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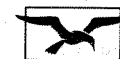
BYRON'S POETRY AND PROSE



AUTHORITATIVE TEXTS
CRITICISM

Selected and Edited by

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having narrowly escaped both shipwreck and Turkish capture. What he did not escape was perhaps his only experience since adolescence of unrequited love. He became deeply attached to Loukas Chalandritsanos, who was fifteen years old when Byron rescued his family of war refugees. Byron made him his page, saw to his family's financial support, and gave poetic form to his passionate feelings in "On This Day I Complete My Thirty-Six Year." Troubled by quarrelling Greek factions and extremists (even at one point arranging the return of Turkish captives), he supported the moderate leader, Mavrocordatos, and helped form an artillery corps of Greek Suliotes. In February, however, Byron suffered severe convulsions, and in April fell seriously ill with a high fever. Further weakened by "bleeding," the only treatment known to his doctors, he died on April 19. Ironically, nothing he could have done in his life could have been as effective as the news of his death in uniting Greece and in gaining for its cause sympathy and support throughout Europe.

POETRY

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

CANTO THE FOURTH¹

Visto ho Toscana, Lombardia, Romagna,
 Quel Monte che divide, e quel che serra
 Italia, e un mare e l'altro, che la bagna.

Ariosto, Satira iii.

Venice, January 2, 1818.

TO JOHN HOBHOUSE, ESQ. A.M. F.R.S. &c. &c. &c.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,

After an interval of eight years between the composition of the first and last cantos of *Childe Harold*, the conclusion of the poem is about to be submitted to the public. In parting with so old a friend, it is not extraordinary

1. In April 1817, Byron took a short trip from Venice to Rome, where he joined his friend and former travel companion, John Cam Hobhouse, stopping along the way at Padua, Ferrara, Bologna, and Florence. After returning to Venice in June and settling in at his summer home at nearby La Mira, he began the fourth canto of *Childe Harold*. The extensive historical annotations written by Hobhouse and published with the poem in April 1818, are omitted from the present edition due to space limitations; for these notes see CPW 2:218-64.

In the fourth canto, as Byron observes in the prefatory dedication letter to Hobhouse, "there will be found less of the pilgrim than in any of the preceding, and that little slightly, if at all, separated from the author speaking in his own person." This final merging of hero and poet-narrator merely acknowledges their implicit identity in the preceding cantos (understood by Byron's readers), while the canto's setting in post-Napoleonic, pre-Risorgimento Italy allows for a culmination of themes introduced throughout *Childe Harold*: the grandeur of past civilizations set against a backdrop of natural beauty—with Venice as the starting point and paradigm; present-day ruins as ironic reminders of past vitality and glory; the descent from freedom and power to political submission to foreign rulers; the human scope for violence and revenge, on the one hand, and, on the other, redemptive sympathy and love (generally signified by female figures, historical and mythological). The special focus of the Italian canto is on art—on the echoes of Tasso, Petrarch, Shakespeare, and "things to greet the heart and eyes" (line 541). Italy, thus, with its "fatal gift of beauty" (line 371) objectifies the condition of the poet, who is "a ruin amidst ruins" (line 219), yet through his art "essentially immortal" (line 38). Like Canto III, Canto IV is informed by Byron's bitterness over his marital separation and the ensuing scandal and ostracism that prompted his self-exile from England. However, opposing the personal and historical arcs of desire and disappointment traceable throughout the four cantos of *Childe Harold* is the persistent beauty of Italy which inspires the

that I should recur to one still older and better,—to one who has beheld the birth and death of the other, and to whom I am far more indebted for the social advantages of an enlightened friendship, than—though not ungrateful—I can, or could be, to Childe Harold, for any public favour reflected through the poem on the poet,—to one, whom I have known long, and accompanied far, whom I have found wakeful over my sickness and kind in my sorrow, glad in my prosperity and firm in my adversity, true in counsel and trusty in peril,—to a friend often tried and never found wanting;—to yourself.

