

Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire

Percy Bysshe Shelley

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A Person complained that whenever he began to write, he never could arrange his ideas in grammatical order. Which occasion suggested the idea of the following lines:

1. LETTER.

Here I sit with my paper, my pen and my ink,
First of this thing, and that thing, and t'other thing think;
Then my thoughts come so pell-mell all into my mind,
That the sense or the subject I never can find:
This word is wrong placed,—no regard to the sense,
The present and future, instead of past tense,
Then my grammar I want; O dear! what a bore,
I think I shall never attempt to write more,
With patience I then my thoughts must arraign,
Have them all in due order like mutes in a train,
Like them too must wait in due patience and thought,
Or else my fine works will all come to nought.
My wit too's so copious, it flows like a river,
But disperses its waters on black and white never;
Like smoke it appears independent and free,
But ah luckless smoke! it all passes like thee—
Then at length all my patience entirely lost,
My paper and pens in the fire are tossed;
But come, try again—you must never despair,
Our Murray's or Entick's are not all so rare,
Implore their assistance—they'll come to your aid,
Perform all your business without being paid,
They'll tell you the present tense, future and past,
Which should come first, and which should come last,
This Murray will do—then to Entick repair,
To find out the meaning of any word rare.
This they friendly will tell, and ne'er make you blush,
With a jeering look, taunt, or an O fie! tush!
Then straight all your thoughts in black and white put,
Not minding the if's, the be's, and the but,
Then read it all over, see how it will run,
How answers the wit, the retort, and the pun,
Your writings may then with old Socrates vie,
May on the same shelf with Demosthenes lie,
May as Junius be sharp, or as Plato be sage.
The pattern or satire to all of the age;
But stop—a mad author I mean not to turn,
Nor with thirst of applause does my heated brain burn,
Sufficient that sense, wit, and grammar combined,
My letters may make some slight food for the mind;
That my thoughts to my friends I may freely impart,
In all the warm language that flows from the heart.
Hark! futurity calls! it loudly complains,
It bids me step forward and just hold the reins,
My excuse shall be humble, and faithful, and true,
Such as I fear can be made but by few—
Of writers this age has abundance and plenty,
Three score and a thousand, two millions and twenty,
Three score of them wits who all sharply vie,
To try what odd creature they best can belie,
A thousand are prudes who for CHARITY write,
And fill up their sheets with spleen, envv. and spite[.]

JANUARY, 1810.

2. LETTER: TO MISS — — [HARRIET GROVE] FROM MISS — — [ELIZABETH SHELLEY].

For your letter, dear — [Hattie], accept my best thanks,
Rendered long and amusing by virtue of franks,
Though concise they would please, yet the longer the better,
The more news that's crammed in, more amusing the letter,
All excuses of etiquette nonsense I hate,
Which only are fit for the tardy and late,
As when converse grows flat, of the weather they talk,
How fair the sun shines—a fine day for a walk,
Then to politics turn, of Burdett's reformation,
One declares it would hurt, t'other better the nation,
Will ministers keep? sure they've acted quite wrong,
The burden this is of each morning-call song.
So — is going to — you say,
I hope that success her great efforts will pay [—]
That [the Colonel] will see her, be dazzled outright,
And declare he can't bear to be out of her sight.
Write flaming epistles with love's pointed dart,
Whose sharp little arrow struck right on his heart,
Scold poor innocent Cupid for mischievous ways,
He knows not how much to laud forth her praise,
That he neither eats, drinks or sleeps for her sake,
And hopes her hard heart some compassion will take,
A refusal would kill him, so desperate his flame,
But he fears, for he knows she is not common game,
Then praises her sense, wit, discernment and grace,
He's not one that's caught by a sly looking face,
Yet that's TOO divine—such a black sparkling eye,
At the bare glance of which near a thousand will die;
Thus runs he on meaning but one word in ten,
More than is meant by most such kind of men,
For they're all alike, take them one with another,
Begging pardon—with the exception of my brother.
Of the drawings you mention much praise I have heard,
Most opinion's the same, with the difference of word,
Some get a good name by the voice of the crowd,
Whilst to poor humble merit small praise is allowed,
As in parliament votes, so in pictures a name,
Oft determines a fate at the altar of fame.—
So on Friday this City's gay vortex you quit,
And no longer with Doctors and Johnny cats sit—
Now your parcel's arrived — [Bysshe's] letter shall go,
I hope all your joy mayn't be turned into woe,
Experience will tell you that pleasure is vain,
When it promises sunshine how often comes rain.
So when to fond hope every blessing is nigh,
How oft when we smile it is checked with a sigh,
When Hope, gay deceiver, in pleasure is dressed,
How oft comes a stroke that may rob us of rest.
When we think ourselves safe, and the goal near at hand,
Like a vessel just landing, we're wrecked near the strand,
And though memory forever the deep non-resist ford

