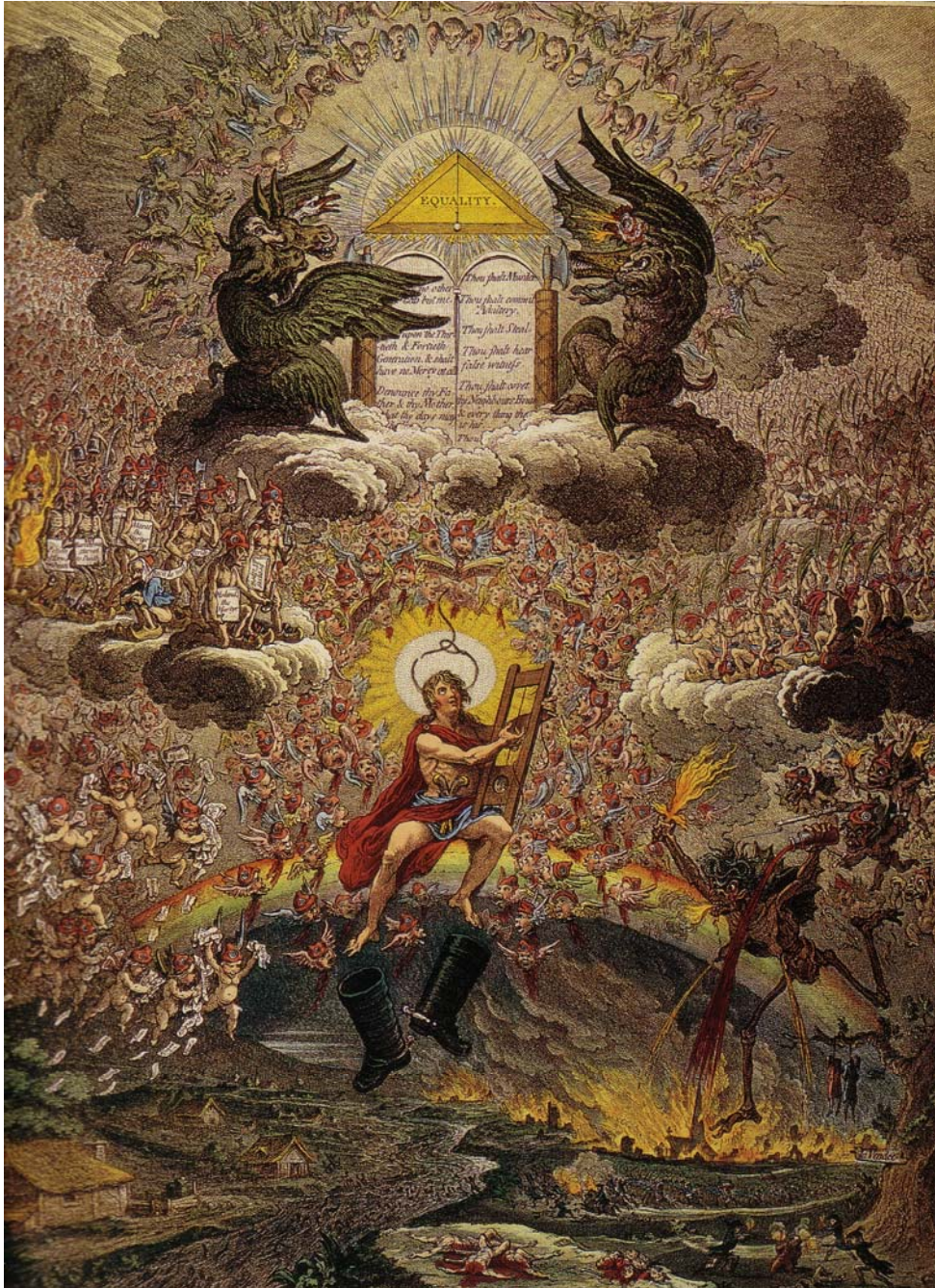


LORD BYRON
THE VISION OF JUDGEMENT

edited by Peter Cochran

For the poem's background, see the essay "Why did Byron hate Southey?" on this website.

Appendix: Southey's *A Vision of Judgement* (text only) will be found at the bottom of this document.



Gillray: The Apotheosis of Hoche

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

(As performed at the 1996 conference of the International Byron Society and the Gesellschaft für Englische Romantik, Duisburg, August 24th 1996)

St. Peter	Derek Wise
A Cherub	Anne Barton
Sathan	Malcolm Kelsall
St. Michael	Bernard Beatty
Paddy	Paul Curtis
The temperate Scot	Drummond Bone
The Voice of Jonathan	James Soderholm
Junius	Stephen Prickett
John Wilkes	Christine Kenyon-Jones
Asmodeus	Markus Schwartz
King George III	Edward Burns
Robert Southey	Itsuyo Higashinaka
Narrator	Peter Cochran

(As performed at the International Byron Society 30th Annual Conference, Moncton, New Brunswick, August 17th 2004)

St. Peter	Christine Kenyon-Jones
A Cherub	Jane Stabler
Sathan	Bernard Beatty
St. Michael	Charles Robinson
Paddy	
The temperate Scot	
The Voice of Jonathan	The audience
Junius	Ian Balfour
John Wilkes	Itsuyo Higashinaka
Asmodeus	Joan Blythe
King George III	Alan Gregory
Robert Southey	John Clubbe
Narrator	Peter Cochran

The action is set before the Gate of Heaven.

Text

Byron wrote *The Vision of Judgement* – his finest finished poem – in Ravenna, in two parts. He began it on May 7th 1821, got as far as stanza 38, then abandoned it temporarily. Next he wrote *Cain*, and, having got that drama off his chest, returned to *The Vision* on September 20th, and finished it on October 4th. He sent the rough manuscript to Murray on that date. Murray would not publish it. It was published in *The Liberal* of October 15th 1822, from an uncorrected proof. When Byron saw the result he was furious, and blamed Murray, though the culprit seems to have been Douglas Kinnaird, who kept the corrected proof, and would let neither Murray nor John Hunt, printer of *The Liberal*, know that he had it.

A second edition of *The Liberal's* first number, published on January 1st 1823, corrected the glaring errors; nevertheless, even this text of *The Vision* introduced variations from the manuscript, leaving aside small punctuation ones, which have been with the poem ever since. At 301, “if in his earthly span” becomes “if in this earthly span” (this was corrected in Jerome McGann’s 1991 *Clarendon* edition). At 590, “heads and knees” becomes “hands and knees” (this wasn’t corrected in Jerome McGann’s 1991 *Clarendon* edition). Michael is deprived of an authentic exclamation-mark and tonal lapse in “For Godsake! Stop, my friend!” at 727; and a very funny moment at 735-6 is altered from the confident “What? What? / *Pye* come again!” to the querulous “What! What! / *Pye* come again?” – it seems to me that to credit George with a brief flash of certainty in the face of Southey’s “spavined Dactyls” is closer to Byron’s sympathetic intention.

Exclamation-marks are lost from “let him have way!” (304) “Michael!” (381) “Eternity!” (502) ““Iron Mask”!” (624) and “... the latter yours, good Michael!” (690).

On the other hand, several new exclamation-marks have been introduced: “undone!” (62) “died!” (65) “Speak!” (300) “... you, Saint Peter!” (381) “True!” (385) “of that be sure!” (396) ““No!”“ (407) “The Shadow came!” (593) “Vision!” (801) “... fall!” (804) and “Alfonso!” (807). Some are expressive and comical: but those given to the narrative voice at 62, 65 and 593 seem to me cheaply sensational.

Some inauthentically conservative capitalisations occur: “King” (throughout) “President” (472) “Lords and Commons” (558) and most damagingly “Thing of Light” (which introduces St Michael at 218). Much of Byron’s own eccentric capitalisation vanishes, as it habitually did at this stage; and the comedy is smothered in semi-colons and colons.

Byron’s archaic preference “burthen” is modernised at 677 as “burden” (this fits in much better with the surrounding consonant-pattern). His correct but unpunctuated “eer” becomes “ere” at 780, and his correct scansion at 800, “Has more of brass in’t and is as well blown”, gets a foot added in “Has more of brass in it, and is as well blown” (“in’t” makes the line harder to say). Finally, at 802-3, Southey loses a proud and thus fatuous underlining / italicisation, and a proud and thus fatuous capital: “Now you shall judge – all people! – yes – you shall / Judge with *my* Judgement!”