In so doing, I recur from fiction to truth; and in dedicating to you in its complete, or at least concluded state, a poetical work which is the longest, the most thoughtful and comprehensive of my compositions, I wish to do honour to myself by the record of many years' intimacy with a man of learning, of talent, of steadiness, and of honour. It is not for minds like ours to give or to receive flattery; yet the praises of sincerity have ever been permitted to the voices of friendship; and it is not for you, nor even for others, but to relieve a heart which has not elsewhere, or lately, been so much accustomed to the encounter of good-will as to withstand the shock firmly, that I thus attempt to commemorate your good qualities, or rather the advantages which I have derived from their exertion. Even the recurrence of the date of this letter, the anniversary of the most unfortunate day of my past existence, but which cannot poison my future while I retain the resource of your friendship, and of my own faculties, will henceforth have a more agreeable recollection for both, inasmuch as it will remind us of this my attempt to thank you for an indefatigable regard, such as few men have experienced, and no one could experience, without thinking better of his species and of himself.

It has been our fortune to traverse together, at various periods, the countries of chivalry, history, and fable—Spain, Greece, Asia Minor, and Italy; and what Athens and Constantinople were to us a few years ago, Venice and Rome have been more recently. The poem also, or the pilgrim, or both, have accompanied me from first to last; and perhaps it may be a pardonable vanity which induces me to reflect with complacency on a composition which in some degree connects me with the spot where it was produced, and the objects it would fain describe; and however unworthy it may be deemed of those magical and memorable abodes, however short it may fall of our distant conceptions and immediate impressions, yet as a mark of respect for what is venerable, and of feeling for what is glorious, it has been to me a source of pleasure in the production, and I part with it with a kind of regret, which I hardly suspected that events could have left me for imaginary objects.

With regard to the conduct of the last canto, there will be found less of the pilgrim than in any of the preceding, and that little slightly, if at all, separated from the author speaking in his own person. The fact is, that I had become weary of drawing a line which every one seemed determined not to

suffering poet to affirm that "there is that within me which shall tire / Torture and Time, and breathe when I expire" (lines 1228–29). The poem ends at the ocean, which, fittingly for a pilgrimage, reveals a transcendent power that is "boundless, endless, and sublime" (line 1643).

Criticism: In addition to works listed in the headnote to *Childe Harold I–II* and Christensen, "The Shaping Spirit of Ruin: *Childe Harold IV*" (p. 926), see: Bone, "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage IV, *Don Juan* and *Beppo*," in Bone, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Byron*; Blackstone, *Byron: A Survey*; Newey, "Authoring the Self: *Childe Harold III* and *IV*."

perceive: like the Chinese in Goldsmith's 'Citizen of the World,' whom nobody would believe to be a Chinese, it was in vain that I asserted, and imagined that I had drawn, a distinction between the author and the pilgrim; and the very anxiety to preserve this difference, and disappointment at finding it unavailing, so far crushed my efforts in the composition, that I determined to abandon it altogether—and have done so. The opinions which have been, or may be, formed on that subject, are *now* a matter of indifference; the work is to depend on itself, and not on the writer; and the author, who has no resources in his own mind beyond the reputation, transient or permanent, which is to arise from his literary efforts, deserves the fate of authors.²

In the course of the following canto it was my intention, either in the text or in the notes, to have touched upon the present state of Italian literature, and perhaps of manners. But the text, within these limits I proposed, I soon found hardly sufficient for the labyrinth of external objects, and the consequent reflections; and for the whole of the notes, excepting a few of the shortest, I am indebted to yourself, and these were necessarily limited to the elucidation of the text.