APRIL 30, 1810.

3. SONG.

Cold, cold is the blast when December is howling,
Cold are the damps on a dying man's brow,—
Stern are the seas when the wild waves are rolling,
And sad is the grave where a loved one lies low;
But colder is scorn from the being who loved thee,
More stern is the sneer from the friend who has proved thee,
More sad are the tears when their sorrows have moved thee,
Which mixed with groans anguish and wild madness flow—

And ah! poor — has felt all this horror,
Full long the fallen victim contended with fate:
'Till a destitute outcast abandoned to sorrow,
She sought her babe's food at her ruiner's gate—
Another had charmed the remorseless betrayer,
He turned laughing aside from her moans and her prayer,
She said nothing, but wringing the wet from her hair,
Crossed the dark mountain side, though the hour it was late.
'Twas on the wild height of the dark Penmanmawr,
That the form of the wasted — reclined;
She shrieked to the ravens that croaked from afar,
And she sighed to the gusts of the wild sweeping wind.—
I call not yon rocks where the thunder peals rattle,
I call not yon clouds where the elements battle,
But thee, cruel — I call thee unkind!'—

Then she wreathed in her hair the wild flowers of the mountain,
And deliriously laughing, a garland entwined,
She bedewed it with tears, then she hung o'er the fountain,
And leaving it, cast it a prey to the wind.
'Ah! go,' she exclaimed, 'when the tempest is yelling,
'Tis unkind to be cast on the sea that is swelling,
But I left, a pitiless outcast, my dwelling,
My garments are torn, so they say is my mind—'

Not long lived —, but over her grave
Waved the desolate form of a storm-blasted yew,
Around it no demons or ghosts dare to rave,
But spirits of peace steep her slumbers in dew.
Then stay thy swift steps mid the dark mountain heather,
Though chill blow the wind and severe is the weather,
For perfidy, traveller! cannot bereave her,
Of the tears, to the tombs of the innocent due.—

JULY, 1810.

4. SONG.

Come [Harriet]! sweet is the hour,
Soft Zephyrs breathe gently around,
The anemone's night-boding flower,
Has sunk its pale head on the ground.

'Tis thus the world's keenness hath torn,
Some mild heart that expands to its blast,
'Tis thus that the wretched forlorn,
Sinks poor and neglected at last.—

The world with its keenness and woe,
Has no charms or attraction for me,
Its unkindness with grief has laid low,
The heart which is faithful to thee.
The high trees that wave past the moon,
As I walk in their umbrage with you,
All declare I must part with you soon,
All bid you a tender adieu!—

Then [Harriet]! dearest farewell,
You and I love, may ne'er meet again;
These woods and these meadows can tell
How soft and how sweet was the strain.—

APRIL, 1810.

5. SONG: DESPAIR.

Ask not the pallid stranger's woe,
With beating heart and throbbing breast,
Whose step is faltering, weak, and slow,
As though the body needed rest.—

Whose 'wilder'd eye no object meets,
Nor cares to ken a friendly glance,
With silent grief his bosom beats,—
Now fixed, as in a deathlike trance.