How all these inaccuracies gained their current quasi-canonical status is a long story – one which places the social relations between Byron and his English publisher and friends under the closest scrutiny, and brings into grave doubt the reliability of any text which emerged from what attempts they made at “social and editorial collaboration” during this period, that is, 1821-3. The text below is an attempt at atonement. I have consulted the editions of John Wright (1832) E.H.Coleridge (1900) and Jerome McGann (1991) and have credited them in bold type where I have borrowed their notes.

In annotating I have placed particular emphasis on borrowings from Scott’s *Waverley* Novels, from poems by Southey, and from possible memories of cartoons by Gillray.

The manuscript of *The Vision of Judgement* is in the John Murray Archive at the National Library of Scotland, where I last examined it in October 2006. I am very grateful indeed to the late Jock Murray, John Murray, and Virginia Murray for the help they gave during the time I puzzled over it.

**THE VISION OF JUDGEMENT,
BY
QUEVEDO REDIVIVUS¹**

**SUGGESTED BY THE COMPOSITION SO ENTITLED
BY THE AUTHOR OF “WAT TYLER”²**

“A Daniel come to judgement! yea, a Daniel!
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.”³

PREFACE

It hath been wisely said, that “One fool makes many;” and it hath been poetically observed,

“That fools rush in where angels fear to tread.” – *Pope*.⁴

If M^r. Southey had not rushed in where he had no business, and where he never was before, and never will be again, the following poem would not have been written. It is not impossible that it may be as good as his own, seeing that it cannot, by any species of stupidity, natural or acquired, be worse. The gross flattery, the dull impudence, the renegado intolerance and impious cant of the poem by the author of *Wat Tyler*, are something so stupendous as to form the sublime of himself – containing the quintessence of his own attributes.

So much for his poem – a word on his preface. In this preface it has pleased the magnanimous Laureate to draw the picture of a supposed “Satanic School,” the which he doth recommend to the notice of the legislature, thereby adding to his other laurels the ambition of those of an informer. If there exists anywhere, except in his imagination, such a school, is he not sufficiently armed against it by his own intense vanity? The truth is, that there are certain writers whom M^r. S. imagines, like *Scrub*,⁵ to have “talked of him; for they laughed consumedly.”

I think I know enough of most of the writers to whom he is supposed to allude, to assert, that they, in their individual capacities, have done more good in the charities of life to their fellow-creatures in any one year, than M^r. Southey has done harm to himself by his absurdities in his whole life; and this is saying a great deal. But I have a few questions to ask.

1^{stly}. Is M^r. Southey the author of *Wat Tyler*?

2^{ndly}. Was he not refused a remedy at law by the highest Judge of his beloved England, because it was a blasphemous and seditious publication?⁶

3^{rdly}. Was he not entitled by William Smith, in full parliament, “a rancorous Renegado?”⁷

1: Seventeenth century Spanish poet and prose satirist Francisco Gomez de Quevedo y Villegas (1580-1645) whose *Sueños* (Visions) ridiculed the vices and follies of society. One of his “visions”, as translated by the Restoration journalist and wit Sir Roger L’Estrange, is called *Of the Last Judgement*. Byron is thus “Quevedo Resurrected”.

2: A play about the Peasants’ Revolt written by Southey in his jacobinical youth and not published until 1817, when three radicals called Sherwood, Neely and Jones got hold of the manuscript and published it to expose the Laureate’s earlier politics. The play was acted, and sold tens of thousands – Southey receiving no profit.

3: Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, IV i: Byron conflates.

4: Pope, *Essay on Criticism*, l.625.

5: Clownish servant in George Farquhar’s *The Beaux’ Stratagem* (1707). The line occurs in III, ii. See references at BLJ III 235 and VIII 50.

6: Southey sought an injunction against the publication of *Wat Tyler*; but the Lords’ judgement was that since the play was “calculated to do an injury to the public” (the words Byron uses are more sensational than those of Lord Eldon, the Lord Chief Justice, who gave the judgement) its author could expect no redress at law. The full judgement is quoted at *The Life and Correspondence of the Late Robert Southey*, ed. C.C.Southey, 6 vols 1849-1850), IV 251n.

4^{thly}. Is he not Poet Laureate, with his own lines on Martin the Regicide staring him in the face?⁸

And, 5^{thly}. Putting the four preceding items together, with what conscience dare he call the attention of the laws to the publications of others, be they what they may? I say nothing of the cowardice of such a proceeding; its meanness speaks for itself; but I wish to touch upon the *motive*, which is neither more nor less, than that M^r.S. has been laughed at a little in some recent publications, as he was of yore in the “Anti-jacobin”⁹ by his present patrons. Hence all this “skimble scramble stuff”¹⁰ about “Satanic,” and so forth. However, it is worthy of him – “*Qualis ab incepto.*”¹¹

If there is anything obnoxious to the political opinions of a portion of the public, in the following poem, they may thank M^r. Southey. He might have written hexameters, as he has written everything else, for aught that the writer cared – had they been upon another subject. But to attempt to canonise a Monarch, who, whatever were his household virtues, was neither a successful nor a patriotic king, – inasmuch as several years of his reign passed in war with America and Ireland, to say nothing of the aggression upon France, – like all other exaggeration, necessarily begets opposition. In whatever manner he may be spoken of in this new “Vision,” his *public* career will not be more favourably transmitted by history. Of his private virtues (although a little expensive to the nation) there can be no doubt.

With regard to the supernatural personages treated of, I can only say that I know as much about them, and (as an honest man) have a better right to talk of them than Robert Southey. I have also treated them more tolerantly. The way in which that poor insane creature, the Laureate, deals about his judgements in the next world, is like his own judgement in this. If it was not completely ludicrous, it would be something worse. I don’t think that there is much more to say at present.

QUEVEDO REDIVIVUS.

P.S. – It is possible that some readers may object, in these objectionable times, to the freedom with which saints, angels, and spiritual persons, discourse in this “Vision.” But for precedents upon such points, I must refer him to Fielding’s “Journey from this World to the next,”¹² and to the Visions of myself, the said Quevedo, in Spanish or translated. The reader is also requested to observe, that no doctrinal tenets are insisted upon or discussed; that the person of the Deity is carefully withheld from sight, which is more than can be said for the Laureate, who hath thought proper to make him talk, not “like a school-divine,”¹³ but like the unscholarlike M^r. Southey. The whole action passes on the outside of Heaven; and Chaucer’s Wife of Bath,¹⁴ Pulci’s Morgante Maggiore,¹⁵ Swift’s Tale of a Tub,¹⁶ and the other works above

7: *Wat Tyler* was argued over in Parliament, by William Smith, the member for Norwich, and Southey’s friend C.W.W.Wynn, on 14 March 1817, during a debate on the Seditious Assemblies Bill. What Smith, a liberal, angry at Southey’s more recently published reactionary views, actually said was “... that what he most detested, what filled him with disgust, was the settled, determined malignity of a renegado” (quoted Madden, *Robert Southey the Critical Heritage*, p.236).

8: The poem alluded to did not find its way into the 1838 edition of Southey’s complete works – which does include *Wat Tyler*.

9: Or *Weekly Examiner*: anti-revolutionary periodical, 1797-8. Several parodies of Southey appeared in the numbers for November and December 1797.

10: Shakespeare, *Henry IV I*, III i 154.

11: *As he has been from the start* (from Horace, *Ars Poetica*, l.127: Horace is advising a poet to keep original characters consistent).

12: A prose eschatological satire in the style of Quevedo published by Henry Fielding in 1743.

13: Pope, *Imitations of Horace*, II i 102, where Milton is accused of making God the Father in *Paradise Lost* talk like a school-divine.

14: I find no saints conversing in either the Wife’s Prologue or her Tale, any more than in Fielding. At least one supernatural being may be supposed present, though the Loathly Lady is hardly an Immortal like Michael or Satan. Chaucer does permit the Wife herself to misquote scripture freely in her Prologue.