It is also a delicate, and no very grateful task, to dissert upon the literature and manners of a nation so dissimilar; and requires an attention and impartiality which would induce us—though perhaps no inattentive observers, nor ignorant of the language or customs of the people amongst whom we have recently abode—to distrust, or at least defer our judgment, and more narrowly examine our information. The state of literary, as well as political party, appears to run, or to *have* run, so high, that for a stranger to steer impartially between them is next to impossible. It may be enough, then, at least for my purpose, to quote from their own beautiful language—'Mi pare che in un paese tutto poetico, che vanta la lingua la più nobile ed insieme la più dolce, tutte tutte la vie diverse si possono tentare, e che sinche la patria di Alfieri e di Monti non ha perduto l'antico valore, in tutte essa dovrebbe essere la prima.' Italy has great names still—Canova, Monti, Ugo Foscolo, Pindemonte, Visconti, Morelli, Cicognara, Albrizzi, Mezzophanti, Mai, Mustoxidi, Aglietti, and Vacca, will secure to the present generation an honourable place in most of the departments of Art, Science, and Belles Lettres; and in some the very highest—Europe—the World—has but one Canova.

It has been somewhere said by Alfieri, that 'La pianta uomo nasce più robusta in Italia che in qualunque altra terra—e che gli stessi atroci delitti che vi si commettono ne sono una prova.' Without subscribing to the latter part of his proposition, a dangerous doctrine, the truth of which may be disputed on better grounds, namely, that the Italians are in no respect more ferocious than their neighbours, that man must be wilfully blind, or ignorantly heedless, who is not struck with the extraordinary capacity of this people, or, if such a word be admissible, their *capabilities*, the facility of their acquisitions, the rapidity of their conceptions, the fire of their genius, their sense of beauty, and, amidst all the disadvantages of repeated revolutions, the desolation of battles, and the despair of ages, their still unquenched longing after immortality,—the immortality of independence.

2. In the manuscript, Byron continues this paragraph with a discussion of the conflict between Classic and Romantic poetry (see *CPW* 2: 122n).

And when we ourselves, in riding round the walls of Rome, heard the simple lament of the labourers' chorus, 'Roma! Roma! Roma! Roma non è più come era prima,' it was difficult not to contrast this melancholy dirge with the bacchanal roar of the songs of exultation still yelled from the London taverns, over the carnage of Mont St Jean, and the betrayal of Genoa, of Italy, of France, and of the world, by men whose conduct you yourself have exposed in a work worthy of the better days of our history. For me,—

'Non movero mai corda

Ove la turba di sue ciance assorda.'

What Italy has gained by the late transfer of nations, it were useless for Englishmen to enquire, till it becomes ascertained that England has acquired something more than a permanent army and a suspended Habeas Corpus; it is enough for them to look at home. For what they have done abroad, and especially in the South, 'Verily they will have their reward,' and at no very distant period.

Wishing you, my dear Hobhouse, a safe and agreeable return to that country whose real welfare can be dearer to none than to yourself, I dedicate to you this poem in its completed state; and repeat once more how truly I am ever,

Your obliged

And affectionate friend,

BYRON.

1

I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs;¹

A palace and a prison on each hand:

I saw from out the wave her structures rise

As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand:

A thousand years their cloudy wings expand

Around me, and a dying Glory smiles

O'er the far times, when many a subject land

Look'd to the winged Lion's² marble piles,

Where Venice sate in state, throned on her hundred isles!

2

She looks a sea Cybele, fresh from ocean,³

Rising with her tiara of proud towers

At airy distance, with majestic motion,

A ruler of the waters and their powers:

And such she was;—her daughters had their dowers

1. "The 'Bridge of Sighs' (il Ponte dei Sospiri) divides the Doge's Palace from the state prison.—It is roofed and divided by a wall into two passages.—By the one—the prisoner was conveyed to judgment—by the other he returned to death, being generally strangled in an adjoining chamber"—from a manuscript note by Byron.