Who looks around with fearful eye,
And shuns all converse with man kind,
As though some one his griefs might spy,
And soothe them with a kindred mind.

A friend or foe to him the same,
He looks on each with equal eye;
The difference lies but in the name,
To none for comfort can he fly.—

'Twas deep despair, and sorrow's trace,
To him too keenly given,
Whose memory, time could not efface—
His peace was lodged in Heaven.—

He looks on all this world bestows,
The pride and pomp of power,
As trifles best for pageant shows
Which vanish in an hour.

When torn is dear affection's tie,
Sinks the soft heart full low;
It leaves without a parting sigh,
All that these realms bestow.

JUNE, 1810.

6. SONG: SORROW.

To me this world's a dreary blank,
All hopes in life are gone and fled,
My high strung energies are sank,
And all my blissful hopes lie dead.—

The world once smiling to my view,
Showed scenes of endless bliss and joy;
The world I then but little knew,
Ah! little knew how pleasures cloy;

All then was jocund, all was gay,
No thought beyond the present hour,
I danced in pleasure's fading ray,
Fading alas! as drooping flower.

Nor do the heedless in the throng,
One thought beyond the morrow give[,]
They court the feast, the dance, the song,
Nor think how short their time to live.

The heart that bears deep sorrow's trace,
What earthly comfort can console,
It drags a dull and lengthened pace,
'Till friendly death its woes enroll.—

The sunken cheek, the humid eyes,
E'en better than the tongue can tell;
In whose sad breast deep sorrow lies,
Where memory's rankling traces dwell.—

The rising tear, the stifled sigh,
A mind but ill at ease display,
Like blackening clouds in stormy sky,
Where fiercely vivid lightnings play.

Thus when souls' energy is dead,
When sorrow dims each earthly view,
When every fairy hope is fled,
We bid ungrateful world adieu.

AUGUST, 1810.

7. SONG: HOPE.

And said I that all hope was fled,
That sorrow and despair were mine,
That each enthusiast wish was dead,
Had sank beneath pale Misery's shrine.—

Seest thou the sunbeam's yellow glow,
That robes with liquid streams of light;
Yon distant Mountain's craggy brow.
And shows the rocks so fair,—so bright—

Tis thus sweet expectation's ray,
In softer view shows distant hours,
And portrays each succeeding day,
As dressed in fairer, brighter flowers,—

The vermeil tinted flowers that blossom;
Are frozen but to bud anew,
Then sweet deceiver calm my bosom,
Although thy visions be not true,—

Yet true they are,—and I'll believe,
Thy whisperings soft of love and peace,
God never made thee to deceive,
'Tis sin that bade thy empire cease.

Yet though despair my life should gloom,
Though horror should around me close,
With those I love, beyond the tomb,
Hope shows a balm for all my woes.

AUGUST, 1810.

8. SONG: TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

Oh! what is the gain of restless care,
And what is ambitious treasure?
And what are the joys that the modish share,
In their sickly haunts of pleasure?

My husband's repast with delight I spread,
What though 'tis but rustic fare,
May each guardian angel protect his shed,
May contentment and quiet be there.

And may I support my husband's years,
May I soothe his dying pain,
And then may I dry my fast falling tears,
And meet him in Heaven again.

JULY, 1810.

9. SONG: TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

Ah! grasp the dire dagger and couch the fell spear,
If vengeance and death to thy bosom be dear,
The dastard shall perish, death's torment shall prove,
For fate and revenge are decreed from above.

Ah! where is the hero, whose nerves strung by youth,
Will defend the firm cause of justice and truth;
With insatiate desire whose bosom shall swell,
To give up the oppressor to judgement and Hell—

For him shall the fair one twine chaplets of bays,
To him shall each warrior give merited praise,
And triumphant returned from the clangour of arms,
He shall find his reward in his loved maiden's charms.

In ecstatic confusion the warrior shall sip,
The kisses that glow on his love's dewy lip,
And mutual, eternal, embraces shall prove,
The rewards of the brave are the transports of love.

