tire
 With long recital of the rest.
 Since I became the Cossack's guest
 They found me senseless on the plain—
 They bore me to the nearest hut—
 They brought me into life again—
 Me—one day o'er their realm to reign!
 Thus the vain fool who strove to glut
 His rage, refining on my pain,
 Sent me forth to the wilderness,
 Bound, naked, bleeding, and alone,
 To pass the desert to a throne,—
 What mortal his own doom may guess?—
 Let none despond, let none despair!
 To-morrow the Borysthènes
 May see our coursers graze at ease
 Upon his Turkish bank,—and never
 Had I such welcome for a river
 As I shall yield when safely there.
 Comrades, good night!"—The Hetman threw
 His length beneath the oak-tree shade,
 With leafy couch already made,
 A bed nor comfortless nor new
 To him, who took his rest whene'er
 The hour arrived, no matter where:
 His eyes the hastening slumbers steep,
 And if ye marvel Charles forgot
 To thank his tale, he wonder'd not,—
 The king had been an hour asleep.

ODE ON VENICE.

I.

O Venice! Venice! when thy marble walls
 Are level with the waters, there shall be
 A cry of nations o'er thy sunken halls,
 A loud lament along the sweeping sea!
 If I, a northern wanderer, weep for thee,
 What should thy sons do?—anything but weep
 And yet they only murmur in their sleep.

In contrast with their fathers—as the slime,
 The dull green ooze of the receding deep,
 Is with the dashing of the spring-tide foam,
 That drives the sailor shipless to his home,
 Are they to those that were; and thus they creep,
 Crouching and crab-like, through their sapping streets.
 Oh! agony—that centuries should reap
 No mellow harvest! Thirteen hundred years
 Of wealth and glory turn'd to dust and tears;
 And every monument the stranger meets,
 Church, palace, pillar, as a mourner greets;
 And even the Lion all subdued appears,
 And the harsh sound of the barbarian drum,
 With dull and daily dissonance, repeats
 The echo of thy tyrant's voice along
 The soft waves once all musical to song,
 That heaved beneath the moonlight with the throng
 Of gondolas—and to the busy hum
 Of cheerful creatures, whose most sinful deeds
 Were but the overbeating of the heart,
 And flow of too much happiness, which needs
 The aid of age to turn its course apart
 From the luxuriant and voluptuous flood
 Of sweet sensations, battling with the blood.
 But these are better than the gloomy errors,
 The weeds of nations in their last decay
 When Vice walks forth with her unsoften'd terrors,
 And Mirth is madness, and but smiles to slay;
 And Hope is nothing but a false delay,
 The sick man's lightning half an hour ere death,
 When Faintness, the last mortal birth of Pain,
 And apathy of limb, the dull beginning
 Of the cold staggering race which Death is winning,
 Steals vein by vein and pulse by pulse away;
 Yet so relieving the o'er-tortured clay,
 To him appears renewal of his breath,
 And freedom the mere numbness of his chain;—
 And then he talks of life, and how again
 He feels his spirit soaring—albeit weak,
 And of the fresher air, which he would seek;
 And as he whispers knows not that he gasps,
 That his thin finger feels not what it clasps,
 And so the film comes o'er him—and the dizzy
 Chamber swims round and round—and shadows busy
 At which he vainly catches, flit and gleam,
 Till the last rattle chokes the strangled scream,
 And all is ice and blackness,—and the earth
 That which it was the moment ere our birth.

II.

There is no hope for nations!—Search the page
 Of many thousand years—the daily scene,
 The flow and ebb of each recurring age,
 The everlasting *to be* which *hath been*
 Hath taught us nought or little: still we lean