2. The emblem of St. Mark the Evangelist, patron saint of Venice.

3. "Sabellicus [Marcus Sabellicus, 1436–1506], describing the appearance of Venice, has made use of the above image, which would not be poetical were it not true.—'Quo fit ut qui superne urbem contempletur, turratam telluris imaginem medio Oceano figuratam se putet inspicere.'" *Cybele*: in Greek mythology, the mother of the gods, represented as wearing a crown of towers.

And From spoils of nations, and the exhaustless East

"Sp. Pour'd in her lap all gems in sparkling showers."⁴

Mo. In purple was she robed, and of her feast

T. Monarchs partook, and deem'd their dignity increased.

I. I saw the pomp of many a monarch's state

I should have seen all that the East could give

And in Venice Tasso's echoes are no more,⁵

And silent rows the songless gondolier;

Th. Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,

And And music meets not always now the ear:

Th. Those days are gone—but Beauty still is here.

No. States fall, arts fade—but Nature doth not die,

St. Nor yet forget how Venice once was dear,

St. The pleasant place of all festivity,

O. The revel of the earth, the masque⁶ of Italy!

And. I saw the pomp of many a monarch's state

Why. I should have seen all that the East could give

But unto us she hath a spell beyond

Her name in story, and her long array

Th. Of mighty shadows, whose dim forms despond

And Above the dogeless⁷ city's vanish'd sway;

Th. Ours is a trophy which will not decay

Th. With the Rialto;⁸ Shylock and the Moor,

Th. And Pierre, can not be swept or worn away—

Th. The keystones of the arch! though all were o'er,

For us repeopled were the solitary shore.

Th. I saw the pomp of many a monarch's state

Why. I should have seen all that the East could give

The beings of the mind are not of clay;

Essentially immortal, they create

And multiply in us a brighter ray

Th. And more beloved existence: that which Fate

Prohibits to dull life, in this our state

Of mortal bondage, by these spirits supplied

First exiles, then replaces what we hate;

Watering the heart whose early flowers have died,

And with a fresher growth replenishing the void.

Th. I saw the pomp of many a monarch's state

Why. I should have seen all that the East could give

Such is the refuge of our youth and age,

The first from Hope, the last from Vacancy;

Th. I saw the pomp of many a monarch's state

Why. I should have seen all that the East could give

4. In the early fifteenth century, Venice was the leading European sea power, enriched by Asian goods.

5. Torquato Tasso (1544–1595), Venetian poet and author of the Renaissance epic *Jerusalem Delivered*; Venetian gondoliers once routinely sang alternate stanzas of Tasso's epic to each other as their boats passed.

6. A ceremonial court entertainment common during the early seventeenth century.

7. The last doge (ruler) of Venice was deposed by Napoleon in 1797; in 1817 Venice was under Austrian rule.

8. The famed marble bridge spanning the Grand Canal, the city's early center of business; Shylock, the Moor, and Pierre are central characters in, respectively, Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello* and Thomas Otway's play *Venice Preserved* (1682).

And this worn feeling peoples many a page,
 And, may be, that which grows beneath mine eye:
 Yet there are things whose strong reality
 Outshines our fairy-land; in shape and hues
 More beautiful than our fantastic sky,
 And the strange constellations which the Muse⁹
 O'er her wild universe is skilful to diffuse:

7

I saw or dream'd of such,—but let them go,—
 They came like truth, and disappear'd like dreams;
 And whatso'er they were—are now but so:
 I could replace them if I would; still teems
 My mind with many a form which aptly seems
 Such as I sought for, and at moments found;
 Let these too go—for waking Reason deems
 Such over-weening phantasies unsound,
 And other voices speak, and other sights surround.