OCTOBER, 1809.

10. THE IRISHMAN'S SONG.

The stars may dissolve, and the fountain of light
May sink into ne'er ending chaos and night,
Our mansions must fall, and earth vanish away,
But thy courage O Erin! may never decay.

See! the wide wasting ruin extends all around,
Our ancestors' dwellings lie sunk on the ground,
Our foes ride in triumph throughout our domains,
And our mightiest heroes lie stretched on the plains.

Ah! dead is the harp which was wont to give pleasure,
Ah! sunk is our sweet country's rapturous measure,
But the war note is waked, and the clangour of spears,
The dread yell of Sloghan yet sounds in our ears.

Ah! where are the heroes! triumphant in death,
Convulsed they recline on the blood sprinkled heath,
Or the yelling ghosts ride on the blast that sweeps by,
And 'my countrymen! vengeance!' incessantly cry.

OCTOBER, 1809.

11. SONG.

Fierce roars the midnight storm
O'er the wild mountain,
Dark clouds the night deform,
Swift rolls the fountain—

See! o'er yon rocky height,
Dim mists are flying—
See by the moon's pale light,
Poor Laura's dying!

Shame and remorse shall howl,
By her false pillow—
Fiercer than storms that roll,
O'er the white billow;

No hand her eyes to close,
When life is flying,
But she will find repose,
For Laura's dying!

Then will I seek my love,
Then will I cheer her,
Then my esteem will prove,
When no friend is near her.

On her grave I will lie,
When life is parted,
On her grave I will die,
For the false hearted.

DECEMBER, 1809.

12. SONG: TO [HARRIET].

Ah! sweet is the moonbeam that sleeps on yon fountain,
And sweet the mild rush of the soft-sighing breeze,
And sweet is the glimpse of yon dimly-seen mountain,
'Neath the verdant arcades of yon shadowy trees.

But sweeter than all was thy tone of affection,
Which scarce seemed to break on the stillness of eve,
Though the time it is past!—yet the dear recollection,
For aye in the heart of thy [Percy] must live.

Yet he hears thy dear voice in the summer winds sighing,
Mild accents of happiness lisp in his ear,
When the hope-winged moments athwart him are flying,
And he thinks of the friend to his bosom so dear.—

And thou dearest friend in his bosom for ever
Must reign unalloyed by the fast rolling year,
He loves thee, and dearest one never, Oh! never
Canst thou cease to be loved by a heart so sincere.

AUGUST, 1810.

NOTE:

_11 hope-winged]hoped-winged 1810.

13. SONG: TO — [HARRIET].

Stern, stern is the voice of fate's fearful command,
When accents of horror it breathes in our ear,
Or compels us for aye bid adieu to the land,
Where exists that loved friend to our bosom so dear,
'Tis sterner than death o'er the shuddering wretch bending,
And in skeleton grasp his fell sceptre extending,
Like the heart-stricken deer to that loved covert wending,
Which never again to his eyes may appear—

And ah! he may envy the heart-stricken quarry,
Who bids to the friend of affection farewell,
He may envy the bosom so bleeding and gory,
He may envy the sound of the drear passing knell,

Not so deep is his grief on his death couch reposing,
When on the last vision his dim eyes are closing!
As the outcast whose love-raptured senses are losing,
The last tones of thy voice on the wild breeze that swell!

Those tones were so soft, and so sad, that ah! never,
Can the sound cease to vibrate on Memory's ear,
In the stern wreck of Nature for ever and ever,
The remembrance must live of a friend so sincere.

AUGUST, 1810.

14. SAINT EDMOND'S EVE.

Oh! did you observe the Black Canon pass,
And did you observe his frown?
He goeth to say the midnight mass,
In holy St. Edmond's town.

He goeth to sing the burial chaunt,
And to lay the wandering sprite,
Whose shadowy, restless form doth haunt,
The Abbey's drear aisle this night.

It saith it will not its wailing cease,
'Till that holy man come near,
'Till he pour o'er its grave the prayer of peace,
And sprinkle the hallowed tear.