On things that rot beneath our weight, and wear
 Our strength away in wrestling with the air;
 For 'tis our nature strikes us down: the beasts
 Slaughter'd in hourly hecatombs for feasts
 Are of as high an order—they must go
 Even where their driver goads them, though to slaughter
 Ye men, who pour your blood for kings as water,
 What have they given your children in return?
 A heritage of servitude and woes,
 A blindfold bondage, where your hire is blows.
 What! do not yet the red-hot ploughshares burn,
 O'er which you stumble in a false ordeal,
 And deem this proof of loyalty the *real*;
 Kissing the hand that guides you to your scars,
 And glorying as you tread the glowing bars?
 All that your sires have left you, all that Time
 Bequeaths of free, and History of sublime,
 Spring from a different theme!—Ye see and read,
 Admire and sigh, and then succumb and bleed!
 Save the few spirits, who, despite of all,
 And worse than all, the sudden crimes engender'd
 By the down-thundering of the prison-wall,
 And thirst to swallow the sweet waters tendered,
 Gushing from Freedom's fountains—when the crowd,
 Madden'd with centuries of drought, are loud,
 And trample on each other to obtain
 The cup which brings oblivion of a chain
 Heavy and sore,—in which long yoked they plough'd
 The sand,—or if there sprung the yellow grain,
 'Twas not for them, their necks were too much bow'd.
 And their dead palates chew'd the cud of pain —
 Yes! the few spirits—who, despite of deeds
 Which they abhor, confound not with the cause
 Those momentary starts from Nature's laws,
 Which, like the pestilence and earthquake, smite
 But for a term, then pass, and leave the earth
 With all her seasons to repair the blight
 With a few summers, and again put forth
 Cities and generations—fair, when free—
 For, Tyranny, there blooms no bud for thee!

III.

Glory and Empire! once upon these towers
 With Freedom—godlike Triad! how ye sate!
 The league of mightiest nations, in those hours
 When Venice was an envy, might abate,
 But did not quench, her spirit—in her fate
 All were enwrap'd: the feasted monarchs knew
 And loved their hostess, nor could learn to hate,
 Although they humbled—with the kingly few
 The many felt, for from all days and climes
 She was the voyager's worship!—even her crimes
 Were of the softer order—born of Love
 She drank no blood, nor fatten'd on the dead,
 But gladden'd where her harmless conquests spread

For these restor'd the Cross, that from above
 Hallow'd her sheltering banners, which incessant
 Flew between earth and the unholy Crescent,
 Which, if it waned and dwindled, Earth may thank
 The city it has clothed in chains, which clank
 Now, creaking in the ears of those who owe
 The name of Freedom to her glorious struggles;
 Yet she but shares with them a common woe,
 And call'd the "kingdom" of a conquering foe,—
 But knows what all—and, most of all, *we* know—
 With what set gilded terms a tyrant juggles!

IV.

The name of Commonwealth is past and gone
 O'er the three fractions of the groaning globe
 Venice is crush'd, and Holland deigns to own
 A sceptre, and endures the purple robe:
 If the free Switzer yet bestrides alone
 His chainless mountains, 'tis but for a time,
 For tyranny of late is cunning grown,
 And in its own good season tramples down
 The sparkles of our ashes. One great clime,
 Whose vigorous offspring by dividing ocean
 Are kept apart and nursed in the devotion
 Of Freedom, which their fathers fought for, and
 Bequeath'd—a heritage of heart and hand,
 And proud distinction from each other land,
 Whose sons must bow them at a monarch's motion,
 As if his senseless sceptre were a wand
 Full of the magic of exploded science—
 Still one great clime, in fall and free defiance,
 Yet rears her crest, unconquer'd and sublime,
 Above the far Atlantic!—She has taught
 Her Esau-brethren that the haughty flag,
 The floating fence of Albion's feebl' crag,
 May strike to those whose red right hands have bought
 Rights cheaply earn'd with blood. Still, still, for ever
 Better, though each man's life-blood were a river,
 That it should flow, and overflow, than creep
 Through thousand lazy channels in our veins,
 Damm'd like the dull canal with locks and chains,
 And moving, as a sick man in his sleep,
 Three paces, and then faltering.—better be
 Where the extinguish'd Spartans still are free,
 In their proud chanel of Thermopylae,
 Than stagnate in our marsh,—or o'er the deep
 Fly, and one current to the ocean add,
 One spirit to the souls our fathers had,
 One freeman more, America, to thee!

CAPILLA ALFONSINA

U. A. N. L.

Esta publicación deberá ser devuelta
antes de la última fecha abajo indi-
cada.

PR4350

E57

FL

129227

AUTOR

BYRON, George Gordon Noel B.

TITULO

The poetical works of Lord

BYRON