15: *The Greater Morgante*, by Luigi Pulci (1432-84), a burlesque epic in the Tuscan dialect, the first canto of which Byron translated. Pulci’s ottava rima inspired, in part, Byron’s adoption of the style,

referred to, are cases in point of the freedom with which saints, &^c. may be permitted to converse in works intended not to be serious.

Q.R.

[* * M^r. Southey being, as he says, a good Christian and vindictive, threatens, I understand, a reply to this our answer. It is to be hoped that his visionary faculties will in the mean time have acquired a little more judgement, properly so called: otherwise he will get himself into new dilemmas. These apostate jacobins furnish rich rejoinders. Let him take a specimen. M^r. Southey laudeth grievously “one M^r. Landor,”¹⁷ who cultivates much private renown in the shape of Latin verses; and not long ago, the Poet Laureate dedicated to him, it appeareth, one of his fugitive lyrics, upon the strength of a poem called *Gebir*.¹⁸ Who would suppose, that in

though the stanzas in which he translated Pulci’s verses are less sophisticated than his own, perhaps in deference to the Italian’s pseudo-innocence (Pulci is a sceptic before his time). The canto tells of the way Orlando, or Roland, leaves Charlemagne’s court and subdues and converts the giant Morgante, who is terrorising a monastery. No saints are to be found conversing here either, though religion is invoked and discussed with great familiarity by all the characters. Peter Vassallo points out, in *Byron: The Italian Literary Influence*, pp155-65, a number of other points of contact from later cantos of the Morgante, not translated by Byron: the congregation of devils near the battlefield of Roncevalles, ready to catch the souls of the slain (Canto XXVI); the humorous depiction of St. Peter, especially ll.198-200, in which he sweats with fear (Canto XXVI); and the “tolerant and humane” devil Astarotte as a precursor of Sathan. Astarotte, Vassallo points out, adheres in his unorthodox creed to a doctrine of ultimate universal redemption which would have attracted Byron. Vassallo also argues that the *Morgante Maggiore* shares with *The Vision* a reliance on Dante.

16: A prose satire on religion by Jonathan Swift, published 1704. Here is an example of the kind of freedom of discourse which Swift permitted his characters. Peter (the Roman Catholic Church) is showing signs of paranoid delusion, and is boasting of the wonders he can show:

... *One time he swore he had a cow at home which gave as much milk at a meal as would fill three thousand churches; and, what was yet more extraordinary, would never turn sour. Another time he was telling of an old sign-post, that belonged to his father, with nails and timber enough in it to build sixteen large men of war. Talking one day of Chinese waggons, which were made so light as to sail over mountains, “Z—ds,” said Peter, “where’s the wonder of that? By G—, I saw a large house of lime and stone travel over sea and land (granting that it stopped sometimes to bait) above two thousand German leagues.” And that which was the good of it, he would swear desperately all the while that he never told a lie in his life; and at every word, “By G—, gentlemen, I tell you nothing but the truth; and the d—I broil them eternally that will not believe me. (A Tale of a Tub, Dent 1925, pp.79-80.)*

Swift, however, keeps his personages strictly allegorical. His Peter is not the Saint.

17: Walter Savage Landor, (1775-1864) sent down from Rugby and Oxford, a lifelong friend of Southey, admired primarily for prose Imaginary Conversations with famous men. He was the model for Mr Boythorn in *Bleak House*; Southey spent three days at his home at Como during the holiday back from which Byron asserted that he had brought the “League of Incest” rumour, which Landor said many years afterwards that he had heard himself from Sir James Mackintosh.

18: An oriental epic by Landor. Published 1798, written three years earlier when Landor was twenty, revised and reprinted 1803. Published in Latin, 1803. Much praised by Southey, who described it as *the miraculous work of a madman* (quoted Simmons, *Robert Southey*, p.85). Arthur Symons in *The Romantic Movement in English Poetry* (1909) wrote, ‘Gebir’ was published in 1798, the year of the ‘Lyrical Ballads’, and, in its individual way, *it marks an epoch almost as distinctly* (p.174). Gebir, warrior King of Gades, conspired against by heaven and earth and ocean (Book II ll.177-9), is desired ambivalently by the timorous Charoba, Queen of Egypt. He determines to regain his Egyptian inheritance by marrying her, but is thwarted by demons, whose secrets he discovers through wrestling in disguise with a nymph who has previously conquered his brother. Conducted by Arôar, a warrior who fought under his forefathers, into the infernal regions, to behold the ultimate folly and emptiness of power, Gebir sees, as well as his loving and anguished father, other ancestors, including the one to whose punishment Byron so gleefully draws our attention. The allegory – if such it is – is naïve and obscure, and it seems that Byron is only assuming that the wretch bound down supine is George III on the evidence of his white eyebrows: the engine-hung sword would make him with equal plausibility

Louis XVI. If he is George, then we can assume with the same latitude that he whom Gebir sees next, *flound'ring mid the marshes, yellow-flower'd* (III 202), is William III:

*What tyrant with more insolence e'er claim'd
Dominion? when, from th'heart of Usury
Rose more intense the pale-flamed thirst for gold?
And call'd, forsooth, Deliverer! False or fools!* (III 206-9)

He who follows, *Who sold his people to a rival king* (III 215) is presumably Charles II, and a subsequent spectre, *with space between the purple and the crown* (III 222), Charles I. Who all this makes Gebir himself is anyone's guess, though it seems as if Napoleon will spring from his brother's *descendants* (VI 193). Gebir is subsequently betrothed to Charoba, but is draped during the wedding ceremonial with a poisoned garment prepared by his new wife's nurse and her sorceress sister, and dies Hercules-like as the poem ends. (All quotations from Landor's *Poetical Works*, ed. Wheeler, Oxford, 1937, Vol I pp.1-55). As with Landor's "ithyphallics" (see next note) it's hard not feel that Byron is fishing about rather desperately in trying to bring Southey's friend into his polemic at all. *Gebir* is vaguely a parable against invading foreign countries: Egypt was invaded by France at the time of its publication, but as it praises Napoleon there seems no clear contemporary radical or anti-imperialist message, and the poem is Landor's *Wat Tyler* in innocent turgidity only. In a note to *The Island* (II, 401) Byron says of *Gebir*: *the poem I never read ...* and it was probably to Shelley (see below) that he owed his knowledge of it.

19: Ithyphallics are verses composed either in the metre or the mood of Bacchic hymns: Byron is accusing Landor of writing dirty poems. Here is one such, from *Cupid and Pan*: Cupid is endeavouring playfully to wrestle with Pan, but is danger of being overmastered:

*When Love, unequal to such strength, had nigh
Succumbed, he made one effort more, and caught
The horn above him: he from Arcady
Laught as he tost him upon high: nor then
Forgot the child his cunning. While the foe
Was crying "Yield thee," and was running o'er
The provinces of conquest, now with one
Now with the other hand, their pleasant change,
Losing and then recovering what they lost,
Love from his wing drew one short feather forth
And smote the eyes devouring him. Then rang
The rivers and deep lakes, and groves and vales
Throughout their winding.* (Landor, *Poetical Works*, 1937, ed. Wheeler, Vol II p.193)

Byron alludes again to such things in his *Island* note, saying that ... *they vie with Martial or Catullus in obscenity*. Southey's championship of such crypto-pornography was, however, safe enough: this is Landor's 1847 translation – which he "recast" still further in 1859 – of the 1820 original, which was in Latin. It had appeared, as *Cupido et Pan*, on p.3 of a book called *Idyllia Heroica Decem Librum Phaleuciorum Unum*, which Landor had published in 1820. (Swinburne, in a letter to Sidney Colvin of June 1st 1881 – *The Swinburne Letters*, Vol. IV p.218 – also suggests *Idyllia* as the source, quoting a poem called *Ad Mulum*). Compare Byron:

*There's a whore to my right
For I rhyme best at night
When a C—t is tied close to my inkstand ...* (BLJ VI 5)

They know nothing of the world, and what is poetry but a reflection of the world? (BLJ IV 85).