The Canon's horse is stout and strong
The road is plain and fair,
But the Canon slowly wends along,
And his brow is gloomed with care.

Who is it thus late at the Abbey-gate?
Sullen echoes the portal bell,
It sounds like the whispering voice of fate,
It sounds like a funeral knell.

The Canon his faltering knee thrice bowed,
And his frame was convulsed with fear,
When a voice was heard distinct and loud,
'Prepare! for thy hour is near.'

He crosses his breast, he mutters a prayer,
To Heaven he lifts his eye,
He heeds not the Abbot's gazing stare,
Nor the dark Monks who murmured by.

Bare-headed he worships the sculptured saints
That frown on the sacred walls,
His face it grows pale,—he trembles, he faints,
At the Abbot's feet he falls.

And straight the father's robe he kissed,
Who cried, 'Grace dwells with thee,
The spirit will fade like the morning mist,
At your benedicite.

'Now haste within! the board is spread,
Keen blows the air, and cold,
The spectre sleeps in its earthy bed,
'Till St. Edmond's bell hath tolled,—

'Yet rest your wearied limbs to-night,
You've journeyed many a mile,
To-morrow lay the wailing sprite,
That shrieks in the moonlight aisle.

'Oh! faint are my limbs and my bosom is cold,
Yet to-night must the sprite be laid,
Yet to-night when the hour of horror's told,
Must I meet the wandering shade.

'Nor food, nor rest may now delay,—
For hark! the echoing pile,
A bell loud shakes!—Oh haste away,
O lead to the haunted aisle.'

The torches slowly move before,
 The cross is raised on high,
 A smile of peace the Canon wore,
 But horror dimmed his eye—
 And now they climb the footworn stair,
 The chapel gates unclose,
 Now each breathed low a fervent prayer,
 And fear each bosom froze—
 Now paused awhile the doubtful band
 And viewed the solemn scene,—
 Full dark the clustered columns stand,
 The moon gleams pale between—
 'Say father, say, what cloisters' gloom
 Conceals the unquiet shade,
 Within what dark unhallowed tomb,
 The corpse unblest was laid.'
 'Through yonder drear aisle alone it walks,
 And murmurs a mournful plaint,
 Of thee! Black Canon, it wildly talks,
 And call on thy patron saint—
 The pilgrim this night with wondering eyes,
 As he prayed at St. Edmond's shrine,
 From a black marble tomb hath seen it rise,
 And under yon arch recline.'—
 'Oh! say upon that black marble tomb,
 What memorial sad appears.'—
 'Undistinguished it lies in the chancel's gloom,
 No memorial sad it bears'—
 The Canon his paternoster reads,
 His rosary hung by his side,
 Now swift to the chancel doors he leads,
 And untouched they open wide,
 Resistless, strange sounds his steps impel,
 To approach to the black marble tomb,
 'Oh! enter, Black Canon,' a whisper fell,
 'Oh! enter, thy hour is come.'
 He paused, told his beads, and the threshold passed.
 Oh! horror, the chancel doors close,
 A loud yell was borne on the rising blast,
 And a deep, dying groan arose.
 The Monks in amazement shuddering stand,
 They burst through the chancel's gloom,
 From St. Edmond's shrine, lo! a skeleton's hand,
 Points to the black marble tomb.

Lo! deeply engraved, an inscription blood red,
In characters fresh and clear—
'The guilty Black Canon of Elmham's dead,
And his wife lies buried here!'

In Elmham's tower he wedded a Nun,
To St. Edmond's his bride he bore,
On this eve her noviciate here was begun,
And a Monk's gray weeds she wore;—

O! deep was her conscience dyed with guilt,
Remorse she full oft revealed,
Her blood by the ruthless Black Canon was spilt,
And in death her lips he sealed;

Her spirit to penance this night was doomed,
'Till the Canon atoned the deed,
Here together they now shall rest entombed,
'Till their bodies from dust are freed—

Hark! a loud peal of thunder shakes the roof,
Round the altar bright lightnings play,
Speechless with horror the Monks stand aloof,
And the storm dies sudden away—

The inscription was gone! a cross on the ground,
And a rosary shone through the gloom,
But never again was the Canon there found,
Or the Ghost on the black marble tomb.

