Whose shock was as an earthquake's, and opprest
The land which loved thee so that none could love thee best.

173

Lo, Nemi!® navell'd in the woody hills
So far, that the uprooting wind which tears
The oak from his foundation, and which spills
The ocean o'er its boundary, and bears
Its foam against the skies, reluctant spares
The oval mirror of thy glassy lake;
And, calm as cherish'd hate, its surface wears
A deep cold settled aspect nought can shake,
All coil'd into itself and round, as sleeps the snake.

174

And near Albano's scarce divided waves
Shine from a sister valley:—and afar
The Tiber winds, and the broad ocean laves
The Latian coast where sprang the Epic war,®
"Arms and the Man," whose re-ascending star
Rose o'er an empire:—but beneath thy right
Tully® reposed from Rome:—and where yon bar
Of girdling mountains intercepts the sight
The Sabine® farm was till'd, the weary bard's delight.®

175

But I forget,—My Pilgrim's shrine is won,
And he and I must part,—so let it be,—
His task and mine alike are nearly done;
Yet once more let us look upon the sea;
The midland ocean breaks on him and me.
And from the Alban Mount we now behold
Our friend of youth, that ocean, which when we
Beheld it last by Calpe's rock® unfold
Those waves, we follow'd on till the dark Euxine® roll'd

6. "The village of Nemi was near the Arician retreat of Egeria, and, from the shades which embosomed the temple of Diana, has preserved to this day its distinctive appellation of The Grove. Nemi is but an evening's ride from the comfortable inn of Albanus." The basin of the Lago di Nemi is the crater of an extinct volcano, hence the imagery at the end of the stanza.
7. The conquest of Rome as told in Virgil’s Aeneid (19 B.C.E.), which opens with "Arms and the Man" (line 1562).
8. See p. 309, c. 6.
9. Ancient people of northern Italy subjugated by the Romans.
10. "The whole declivity of the Alban hill is of unrivalled beauty, and from the convent on the highest point, which has succeeded to the temple of the Latian Jupiter, the prospect embraces all the objects alluded to in this stanza: the Mediterranean; the whole scene of the latter half of the Aegean; and the coast from beyond the mouth of the Tiber to the headland of Circeus, and the Cape of Ternicina."
176
Upon the blue Sympelgades: long years—
Long, though not very many, since have done
Their work on both: some suffering and some tears
Have left us nearly where we had begun:
Yet not in vain our mortal race hath run,
We have had our reward—and it is here;
That we can yet feel gladden'd by the sun,
And reap from earth, sea, joy almost as dear
As if there were no man to trouble what is clear.

177
Oh! that the Desert were my dwelling-place,
With one fair Spirit for my minister,*
That I might all forget the human race,
And, hating no one, love but only her!
Ye Elements!—in whose ennobling stir
I feel myself exalted—Can ye not
Accord me such a being? Do I err
In deeming such inhabit many a spot?
Though with them to converse can rarely be our lot.

178
There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep Sea, and music in its roar:
I love not Man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet can not all conceal.

179
Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll!!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
 Stops with the shore:—upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown.

180
His steps are not upon thy paths,—thy fields
Are not a spoil for him,—thou dost arise
And shake him from thee; the vile strength he wields
For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
And send'st him, shivering in thy playful spray
And howling, to his Gods, where haply lies
His petty hope in some near port or bay,
And dashest him again to earth:—there let him lay.

181
The armaments which thunderstrike the walls
Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake,
And monarchs tremble in their capitals,
The oak leviathans,* whose huge ribs make
Their clay creator the vain title take
Of lord of thee, and arbiter of war;
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,
They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar
Alike the Armada's* pride or spoils of Trafalgar.

182
Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee—
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage,* what are they?
Thy waters wash'd them* power while they were free,
And many a tyrant since; their shores obey
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay
Has dried up realms to deserts:—not so thou,
Unchangeable save to thy wild waves' play—
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow—
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

183
Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time,
Calm or convulsed—in breeze, or gale, or storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark-heaving:—boundless, endless, and sublime—
The image of Eternity—the throne
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made; each zone
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

4. Lines 1585–88 suggest Byron's thoughts of his sister; cf. "Epistle to Augusta" (p. 241) and Masefield, 2.2 passim (p. 261).
5. I.e., great ships; "leviathans" refers to huge sea creatures (biblical).
6. The Spanish fleet launched against England in 1588; at Cape Trafalgar (southwest Spain) in 1805, the English navy defeated the allied French and Spanish fleets.
7. Assyria: the great empires of the ancient world.
8. washed them power misprinted as "wasted them" in the first and subsequent editions, including 1832.
And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne, like thy bubbles, onward: from a boy
I wanton'd with thy breakers—they to me
Were a delight; and if the freshening sea
Made them a terror—twas a pleasing fear,
For I was as it were a child of thee,
And trusted to thy billows far and near,
And laid my hand upon thy mane—as I do here.

My task is done—my song hath ceased—my theme
Has died into an echo; it is fit
The spell should break of this protracted dream.
The torch shall be extinguish'd which hath lit
My midnight lamp—and what is writ, is writ,—
Would it were worthier! but I am not now
That which I have been—and my visions flit
Less palpably before me—and the glow
Which in my spirit dwelt is fluttering, faint, and low.

Farewell! a word that must be, and hath been—
A sound which makes us linger;—yet—farewell!
Ye! who have traced the Pilgrim to the scene
Which is his last, if in your memories dwell
A thought which once was his, if on ye swell
A single recollection, not in vain
He wore his sandal-shoon, and scallop-shell;
Farewell! with him alone may rest the pain,
If such there were—with you, the moral of his strain!

Beppo  Byron wrote a first draft of Beppo on October 9–10, 1817, while he was staying at La Mira. Over the next several months he continued to write additional stanzas, revise, copy, and eventually correct proofs for the poem, which was published, anonymously, in February 1818. With Beppo Byron simultaneously broke away from the emotionally fraught poems of 1816–17 (of which he, his publisher and, they feared, his readers were beginning to tire) and discovered a genre and stanza that he would use with consummate virtuosity in his great final comic works, Don Juan and The Vision of Judgment. The genre is, broadly, narrative satire, only the traditionally reformative goals of social satire continually compete, on the one hand, with the poet's irresistible impulse "to giggle and make giggle" (BLJ 6:208) and, on the other, with a sense of the pervasiveness of human foibles, self-deception, and the irony of human ideals. The narrative, moreover, is perpetually interrupted by a chatty, cosmopolitan, and facetious narrator, whose opinions and digressions upstage the story—as in fact does the sheer verbal ingenuity of the verse. The stanza form is ottava rima, eight iambic pentameter lines rhyming abababcc, which, though it is used in an overtly clever and highly artful way, still manages to give