Landor had attacked Byron in the way Southey had, and Byron knew it, for Southey had, in the preface to his *Vision*, quoted in a note from a Latin essay which Landor appended to *Idyllia Heroica* called *De Cultu atque Usu Latini Sermonis*, including words to the effect that real geniuses are not corrupted by great vices, but that the public, not realising this, often admire men *styli morumque vitiis notatum, nec infectum tamen nec in libris edendis parcum* (marked by vices of style and morality, but neither dull, nor miserly in the publication of books). Such men, the deluded public assert, might, if they moderated their genius, produce something *quid et vere epicum* (great and truly epic). But they can not, says Landor, write anything *plusquam mediocria, nihil compositum, arduum, aeternum* (more

than mediocre – nothing well crafted, elevated, or eternal). Landor was living in Pisa – where Byron had moved from Ravenna immediately on completing *The Vision* – and would see no English visitors. His book had been published from there, and he claimed in 1847 that he left as soon as he realised Byron was arriving.

Idyllia Heroica also contains, on page 124, the following (the Carmani were a race living near the Persian Gulf):

DE CARMANIS

*Carmani capita hostium reportant,
Linguam faucibus extrahunt, suisque
Tantum regibus aulicisque amicis
Has unquam sapidas dapes ministrant.
TAUNTO, si tua lingua contigisset
Impransi labium extimum tyranni
A certamine vesperi voracis,
“Proh divum atque hominum fidem! haeret,
Ecquid porrigitis? date exta vulpis
Qui lento interiit macer veneno,
Expostive lupi refixa crura
Et muscis rediviva vermibusque,
Gingivam vetulae senisve testes ..
Auferte hanc olidam obsecro ferinam.
Heus! si quis canis id quod auferatur,
Si quis forte voraverit, catenâ
Cives firmitus hunc tenete ferreâ;
Idem diis sacer esto! abominandum
Monstrum dein puteal tegat perenne.*

[ON THE CARMANI: *The Carmani bring back the heads of their enemies, take the tongues from their throats, and only serve these tasty morsels to their own kings, and friends of the royal households. TAUNTO, if your tongue had come into contact with the very edge of the the lip of a king who, ravenous in the evening from fighting, had not had his morning meal, [he would say] “By the faith of gods and men! It clings – what on earth are you offering me? Give me the entrails of a fox which has died emaciated by slow poison, or the dismembered legs of an abandoned wolf, already eaten once by flies and maggots, the gums of an old woman, or the testicles of an old man. I pray you, take away this stinking meat. Hey! If any dog devours what you are taking away, or if by chance anyone at all eats it, hold him, citizens, more firmly than an iron chain would; let him be consecrated to the gods! Then let a stone cover this evil-omened monstrosity for all time.”* – translation by Michael Fincham.]

This is printed beneath a moving poem called *Ad Sutherlandium*, consoling Southey for the death of his young son Herbert in 1816: so placed, it could well be intended for someone who had spoken ill of the patrum optime in the previous piece; and by 1820 Byron had written the Dedication to *Don Juan*, which, although not officially published, was widely known about.

It was probably Shelley – he also took up residence in Pisa earlier in 1821 – who brought *Idyllia Heroica* to Byron’s attention; he had admired Landor’s verse, so much that Thomas Jefferson Hogg had had, while at Oxford, to throw *Gebir* out of the window to stop Shelley reading it aloud. The fact that Byron’s reference to Landor is put, in square brackets, at the end of his own preface, may reflect the fact that he only realised late that another *good Christian and vindictive* (exceptionally vindictive, to judge by *De Carmanis*) was on the very doorstep. Shelley is reported by Edward Williams in his diary as reading *The Vision* on November 9 182, so perhaps the last part of the Preface dates from this time.

Landor, sent up by Byron at *Don Juan* XI 59 as ... *that deep-mouthed Boeotian Savage Landor [who] Has taken for a swan rogue Southey’s gander* (a rhyme pinched from Leigh Hunt) was subsequently to regret his coldness to Shelley, at least; but he included a satirical portrait of Byron in one of his *Imaginary Conversations* (*The Abbé Delile and Walter Landor*) as *Lord Rochester’s reputed child, Mr George Nelly*:

Whenever he wrote a bad poem, he supported his sinking fame by some signal act of profligacy, an elegy by a seduction, an heroic lay by an adultery, a tragedy by a divorce ... Say what you will, once whispered a friend of mine, there are things in him as strong as poison, and as original as sin.

this same Gebir, the aforesaid Savage Landor (for such is his grim cognomen) putteth into the infernal regions no less a person than the hero of his friend M^r. Southey's heaven, - yea, even George the Third! See also how personal Savage becometh, when he hath a mind. The following is his portrait of our late gracious Sovereign: -

(Prince Gebir having descended into the infernal regions, the shades of his royal ancestors are, at his request, called up to his view, and he exclaims to his ghostly guide) -

“Aroar, what wretch that nearest us? what wretch
Is that with eyebrows white and slanting brow?
Listen! him yonder who, bound down supine,
Shrinks yelling from that sword there, engine-hung.
He too amongst my ancestors! I hate
The despot, but the dastard I despise.
Was he our countryman?”

“Alas, O King!

Iberia bore him, but the breed accurst
Inclement winds blew blighting from north-east.”
“He was a warrior then, nor fear'd the gods?”
“Gebir, he fear'd the Demons, not the Gods,
Though them indeed his daily face ador'd;
And was no warrior, yet the thousand lives
Squander'd, as stones to exercise a sling!
And the tame cruelty and cold caprice -
O madness of mankind! address, adored!” - *Gebir*, p.28.

I omit noticing some edifying Ithyphallics of Savagius, wishing to keep the proper veil over them, if his grave but somewhat indiscreet worshipper will suffer it; but certainly these teachers of “great moral lessons” are apt to be found in strange company.]

Byron, however, was dead within weeks of the publication, which almost certainly he never heard about.

The memory of Landor influenced Swinburne in his 1866 edition of Byron, in which he was hard put to reconcile his admiration for Southey - derived in part from Landor - with his admiration for *The Vision*. And in his dotage, in 1857, seven years before he died, Landor was himself convicted of publishing not a subversive but an indecent libel (not one of his Ithyphallics, and not *De Carmanis*) in a book called *Dry Sticks fagoted by W S Landor*. He was fined £1000, had to assign away his property, and flee back to Italy. Sharing Byron's hatred of the Austrian tyranny there, he was suspected of having encouraged Orsini in his 1857 assassination attempt on Napoleon III. His life and work thus dodge shadowily about the main drama of the Visions of Judgement. See *Landor and the "Satanic School"* by R.H.Super, *Studies in Philology* 43, October 1945, pp.793-810, from which much of the above is derived.

THE VISION OF JUDGEMENT¹⁹

Edited by Peter Cochran

1.

Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate;
 His keys were rusty, and the lock was dull,
 So little trouble had been given of late;
 Not that the place by any means was full,
 But since the Gallic era “Eighty Eight”²⁰ 5
 The Devils had ta’en a longer, stronger pull,
 And “a pull altogether”, as they say
 At Sea,²¹ which drew most Souls another way. –

2.

The Angels all were singing out of tune
 And hoarse with having little else to do, 10
 Excepting to wind up the Sun and Moon,
 Or curb a runaway young Star or two,
 Or wild Colt of a Comet, which too soon
 Broke out of bounds o’er the ethereal blue,
 Splitting some planet with it’s playful tail – 15
 As boats are sometimes by a wanton Whale.²² –

3.

The Guardian Seraphs had retired on high
 Finding their charges past all care below;
 Terrestrial business filled nought in the Sky
 Save the Recording Angel’s black bureau,²³ 20
 Who found indeed the facts to multiply
 With such rapidity of vice and woe
 That he had stripped off both his wings in quills
 And yet was in arrear of human ills. –

19: TEXT: *Judgement*: all other editions have *Judgment*; but this is Byron’s habitual spelling.

20: *the Gallic era “Eighty Eight”*: agitation by French politicians leading to the French Revolution began in earnest in 1788. Byron dates all the troubles in Europe during his lifetime from then. But the start of the Revolution is normally dated 1789: 1788 was the year of Byron’s birth. That *The Devils had ta’en a stronger pull* on mankind from that moment is not an idea with which he plays elsewhere, though he “confesses” to his own damnability in st.15. However, when George III comes to trial (and is, ambiguously, exonerated) the bulk of the arguments relate to what occurred in his reign before 1788: so the implication may be that Byron can conceive of no salvation for anyone who has witnessed the historical and social events he has. Redemption is a thing of the pre-Byronic past.