15. REVENGE.

'Ah! quit me not yet, for the wind whistles shrill,
Its blast wanders mournfully over the hill,
The thunder's wild voice rattles madly above,
You will not then, cannot then, leave me my love.—'

I must dearest Agnes, the night is far gone—
I must wander this evening to Strasburg alone,
I must seek the drear tomb of my ancestors' bones,
And must dig their remains from beneath the cold stones.

'For the spirit of Conrad there meets me this night,
And we quit not the tomb 'till dawn of the light,
And Conrad's been dead just a month and a day!
So farewell dearest Agnes for I must away,—

'He bid me bring with me what most I held dear,
Or a month from that time should I lie on my bier,
And I'd sooner resign this false fluttering breath,
Than my Agnes should dread either danger or death,

'And I love you to madness my Agnes I love,
My constant affection this night will I prove,
This night will I go to the sepulchre's jaw
Alone will I glut its all conquering maw'—

'No! no loved Adolphus thy Agnes will share,
In the tomb all the dangers that wait for you there,
I fear not the spirit,—I fear not the grave,
My dearest Adolphus I'd perish to save'—

'Nay seek not to say that thy love shall not go,
But spare me those ages of horror and woe,
For I swear to thee here that I'll perish ere day,
If you go unattended by Agnes away'—

The night it was bleak the fierce storm raged around,
The lightning's blue fire-light flashed on the ground,
Strange forms seemed to flit,—and howl tidings of fate,
As Agnes advanced to the sepulchre gate.—

The youth struck the portal,—the echoing sound
Was fearfully rolled midst the tombstones around,
The blue lightning gleamed o'er the dark chapel spire,
And tinged were the storm clouds with sulphurous fire.

Still they gazed on the tombstone where Conrad reclined,
Yet they shrank at the cold chilling blast of the wind,
When a strange silver brilliance pervaded the scene,
And a figure advanced—tall in form—fierce in mien.

A mantle encircled his shadowy form,
As light as a gossamer borne on the storm,
Celestial terror sat throned in his gaze,
Like the midnight pestiferous meteor's blaze.—

SPIRIT:

Thy father, Adolphus! was false, false as hell,
And Conrad has cause to remember it well,
He ruined my Mother, despised me his son,
I quitted the world ere my vengeance was done.

I was nearly expiring—'twas close of the day,—
A demon advanced to the bed where I lay,
He gave me the power from whence I was hurled,
To return to revenge, to return to the world,—

Now Adolphus I'll seize thy best loved in my arms,
I'll drag her to Hades all blooming in charms,
On the black whirlwind's thundering pinion I'll ride,
And fierce yelling fiends shall exult o'er thy bride—

He spoke, and extending his ghastly arms wide,
Majestic advanced with a swift noiseless stride,
He clasped the fair Agnes—he raised her on high,
And cleaving the roof sped his way to the sky—

All was now silent,—and over the tomb,
Thicker, deeper, was swiftly extended a gloom,
Adolphus in horror sank down on the stone,
And his fleeting soul fled with a harrowing groan.

DECEMBER, 1809.

16. GHASTA OR, THE AVENGING DEMON!!!

The idea of the following tale was taken from a few unconnected German Stanzas.—The principal Character is evidently the Wandering Jew, and although not mentioned by name, the burning Cross on his forehead undoubtedly alludes to that superstition, so prevalent in the part of Germany called the Black Forest, where this scene is supposed to lie.