8

I've taught me other tongues—and in strange eyes
 Have made me not a stranger; to the mind
 Which is itself, no changes bring surprise;
 Nor is it harsh to make, nor hard to find
 A country with—ay, or without mankind;
 Yet was I born where men are proud to be,
 Not without cause; and should I leave behind
 The inviolate island of the sage and free,
 And seek me out a home by a remoter sea,

9

Perhaps I loved it well; and should I lay
 My ashes in a soil which is not mine,
 My spirit shall resume it—if we may
 Unbodied choose a sanctuary. I twine
 My hopes of being remember'd in my line
 With my land's language: if too fond and far
 These aspirations in their scope incline,—
 If my fame should be, as my fortunes are,
 Of hasty growth and blight, and dull Oblivion bar

10

My name from out the temple where the dead
 Are honour'd by the nations—let it be—
 And light the laurels on a loftier head!

9. In classical myth and epic, one of the nine daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne (Memory) who inspires the poet.

And be the Spartan's epitaph on me—
 "Sparta hath many a worthier son than he."¹
 Meantime I seek no sympathies, nor need;
 The thorns which I have reap'd are of the tree
 I planted,—they have torn me,—and I bleed:
 I should have known what fruit would spring from such a seed.

11

The spouseless Adriatic mourns her lord;
 And, annual marriage now no more renew'd,
 The Bucentaur² lies rotting unrestored,
 Neglected garment of her widowhood!
 St. Mark yet sees his lion where he stood³
 Stand, but in mockery of his wither'd power,
 Over the proud Place where an Emperor sued,⁴
 And monarchs gazed and envied in the hour
 When Venice was a queen with an unequal'd dower.

12

The Suabian sued, and now the Austrian reigns⁵—
 An Emperor tramples where an Emperor knelt;
 Kingdoms are shrunk to provinces, and chains
 Clank over sceptred cities; nations melt
 From power's high pinnacle, when they have felt
 The sunshine for a while, and downward go
 Like lauwine⁶ loosen'd from the mountain's belt;
 Oh for one hour of blind old Dandolo!⁷
 Th' octogenarian chief, Byzantium's conquering foe.

13

Before St. Mark still glow his steeds of brass,⁸
 Their gilded collars glittering in the sun;
 But is not Doria's menace come to pass?⁹
 Are they *not bridled*?—Venice, lost and won,

1. "The answer of the mother of Brasidas, the Lacedaemonian general, to the strangers who praised the memory of her son." Brasidas died 422 B.C.E., in the first decade of the Peloponnesian War.
 2. The state barge in which, on Ascension Day, the doge of Venice would drop a ring into the Adriatic, symbolically marrying the city to the sea; the vessel was destroyed by the French in 1797, and Byron viewed its broken remains.
 3. The statue of the winged lion that stands atop a column next to the Doge's Palace in St. Mark's Square.
 4. Lines 97–101 refer to the humiliating submission of Frederic Barbarossa, Duke of Suabia, to the Pope in 1177.
 5. The Austrian emperor is Francis I (1804–1835).
 6. Pronounced lo'-win; avalanche.
 7. Enrico Dandolo, doge 1192–1205, considered founder of the Venetian Empire; he commanded the fleet in the capture of Constantinople ("Byzantium," line 108) in 1204, where according to legend he was blinded by the Byzantine emperor. Line 107 echoes Walter Scott, "Oh, for one hour of Dundee!" (*Tales of a Grandfather* [1830], series III, chap. 10).
 8. The original four brass horses that stood before the basilica of the Doge's Palace had been looted from Constantinople in 1204 during the Fourth Crusade; taken from Venice by Napoleon in 1797, they were restored to Venice in 1815.
 9. A threat to bridle the horses of St. Mark was attributed to a Genovese admiral, Pietro Doria (1330–1404).

Her thirteen hundred years of freedom done,
Sinks, like a sea-weed, into whence she rose!
Better be whelm'd beneath the waves, and shun,
Even in destruction's depth, her foreign foes,
From whom submission wrings an infamous repose.