21: “*a pull altogether*”: subtitle to an 1804 Gillray cartoon showing Sir Francis Burdett being drawn in triumph after a Middlesex election. Horne Tooke (below, l.670) is coachman, and Sheridan an outrider. For a nautical use of the phrase (“a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether, my hearties, hurrah!”) see Mr. Omer at *David Copperfield*, Chapter XXX.

22: *As boats are sometimes by a wanton Whale*: *From their near approach, we were extremely apprehensive that they [the whales] might strike the boats and materially damage them; frequent instances occurring in the [Newfoundland] fishery, of boats being cut in twain by the force of a single blow from a whale – Loss of His Majesty’s Packet Lady Hobart on an island of Ice*, from Vol.III p.379 of Dalyell’s *Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea*, source for the shipwrecks in *Don Juan* Canto II.

23: *black bureau*: in which he keeps the ledgers recording the names of the damned.

4.

His business so augmented of late years 25
 That he was forced, against his will, no doubt
 (Just like those Cherubs, earthly ministers)
 For some resource to turn himself about
 And claim the help of his celestial peers
 To aid him ere he should be quite worn out 30
 By the increased demand for his remarks;
 Six Angels, and twelve Saints, were named his Clerks. –

5.

This was a handsome board, at least for heaven,
 And yet they had even then enough to do,
 So many Conquerors' Cars were daily driven, 35
 So many kingdoms fitted up anew;
 Each day too slew it's thousands six or seven,²⁴
 Till at the crowning carnage – Waterloo –
 They threw their pens down in divine disgust,
 The page was so besmeared with blood and dust. – 40

6.

This by the way; 'tis not mine to record
 What Angels shrink from;²⁵ even the very devil
 On this Occasion his own work abhorred,²⁶
 So surfeited with the infernal revel;
 Though he himself had sharpened every sword 45
 It almost quenched his innate thirst of evil
 (Here, Sathan's²⁷ sole good work deserves insertion –
 'Tis, that he has both Generals in reversion).²⁸

24: *Each day too slew its thousands six or seven:* see I Samuel 18, 7: *Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.* The first of many Biblical quotations which Byron scatters through the poem.

25: ... *'tis not mine to record / What angels shrink from:* compare Pope, *Essay on Criticism*, 1.625: ... *Fools rush in where Angels fear to tread.* Byron has already quoted the line above, at 1.4 of the Preface.

26: *even the very devil / On this Occasion his own work abhorred:* Byron here boldly inverts Pulci, *Morgante*, Canto XXVI st.90, where *Eaco, il gran Minòs e Rodomanta ... Satàn ... e ... Caron* dance with glee after the battle of Roncesvalles, as they contemplate all the new admissions they will have to make in consequence of its carnage. See also below, 1.198n.

27: TEXT: *Sathan:* In the manuscript, Byron spells the name with an “h” on every other occasion except this: I have changed it here, too, for consistency. *Cain* contains a similar but more specious portrait.

28: *in reversion:* a term of variable definition in law, but meaning in general having expectancy of future possession or repossession. Napoleon died two days before Byron started the poem – on May 5 1821; Wellington died in 1852. For Byron on Wellington, see *Don Juan*, IX sts.1-9.

7.²⁹

Let's skip a few short years of hollow peace,³⁰
 Which peopled earth no better, hell as wont, 50
 And heaven none; they form the tyrant's lease
 With nothing but new names subscribed upon't;
 'Twill one day finish; meantime they increase –
 “With seven heads and ten horns”, and all in front,
 Like Saint John's foretold beast³¹ – but ours are born 55
 Less formidable in the head than horn.

8.

In the first year of Freedom's second dawn³²
 Died George the third, although no tyrant, one
 Who shielded tyrants, till each Sense withdrawn
 Left him nor mental nor external Sun; 60
 A better farmer ne'er brushed dew from lawn,³³
 A weaker king ne'er left a realm undone;³⁴
 He died – but left his subjects still behind,
 One half as mad, and t'other no less blind.

9.

He died –³⁵ his death made no great stir on earth; 65
 His burial made some pomp; there was profusion
 Of Velvet, gilding, brass, and no great dearth
 Of aught but tears – save those shed by collusion –
 For these things may be bought at their true worth;
 Of Elegy there was the due infusion, 70
 Bought also; and the torches, cloaks and banners,
 Heralds, and relics of old Gothic manners,

29: the noun-pronoun relationships here are slightly obscure, but I take *they* (l.51) to be *a few short years* (l.); *it in t'will* (l.53) to be *the tyrant's lease* (l.51) and *they* (l.53) to be *new names* (l.52).

30: *short years of hollow peace*: see *Beppo*, ll.391-2: [*I*] *greatly venerate our recent glories, / And wish they were not owing to the Tories.*

31: “*With seven heads and ten horns*”: One of the few Biblical quotations to which Byron draws direct attention. There are three such apparitions in *Revelation*: firstly 12, 3: ... *and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his head.* This is interpreted as Satan. The dragon confronts a woman *clothed with the sun ... travailing in birth*; but she and her child are taken up by God. After Michael has defeated the dragon, *I ... saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns* (13, 1). This is interpreted as the seven hills of Rome and thus as worldly power – Byron seems to intend such a meaning here; the horns are either the provinces of the empire or ten emperors still to come. The beast inherits the dragon's power (13, 2). Lastly, at 17, 3: *I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.* The woman is earthly lust, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication (17, 2); and is doomed to be eaten up by the beast itself.

32: *In the first year of Freedom's second dawn*: several revolutionary movements started in Europe during 1820, including an abortive one in Italy involving the Carbonari, which Byron joined.

33: *A better farmer*: George III wrote agricultural pamphlets under the pseudonym Ralph Robinson, and was called Farmer George. *Ne'er brushed dew from lawn*: compare Gray's *Elegy*, l.25: *Oft have we see him at the peep of dawn / Brushing with hasty steps the dews away / To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.*

34: **TEXT:** *A weaker king ne'er left a realm undone*: this is the line as altered by the errata list in *The Liberal*. *A weaker king never left a realm undone!* (Oxford Byron) *A worse king never left a realm undone!* (Liberal, Wright, Coleridge) *A weaker king ne'er left a realm undone!* (CPW).

35: **TEXT:** He died – : He died! (all editions).

10.³⁶

Formed a sepulchral melodrame; of all
 The fools who flocked to swell or see the show,
 Who cared about the corpse? The funeral 75
 Made the attraction, and the black the woe;
 There throbbed not there a thought which pierced the pall,
 And when the gorgeous Coffin was laid low
 It seemed the mockery of hell to fold
 The rottenness of eighty years in gold. – 80

11.

So mix his body with the dust! It might
 Return to what it must far sooner, were
 The natural compound left alone to fight
 It's way back into earth, and fire, and air;
 But the unnatural balsams merely blight 85
 What Nature made him at his birth – as bare
 As the mere Millions' base unmmmied Clay –
 Yet all his Spices but prolong decay. –

36: George's lying-in-state and funeral were extremely well stage-managed, and Byron seems to have read such journalistic reports as the following (relevant phrases emboldened):

*The body of his MAJESTY was not embalmed in the usual manner, but has been wrapped in cere-clothes, to preserve it as long as possible. **The corpse, indeed, exhibited a painful spectacle of the rapid decay which had recently taken place in his MAJESTY'S constitution. His once vigorous frame was reduced almost to a skeleton. Nature seemed to have been altogether exhausted, and hence, possibly, the surgeons deemed it impossible to perform the process of embalming in the usual way.***

On Thursday night, the 3d instant, the body, being wrapped in an exterior fold of white satin, was placed in the inside coffin, which was composed of mahogany, pillowed and ornamented in the customary manner with white satin. The ceremony of placing the remains in the inside coffin was performed in the most respectful manner by Mr MASH, and Mr BOTT the late King's principal page, and the other pages attached to the royal person. Mr BRAND, the King's apothecary, being in attendance to fill the coffin with spices and aromatic herbs. This was afterwards enclosed in a leaden coffin, again enclosed in another mahogany coffin, and the whole finally placed in the state coffin, of Spanish mahogany, covered with the richest Genoa velvet of royal purple, a few shades deeper in tint than Garter blue. The lid was divided into three compartments by double rows of gilt silver nails: and in the compartment at the head, over a rich Star of the Order of the Garter, was placed the Royal Arms of England, beautifully executed in dead gold.