Hark! the owlet flaps her wing,
In the pathless dell beneath,
Hark! night ravens loudly sing,
Tidings of despair and death.—

Horror covers all the sky,
Clouds of darkness blot the moon,
Prepare! for mortal thou must die,
Prepare to yield thy soul up soon—

Fierce the tempest raves around,
Fierce the volleyed lightnings fly,
Crashing thunder shakes the ground,
Fire and tumult fill the sky.—

Hark! the tolling village bell,
Tells the hour of midnight come,
Now can blast the powers of Hell,
Fiend-like goblins now can roam—

See! his crest all stained with rain,
A warrior hastening speeds his way,
He starts, looks round him, starts again,
And sighs for the approach of day.

See! his frantic steed he reins,
See! he lifts his hands on high,
Implores a respite to his pains,
From the powers of the sky.—

He seeks an Inn, for faint from toil,
Fatigue had bent his lofty form,
To rest his wearied limbs awhile,
Fatigued with wandering and the storm.

...
...

Slow the door is opened wide—
With trackless tread a stranger came,
His form Majestic, slow his stride,
He sate, nor spake,—nor told his name—

Terror blanched the warrior's cheek,
Cold sweat from his forehead ran,
In vain his tongue essayed to speak,—
At last the stranger thus began:

'Mortal! thou that saw'st the sprite,
Tell me what I wish to know,
Or come with me before 'tis light,
Where cypress trees and mandrakes grow.

'Fierce the avenging Demon's ire,
Fiercer than the wintry blast,
Fiercer than the lightning's fire,
When the hour of twilight's past'—

The warrior raised his sunken eye.
It met the stranger's sullen scowl,
'Mortal! Mortal! thou must die,'
In burning letters chilled his soul.

WARRIOR:

Stranger! whoso'er you are,
I feel impelled my tale to tell—
Horrors stranger shalt thou hear,
Horrors drear as those of Hell.

O'er my Castle silence reigned,
Late the night and drear the hour,
When on the terrace I observed,
A fleeting shadowy mist to lower.—

Light the cloud as summer fog,
Which transient shuns the morning beam;
Fleeting as the cloud on bog,
That hangs or on the mountain stream.—

Horror seized my shuddering brain,
Horror dimmed my starting eye.
In vain I tried to speak,—In vain
My limbs essayed the spot to fly—

At last the thin and shadowy form,
With noiseless, trackless footsteps came,—
Its light robe floated on the storm,
Its head was bound with lambent flame.

In chilling voice drear as the breeze
Which sweeps along th' autumnal ground,
Which wanders through the leafless trees,
Or the mandrake's groan which floats around.

'Thou art mine and I am thine,
 'Till the sinking of the world,
 I am thine and thou art mine,
 'Till in ruin death is hurled—
 'Strong the power and dire the fate,
 Which drags me from the depths of Hell,
 Breaks the tomb's eternal gate,
 Where fiendish shapes and dead men yell,
 'Haply I might ne'er have shrank
 From flames that rack the guilty dead,
 Haply I might ne'er have sank
 On pleasure's flowery, thorny bed—
 —'But stay! no more I dare disclose,
 Of the tale I wish to tell,
 On Earth relentless were my woes,
 But fiercer are my pangs in Hell—
 'Now I claim thee as my love,
 Lay aside all chilling fear,
 My affection will I prove,
 Where sheeted ghosts and spectres are!
 'For thou art mine, and I am thine,
 'Till the dreaded judgement day,
 I am thine, and thou art mine—
 Night is past—I must away.'
 Still I gazed, and still the form
 Pressed upon my aching sight,
 Still I braved the howling storm,
 When the ghost dissolved in night.—
 Restless, sleepless fled the night,
 Sleepless as a sick man's bed,
 When he sighs for morning light,
 When he turns his aching head,—
 Slow and painful passed the day.
 Melancholy seized my brain,
 Lingered fled the hours away,
 Lingered to a wretch in pain.—
 At last came night, ah! horrid hour,
 Ah! chilling time that wakes the dead,
 When demons ride the clouds that lower,
 —The phantom sat upon my bed.
 In hollow voice, low as the sound
 Which in some charnel makes its moan,
 What floats along the burying ground,
 The phantom claimed me as her own.