14

In youth she was all glory,—a new Tyre,¹—
Her very by-word sprung from victory,
The "Planter of the Lion,"² which through fire
And blood she bore o'er subject earth and sea;
Though making many slaves, herself still free,
And Europe's bulwark 'gainst the Ottomite;³
Witness Troy's rival, Candia!⁴ Vouch it, ye
Immortal waves that saw Lepanto's⁵ Fight!
For ye are names no time nor tyranny can blight.

15

Statues of glass—all shiver'd—the long file
Of her dead Doges are declined to dust;
But where they dwelt, the vast and sumptuous pile
Bespeaks the pageant of their splendid trust;
Their sceptre broken, and their sword in rust,
Have yielded to the stranger: empty halls,
Thin streets, and foreign aspects, such as must
Too oft remind her who and what enthral,
Have flung a desolate cloud o'er Venice' lovely walls.

16

When Athens' armies fell at Syracuse,
And fetter'd thousands bore the yoke of war,
Redemption rose up in the Attic Muse,⁶
Her voice their only ransom from afar:
See! as they chant the tragic hymn, the car
Of the o'er-master'd victor stops, the reins
Fall from his hands—his idle scimitar⁷
Starts from its belt—he rends his captive's chains,
And bids him thank the bard for freedom and his strains.

1. Ancient seaport in Phoenicia, one of the great cities of antiquity.
2. "That is, the Lion of St. Mark, the standard of the republic, which is the origin of the word Pantaloön—Piantaleone, Pantaleon, Pantaloön."
3. People of the Turkish Empire. "Shakespeare is my authority for the word Ottomite for Ottoman" (Byron's manuscript note; see *Othello* 2.3.154.)
4. Capital of Crete, vital part of the Venetian Empire before 1669; it fell to the Turks, as Troy to Greece, after a bombardment lasting many years.
5. Battle of Lepanto, October 7, 1571, ended Turkish naval supremacy in the Mediterranean.
6. "The story is told in Plutarch's *Life of Nicias*." Syracuse defeated Athens in 414 B.C.E.
7. Curved sword of Asian origin.

17

Thus, Venice, if no stronger claim were thine,
Were all thy proud historic deeds forgot,
Thy choral memory of the Bard divine,
Thy love of Tasso, should have cut the knot⁸
Which ties thee to thy tyrants; and thy lot
Is shameful to the nations,—most of all,
Albion! to thee: the Ocean queen should not
Abandon Ocean's children; in the fall
Of Venice think of thine, despite thy watery wall.

18

I loved her from my boyhood—she to me
Was as a fairy city of the heart,
Rising like water-columns from the sea,
Of joy the sojourn, and of wealth the mart;
And Otway, Radcliffe, Schiller, Shakspeare's art,⁹
Had stamp'd her image in me, and even so,
Although I found her thus, we did not part,
Perchance even dearer in her day of woe,
Than when she was a boast, a marvel, and a show.

19

I can repeople with the past—and of
The present there is still for eye and thought,
And meditation chasten'd down, enough;
And more, it may be, than I hoped or sought;
And of the happiest moments which were wrought
Within the web of my existence, some
From thee, fair Venice! have their colours caught:
There are some feelings Time cannot benumb,
Nor Torture shake, or mine would now be cold and dumb.

20

But from their nature will the tannen grow¹
Loftiest on loftiest and least shelter'd rocks,
Rooted in barrenness, where nought below
Of soil supports them 'gainst the Alpine shocks
Of eddy storms; yet springs the trunk, and mocks
The howling tempest, till its height and frame
Are worthy of the mountains from whose blocks
Of bleak, gray granite into life it came,
And grew a giant tree;—the mind may grow the same.