*... During the progress of the visitors ... not even a whisper was heard. All were silent as death itself; and the stillness, the "dim religious light," the mourning attitude of every attendant, raised the mind to a sort of dreary sublimity which it is not within the reach of language to produce ... The body lay under a rich canopy, at the upper end of the room, hung with purple drapery, and lighted, like the Presence Chamber, with wax tapers in silver sconces ... it is impossible to describe the thrilling awe of every bosom as the throwing of the dust resounded from the royal coffin: this awe was still further heightened to those in the chapel, from whose eyes the coffin had slowly and gradually disappeared, without hands, as if it had been secretly and mysteriously withdrawn by some supernatural power. – *The European Magazine*, February 1820 pp.126, 128 and 138. (Coleridge, enlarged.)*

12.

He's dead – and upper Earth with him has done;
 He's buried – save the Undertaker's bill, 90
 Or Lapidary Scrawl,³⁷ the world is gone
 For him – unless he left a German will³⁸ –
 But where's the proctor who will ask his Son?
 In whom his qualities are reigning still,
 Except that household virtue most uncommon, 95
 Of Constancy to an unhandsome woman.³⁹ – –

13.

“God save the King!” It is a large economy
 In God to save the like,⁴⁰ but if he will
 Be saving, all the better, for not one am I
 Of those, who think damnation better still – 100
 I hardly know too if not quite alone am I⁴¹
 In this small hope of bettering future ill
 By circumscribing with some slight restriction
 The eternity of Hell's hot jurisdiction.

37: *Lapidary scrawl*: secondary usage of *lapidary*, referring not to gems but to inscriptions on stone.

38: *unless he left a German will*: George was King of Hanover as well as Britain: his grandfather, the previous George, was alleged to have pocketed the will of George I, and never to have acted upon it. George III left two wills, dated 1770 and 1810, the second of which lacked his signature, and gave rise to dispute between George IV and the Duke of York, afterwards William IV. See *Don Juan*, XI, 78, 3.

39: TEXT: *constancy to an unhandsome woman*: this is the line as altered by the errata list in the second edition of *The Liberal's* first number. The wives both of George III and of George IV were or became notably unattractive, the elder, Princess Charlotte-Sophia of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, because of her looks, the younger, Princess Caroline of Brunswick, because of her size, personal hygiene and promiscuity. The elder monarch was a pattern of marital fidelity; the younger not. *constancy to an unhandsome woman*: this is the line as altered by the errata list in the second edition of *The Liberal's* first number. The wives both of George III and of George IV were or became notably unattractive, the elder, Princess Charlotte-Sophia of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, because of her looks, the younger, Princess Caroline of Brunswick, because of her size, personal hygiene and promiscuity. The elder monarch was a pattern of marital fidelity; the younger not. However, the woman, whether bad, ugly or simply unhandsome, may be the Whore of Babylon in *Revelation* 17 1-6: *Come hither; I will shew unto thee judgement of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication ... I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.* The Whore is probably a symbol of Rome and therefore of earthly political power: George had certainly fornicated with and remained constant to her, if that is the right interpretation. Byron's erratum loses not only the ungentlemanly insult to the Queen, but also his apt Biblical allusion.

40: *It is a large economy / In God to save the like*: George IV suffered from obesity. Compare *Don Juan*, VIII 126, 8: *Gaunt Famine never shall approach the throne – / Though Ireland starve, great George weighs twenty stone.* See also *Don Juan*, IX 39, 1 ... 40, 7-8: *Think if then George the Fourth should be dug up! ... how ... will these relics, when they see 'em, / Look like the monsters of a new Museum?* The fact remains, however, that in st.106 George III is (temporarily at least) saved.

41: *I hardly know too if not quite alone am I*: the strange scansion of this line is perhaps explained if we see that it contains two dactyls formed on the principles Southey explains in the Preface to his *Vision*: *hardly-know* and *nòt-quite-a-*. See also *nòt-one-am* in L.99. The manuscript indicates a deliberate rewriting to incorporate the joke. See note to 1.721. For Byron's prose reflections on damnation, see note to st.15.

14.

I know this is unpopular – I know 105
 'Tis blasphemous – I know one may be damned
 For hoping no one else may e'er be so –
 I know my catechism – I know we're crammed
 With the best doctrines till we quite o'erflow –
 I know that all save England's church have shammed,
 And that the other twice two hundred Churches 110
 And Synagogues have made a *damned* bad purchase. –

15.⁴²

God help us all! God help me too! I am
 God knows as helpless as the Devil can wish –
 And not a whit more difficult to damn 115
 Than is to bring to land a late-hooked fish,
 Or to the butcher to purvey the lamb –
 Not that I'm fit for such a noble dish –
 As one day will be that immortal Fry
 Of almost every body born to die. – 120

42: Byron here confesses his own damnability to avoid any accusations that he shares Southey's complacency; but he doesn't seem over-worried by it. Note opposite that the stanza was written without revisions of any kind – the most striking of the four out of one-hundred-and-six which emerged “neat”. For some of Byron's private and prosaic reflections on damnation and the afterlife, see this, from *Detached Thoughts*, written between October 15 1821 and May 18 1822 – that is, within a very short time of *The Vision of Judgement*:

– *A material resurrection seems strange and even absurd except for purposes of punishment – and all punishment which is to revenge rather than correct – must be morally wrong – and when the World is at an end – what moral or warning purpose can eternal tortures answer? – human passions have probably disfigured the divine doctrines here – but the whole thing is inscrutable. – It is useless to tell one not to reason but to believe – – you might as well tell a man not to wake but sleep – and then to bully with torments! – and all that! – I cannot help thinking that the menace of Hell makes as many devils as the severe penal codes of inhuman humanity make villains. – – Man is born passionate of body – but with an innate though secret tendency to the love of Good in his Main-spring of Mind. – – But God help us all! – It is at present a sad jar of atoms. – – (BLJ IX 45-6).*

The irony of the verse seems a proper reflection of the scepticism of the prose. Byron was, later, impressed by the Socinian doctrine that punishment after death was not eternal. In 1823, he praised a theory that *a time will come when every intelligent creature shall be supremely happy, and eternally so, which [expunged] that shocking doctrine, that sin and misery will for ever exist under the government of a God whose highest attribute is love and goodness; and thus, by removing one of the greatest difficulties, reconciles us to the wise and good Creator whom the Scriptures reveal (H.V.S.V. pp.454-5)*. He also said, *I already believe in predestination ... and in the depravity of the human heart in general, and of my own in particular ... I shall get at the others by and by ... (445)*; but James Kennedy also noted that *there was never any great degree of seriousness mixed with [Byron's] sentiments, and that though there was nothing in his manner ... that indicated a wish to mock at religion ... an able dissembler could have done all that he did with such feelings and intentions ... I am perfectly uncertain what impression was made on Lord B.'s mind (449)*.

16.

Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate
 And nodded o'er his keys – when, lo! there came
 A wondrous noise he had not heard of late –
 A rushing sound of wind – & stream, and flame –
 In short, a roar of things extremely great 125
 Which would have made aught save a Saint exclaim –
 But he with first a start and then a wink
 Said, “There’s another Star gone out I think!”

17.⁴³

But ere he could return to his repose,
 A Cherub flapped his right wing o'er his eyes – 130
 At which Saint Peter yawned, & rubbed his nose;
 “Saint Porter,” said the Angel, “prithee rise!”
 Waving a goodly wing, which glowed as glows
 An earthly Peacock’s tail, with heavenly dyes;
 To which the Saint replied, “Well – what’s the matter? 135
 “Is Lucifer⁴⁴ come back with all this Clatter?”

18.