Her chilling finger on my head,
With coldest touch congealed my soul—
Cold as the finger of the dead,
Or damps which round a tombstone roll—
Months are passed in lingering round,
Every night the spectre comes,
With thrilling step it shakes the ground,
With thrilling step it round me roams—
Stranger! I have told to thee,
All the tale I have to tell—
Stranger! canst thou tell to me,
How to 'scape the powers of Hell?—

STRANGER:

Warrior! I can ease thy woes,
Wilt thou, wilt thou, come with me—
Warrior! I can all disclose,
Follow, follow, follow me.

Yet the tempest's duskiest wing,
Its mantle stretches o'er the sky,
Yet the midnight ravens sing,
'Mortal! Mortal! thou must die.'

At last they saw a river clear,
That crossed the heathy path they trod,
The Stranger's look was wild and drear,
The firm Earth shook beneath his nod—

He raised a wand above his head,
He traced a circle on the plain,
In a wild verse he called the dead,
The dead with silent footsteps came.

A burning brilliance on his head,
Flaming filled the stormy air,
In a wild verse he called the dead,
The dead in motley crowd were there.—

'Ghast! Ghast! come along,
Bring thy fiendish crowd with thee,
Quickly raise th' avenging Song,
Ghast! Ghast! come to me.'

Horrid shapes in mantles gray,
Flit athwart the stormy night,
'Ghast! Ghast! come away,
Come away before 'tis light.'

See! the sheeted Ghost they bring,
Yelling dreadful o'er the heath,
Hark! the deadly verse they sing,
Tidings of despair and death!

The yelling Ghost before him stands,
See! she rolls her eyes around,
Now she lifts her bony hands,
Now her footsteps shake the ground.

STRANGER:

Phantom of Theresa say,
Why to earth again you came,
Quickly speak, I must away!
Or you must bleach for aye in flame,—

PHANTOM:

Mighty one I know thee now,
Mightiest power of the sky,
Know thee by thy flaming brow,
Know thee by thy sparkling eye.

That fire is scorching! Oh! I came,
From the caverned depth of Hell,
My fleeting false Rodolph to claim,
Mighty one! I know thee well.—

STRANGER:

Ghast! seize yon wandering sprite,
Drag her to the depth beneath,
Take her swift, before 'tis light,
Take her to the cells of death!

Thou that heardst the trackless dead,
In the mouldering tomb must lie,
Mortal! look upon my head,
Mortal! Mortal! thou must die.

Of glowing flame a cross was there,
Which threw a light around his form,
Whilst his lank and raven hair,
Floated wild upon the storm.—

The warrior upwards turned his eyes,
Gazed upon the cross of fire,
There sat horror and surprise,
There sat God's eternal ire.—

A shivering through the Warrior flew,
Colder than the nightly blast,
Colder than the evening dew,
When the hour of twilight's past.—

Thunder shakes th' expansive sky,
Shakes the bosom of the heath,
'Mortal! Mortal! thou must die'—
The warrior sank convulsed in death.

JANUARY, 1810.

17. FRAGMENT, OR THE TRIUMPH OF CONSCIENCE.

'Twas dead of the night when I sate in my dwelling,
One glimmering lamp was expiring and low,—
Around the dark tide of the tempest was swelling,
Along the wild mountains night-ravens were yelling,
They bodingly presaged destruction and woe!

'Twas then that I started, the wild storm was howling,
Nought was seen, save the lightning that danced on the sky,
Above me the crash of the thunder was rolling,
And low, chilling murmurs the blast wafted by.—

My heart sank within me, unheeded the jar
Of the battling clouds on the mountain-tops broke,
Unheeded the thunder-peal crashed in mine ear,
This heart hard as iron was stranger to fear,
But conscience in low noiseless whispering spoke.
'Twas then that her form on the whirlwind uprearing,
The dark ghost of the murdered Victoria strode,
Her right hand a blood reeking dagger was bearing,
She swiftly advanced to my lonesome abode.—
I wildly then called on the tempest to bear me!

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September 1810

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