8. The Treaty of Paris (1814) returned Venice to Austrian rule; Castlereagh was the delegate from England ("Albion," line 151). *Tasso*: see p. 299, n. 5.
9. "Venice Preserved; Mysteries of Udolpho; the Ghost-Seer, or Armenian; the Merchant of Venice; *Othello*." *Radcliffe*: Ann Radcliffe (1764–1823), English author of Gothic novels. *Schiller*: Friedrich von Schiller (1759–1805), German poet, playwright, philosopher and historian.
1. "Tannen is the plural of *tanne*, a species of fir peculiar to the Alps, which only thrives in very rocky parts, where scarcely soil sufficient for its nourishment can be found. On these spots it grows to a greater height than any other mountain tree."

21

Existence may be borne, and the deep root
Of life and sufferance make its firm abode
In bare and desolated bosoms: mute
The camel labours with the heaviest load,
And the wolf dies in silence,—not bestow'd
In vain should such example be; if they,
Things of ignoble or of savage mood,
Endure and shrink not, we of nobler clay
May temper it to bear,—it is but for a day.

22

All suffering doth destroy, or is destroy'd,
Even by the sufferer; and, in each event,
Ends:—Some, with hope replenish'd and rebuoy'd,
Return to whence they came—with like intent,
And weave their web again; some, bow'd and bent,
Wax gray and ghastly, withering ere their time,
And perish with the reed on which they leant;
Some seek devotion, toil, war, good or crime,
According as their souls were form'd to sink or climb:

23

But ever and anon of griefs subdued
There comes a token like a scorpion's sting,
Scarce seen, but with fresh bitterness imbued;
And slight withal may be the things which bring
Back on the heart the weight which it would fling
Aside for ever: it may be a sound—
A tone of music—summer's eve—or spring—
A flower—the wind—the ocean—which shall wound,
Striking the electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound;

24

And how and why we know not, nor can trace
Home to its cloud this lightning of the mind,
But feel the shock renew'd, nor can efface
The blight and blackening which it leaves behind,
Which out of things familiar, undesign'd,
When least we deem of such, calls up to view
The spectres whom no exorcism can bind,
The cold—the changed—perchance the dead—anew,
The mourn'd, the loved, the lost—too many!—yet how few!

25

But my soul wanders; I demand it back
To meditate amongst decay, and stand
A ruin amidst ruins; there to track

Fall'n states and buried greatness, o'er a land
Which was the mightiest in its old command,
And is the loveliest, and must ever be
The master-mould of Nature's heavenly hand,
Wherein were cast the heroic and the free,
The beautiful, the brave—the lords of earth and sea,

26

The commonwealth of kings, the men of Rome!
And even since, and now, fair Italy!
Thou art the garden of the world, the home
Of all Art yields, and Nature can decree;
Even in thy desert, what is like to thee?
Thy very weeds are beautiful, thy waste
More rich than other climes' fertility;
Thy wreck a glory, and thy ruin graced
With an immaculate charm which cannot be defaced.

27

The moon is up, and yet it is not night—
Sunset divides the sky with her—a sea
Of glory streams along the Alpine height
Of blue Friuli's mountains;² Heaven is free
From clouds, but of all colours seems to be
Melted to one vast Iris of the West,
Where the Day joins the past Eternity;
While, on the other hand, meek Dian's crest
Floats through the azure air—an island of the blest!³

28

A single star is at her side, and reigns
With her o'er half the lovely heaven; but still
Yon sunny sea heaves brightly, and remains
Roll'd o'er the peak of the far Rhaetian hill,⁴
As Day and Night contending were, until
Nature reclaim'd her order:—gently flows
The deep-dyed Brenta, where their hues instil
The odorous purple of a new-born rose,
Which streams upon her stream, and glass'd within it glows,

29

Fill'd with the face of heaven, which, from afar,
Comes down upon the waters; all its hues,

2. The Friulian Alps are northeast of Venice.

3. "The above description may seem fantastical or exaggerated to those who have never seen an Oriental or an Italian sky, yet it is but a literal and hardly sufficient delineation of an August evening (the eighteenth), as contemplated in one of many rides along the banks of the Brenta, near La Mira."

4. The Rhaetian Alps are northwest of Venice.