“No,” quoth the Cherub, “George the third⁴⁵ is dead.”
 “And who is George the third?” replied the Apostle.
 “*What George? What third?*” “The king⁴⁶ of England,” said
 The Angel. “Well! he won’t find kings to jostle 140
 “Him on his way – but does he wear his head?⁴⁷
 “Because the last we saw here had a tussle
 “And ne’er would have got into heaven’s good graces
 “Had he not flung his head in all our faces. –

43: For Heaven’s indifference here, contrast Southey, *A Vision of Judgement*, Part IV:

*O'er the adamantine gates an Angel stood on the summit.
 Ho! he exclaim'd, King George of England cometh to Judgement!
 Hear Heaven! Ye Angels hear! Souls of the Good and the Wicked
 Whom it concerns, attend! Thou, Hell, bring forth his accusers!
 As the sonorous summons was utter'd, the Winds, who were waiting,
 Bore it abroad through Heaven; and Hell, in her nethermost caverns,
 Heard, and obey'd in dismay.*

44: *Lucifer*: Peter forgets that when the Devil fell he forfeited this name. See Michael too, at l.497. He is only called Sathan by the narrator: the angels and saints seem not to have come to terms with the implications of his revolt.

45: TEXT: *third*: Third (all editions).

46: TEXT: *king*: King (all editions).

47: *but does he wear his head?*: the previous monarch to arrive at Heaven’s gate had been Louis XVI of France, guillotined in 1793.

19.

“He was, if I remember, king of France; 145
 “That head of his, which could not keep a crown
 “On earth, yet ventured in my face to advance
 “A claim to those of Martyrs – like my own;
 “If I had had my sword – as I had once
 “When I cut ears off⁴⁸ – I had cut him down; 150
 “But having but my keys and not my brand,
 “I only knocked his head from out his hand. –

20.

“And then he set up such a headless howl,
 “That all the Saints came out and took him in –
 “And there he sits by Saint Paul, cheek by jowl;⁴⁹ 155
 “That fellow Paul – the Parvenù!⁵⁰ The Skin
 “Of Saint Bartholomew,⁵¹ which makes his cowl
 “In heaven, and upon earth redeemed his sin,
 “So as to make a martyr, never sped
 “Better than did this weak & wooden head. – 160

21.

“But had it come up here upon it’s shoulders,
 “There would have been a different tale to tell –
 “The fellow feeling in the Saint’s beholders
 “Seems to have acted on them like a Spell⁵² –
 “And so this very foolish head heaven solders 165
 “Back on it’s trunk – it may be very well –
 “And seems the custom here to overthrow
 “Whatever has been wisely done below.”

48: *when I cut ears off*: see *Matthew* 26, 51, *Mark* 14, 47, *Luke* 22, 51, and *John* 18, 10. Only John specifies Peter as the assailant.

49: *cheek by jowl*: see *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, III ii 338.

50: *the Parvenù!*: St Peter resents St. Paul, who, though personally unacquainted with Jesus, and a latecomer on the apostolic scene, has apparently found much greater favour in heaven, sitting within while Peter sits without.

51: *the Skin / Of Saint Bartholomew*: the saint, one of the more obscure apostles, was flayed alive. His skin figures as Michaelangelo’s self-portrait in the Sistine Chapel *Last Judgement*. A letter from Byron to Murray, May 9 1817 (BLJ V 220-1, quoted l.440 below) describing *The Last Judgement* and imagining Southey in it; and Johnson’s words at *Don Juan* V 44 4: ... *when / From Saint Bartholomew we have saved our skin ...*

52: *The fellow feeling in the Saint’s beholders / Seems to have acted on them like a Spell*: Just as St Bartholomew’s dreadful fate gave him unquestioned admission into heaven, so (“in the same way” – l.165) did that of Louis XVI. St Peter is not at all certain that Louis deserved such treatment. Byron’s syntax is not crystal clear; but it seems unlikely that Louis XVI is meant by *the Saint*.

22.

The Angel answered, “Peter! do not pout –
 “The king who comes has head and all entire 170
 “And never knew much what it was about –
 “He did as doth the Puppet – by it’s wire –
 “And will be judged like all the rest, no doubt –
 “My business and your own is not to enquire
 “Into such matters, but to mind our cue – 175
 “Which is to act as we are bid to do.”

23.

While thus they spake, the Angelic Caravan,
 Arriving like a rush of mighty Wind⁵³
 Cleaving the fields of Space, as doth the Swan
 Some silver stream (Say Ganges, Nile, or Inde, 180
 Or Thames, or Tweed)⁵⁴ & midst them an old man
 With an old soul, and both extremely blind,
 Halted before the Gate, and in his shroud
 Seated their fellow traveller on a cloud. –

53: *A rushing sound of wind, and stream, and flame:* see Acts 2, 2-3, when the Holy Ghost appears at Pentecost: *And suddenly there came from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind.* Byron quotes the verses again at l.178. On neither occasion are they entirely apt. Southey records himself as “experiencing” the same effect in Part I of his *Vision*:

*... therewithal I felt a stroke as of lightning,
 With a sound like the rushing of winds, or the roaring of waters.*

54: *(Say Ganges, Nile, or Inde, / Or Thames, or Tweed):* echoes Voltaire, *La Princesse de Babylone*, Chapter VIII: “... on était mille fois plus instruit sur les bords de la Tamise que sur ceux du Nil, de l’Euphrate, et du Gange”.

24.⁵⁵

But bringing up the rear of this bright host 185
 A Spirit of a different aspect waved
 His wings, like thunder-clouds above some coast
 Whose barren beach with frequent wrecks is paved –
 His brow was like the Deep when tempest-tost –
 Fierce and unfathomable thoughts engraved 190
 Eternal wrath on his immortal face –
 And *where* he gazed a gloom pervaded Space.

55: Sathan has here a dignity denied him by Southey:

*It was the Spirit by which his [George's] righteous realm had been troubled;
 Likest in form uncouth to the hideous Idols whom India
 (Long by guilty neglect to hellish delusions abandon'd)
 Worships with horrible rites of self-immolation and torture.
 Many-headed and monstrous the Fiend; with numberless faces,
 Numberless bestial ears erect to all rumours, and restless,
 And with numberless mouths which were fill'd with lies as with arrows.
 Clamours arose as he came, a confusion of turbulent voices,
 Maledictions, and blatant tongues, and viperous hisses;
 And in the hubbub of senseless sounds the watchwords of faction,
 Freedom, Invaded Rights, Corruption, and War, and Oppression, ...
 Loudly enounced were heard.*

(A Vision of Judgement, Part V)

Byron's portrait of Sathan is derived from several heroes of his earlier works: see for example the portrait of Conrad in *The Corsair*:

*... There was a laughing Devil in his sneer,
 That raised emotions both of rage and fear;
 And where his frown of hatred darkly fell,
 Hope withering fled – and Mercy sighed farewell! (I 223-6)*

Yet see also Junius, at sts.75-9. Sathan has Conrad's gloom, Junius a much subtler version of his inscrutability. Both are described with more wit and vigour. (For an echo of the imagery of this stanza, see *Don Juan* II, 177; also note to l.305, below.) Arimanes from *Manfred* might be another Byronic forbearer, were he given any speeches of length: Milton's Satan is behind them all, as he is not behind Southey's:

*Dark'nd so, yet shon
 Above them all th'Archangel: but his face
 Deep scarrs of Thunder had intrencht, and care
 Sat on his faded cheek, but under Browes
 Of dauntless courage, and considerat Pride
 Waiting revenge: cruel his eye, but cast
 Signs of remorse and passion to behold
 The fellows of his crime ... (Paradise Lost I 599-60).*

25.

As he drew near, he gazed upon the Gate
 Ne'er to be entered more by him or Sin
 With such a glance of supernatural hate 195
 As made Saint Peter wish himself within –
 He potted with his keys at a great rate
 And sweated through his Apostolic skin⁵⁶ –
 Of course his perspiration was but Ichor,⁵⁷
 Or some such other Spiritual liquor. – 200

26.

The very Cherubs huddled altogether
 Like birds when soars the Falcon – & they felt
 A tingling to the tip of every feather,
 And formed a circle like Orion's belt
 Around their poor old Charge, who scarce knew whither 205
 His Guards had led him – though they gently dealt
 With royal Manes⁵⁸ (for by many stories,
 And true, we learn the Angels all are Tories).

27.

As things were in this posture, the gate flew
 Asunder, and the flashing of it's hinges 210
 Flung over space an universal hue
 Of many-coloured flame, until it's tinges
 Reached even our speck of earth, & made a new
 Aurora Borealis⁵⁹ spread it's fringes
 O'er the North Pole – the same seen, when ice-bound, 215
 By Captain Parry's crews in "Melville's Sound."⁶⁰

56: *sweated through his Apostolic skin*: lifted from Pulci, *Morgante*, XXVI 91, where Pietro sweats so much ... *che la barba gli sudava e'l pello* (... his beard and skin were soaked). See also above, ll.42-3n.

57: *Ichor*: an ethereal fluid supposed to flow in the veins of gods. See *Paradise Lost* VI, 328-34, *Iliad*, V 340, and *The Dunciad* (1743) II 92.

58: *Manes*: Departed spirits (Latin).

59: *Aurora Borealis*: the idea of an angel's entry through heaven's gate mistaken for the aurora is from *Paradise and the Peri* in Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh* (1817):

*To mortal eye this light might seem
 A northern flash or meteor beam –
 But well th'enraptur'd PERI knew
 'Twas a bright smile the Angel threw
 From Heaven's gate ...*

Lalla Rookh was written with Byron's encouragement (see BLJ IV 252-3, V 186). Featuring the repentance of an Eastern villain similar to Conrad in *The Corsair* (one of his sincerely-shed tears is the Peri's ticket into Paradise) it may be Moore's riposte to Byron's less obviously ethical *Turkish Tales*, and it is amusing to read the small reciprocal echo here as Byron's acknowledgement. But see also Southey, *The Curse of Kehama*, VII: *Even we on earth at intervals descry / Gleams of the glory, streaks of flowing light, / Openings of heaven, and streams that flash at night, / In fitful splendour, through the northern sky.* *Lalla Rookh* is in several important respects indebted to Southey's earlier epic.

60: *Captain Parry's crews, in "Melville's Sound"*: Sir William Edward Parry (1790-1855) was in late 1821 in the middle of his third polar expedition. Viscount Melville's Sound is to the south of what are now the Parry Islands in northern Canada. All editions except the *Liberal* and CPW have "crew", but the expedition to which Byron refers was in 1820-1, when Parry took two ships, the *Hecla* and the

28.

And from the Gate thrown open issued beaming
 A beautiful & mighty thing of light⁶¹ –
 Radiant with glory – like a banner streaming
 Victorious from some World-o’erthrowing fight – 220
 My poor Comparisons must needs be teeming
 With earthly likenesses, for here the Night
 Of Clay obscures our best conceptions, saving
 Johanna Southcote or Bob Southey raving.⁶² –

Griper, in search of the Northwest Passage, so “crews” is right. Parry didn’t find the Passage, but his journal records on pages 134-6 a sighting of the Northern Lights on Saturday January 15 1820: unfortunately for the idea, George III died a fortnight later, on January 29. John Murray, publisher to the Admiralty as well as Byron, published the Journal in 1821; it is item 221 in the 1827 Sale Catalogue (CMP 254). Thus Byron deflates his own Southeyan and Moore-ish allusions. For further use of Parry, see *Don Juan* VII 2, XIII 39, 5, XIV 22, 4 (a very ambivalent reference) and XII 82, which reverses the idea here by making parliamentary debates *flash ... as far as where the musk bull browses*.

61: TEXT: *thing of light:* Thing of Light (all editions). Precedents for Michael here may be found in *Ezekiel* 1, 26, 10, 1-5 and 43, 1-5; *Daniel* 7, 9-10 and 10, 5-6; in *Revelation* 4, 2: see also Tasso, *Gerusalemme Liberata*, IX 58-62.

62: *Johanna Southcote or Bob Southey raving:* Johanna Southcote, or Bob Southey raving (all editions). The first introduction of Southey’s name is carefully made in conjunction with that of this lady. Joanna Southcott, the correct spelling (1750-1814) was a Christian preacher from Devon, who had thousands of followers from 1792 onwards. In 1813 she announced that in the following year she would give birth to Shiloh, the new Prince of Peace: soon she showed all the symptoms of incipient motherhood, and received countless presents appropriate to such a confinement. But, recognising her true condition, and perhaps seeing herself with disquiet in *Revelation* 2, 20-3 (*that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess ... I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed ... and I will kill her children with death*) she sent them back, dying four days later. See *Don Juan* XI 1.666. Self-questioning, she often, like Southey, expressed herself in visionary verse, though in a style less polished. The following may serve as an example: it was “given to Joanna Southcott on the 7 of March, 1803”, but not published until 1829, when one C.W.Twort printed it as “The Vision of Judgement, or the Return of Joanna from her Trance”: the date and the title may suggest a forgery, but the style is well in keeping with that of authentic prophecies published during Southcott’s lifetime:

... So when I come to make an end,
 Both churches to unite,
 Just so you’ll see departed friends,
 In dazzling robes of white:
 They’ll come below, you all will know,
 And with them you’ll converse;
 From world, to world, the dead will go,
 Where none can them molest.
 But now be clear, some legions there,
 Are hovering in the air:
 Without my angels guard them there,
 They cannot come to you.
 But mark the crown, how this was found,
 And bring it to thy view:
 See it again – I’ll tell thee plain
 How every branch do go;
 And how ’twill be, the end they’ll see,
 Like Peter’s vision come,
 That from the heaven was shown to him,
 If this was done when first I came,
 My followers for to see,
 You must expect more wondrous sights,

29.

'Twas the Archangel Michael⁶³ – all men know 225
 The make of Angels & Archangels, since
 There's scarce a scribbler has not one to show,
 From the fiends' leader to the angels' Prince;
 There also are some Altar-pieces, though
 I really can't say they much evince 230
 One's inner notions of immortal Spirits;
 But let the Connoisseurs⁶⁴ explain *their* merits. –

When I come down to ye. (p.34)

Byron referred to Joanna Southcott as *Mrs Trinity* (BLJ IV 171) and said, during her supposed pregnancy, *I long to know what she will produce – her being with child at 65 is indeed a miracle – but her getting anyone to beget it – a greater* (BLJ IV 164). He used to refer to Shelley as “Shiloh”. At *Don Juan*, III 95, he also equates Wordsworth with Southcott: ... *the new births of both their stale virginites / Have proved but dropsies, taken for divinities*. Southey thought Southcott should be sent to Botany Bay (Curry, *New Letters*, I 428), or Bedlam (I 468). He said, *You will hardly believe that such blasphemies should be tolerated, or such credulity be found in England at this time* (I 428). Here is a passage (*The Curse of Kehama*, VII, 5) where Southey describes a celestial being not unlike St. Michael:

*The wings of Eagle or of Cherubim
 Had seem'd unworthy him;
 Angelic power and dignity and grace
 Were in his glorious pennons; from the neck
 Down to the ankle reach'd their swelling web
 Richer than robes of Tyrian dye, that deck
 Imperial Majesty:
 Their colour like the winter's moonless sky,
 When all the stars of midnight's canopy
 Shine forth; or like the azure deep at noon,
 Reflecting back to heaven a brighter blue.
 Such was their tint when closed, but when outspread,
 The permeating light
 Shed through their substance thin a varying hue;
 Now bright as when the rose,
 Beauteous as fragrant, gives to scent and sight
 A like delight; now like the juice that flows
 From Duoro's generous vine;
 Or ruby when with deepest red it glows;
 Or as the morning clouds refulgent shine,
 When, at forthcoming of the Lord of Day,
 The Orient, like a shrine,
 Kindles, as it receives the rousing ray,
 And heralding his way,
 Proclaims the presence of the Power divine.*

Byron's assertion here is that he is not equal to Southey (or Southcote) in this sort of thing. But now see st.61 of the present poem.

63: *Michael*: the only named angel in *Revelation* (12 7). Identified by some commentators with Christ himself.

64: *the Connoisseurs*: echoes *CHP*, IV 53, where connoisseurs are said to *describe the indescribable*. Byron says, speaking about critics of the Medici Venus, which he admires more than he does the altar-pieces here, *I would not their vile breath should crisp the stream / Wherein that image shall for ever dwell*. Byron may be thinking here of Caravaggio's altar-piece *St Matthew and the Angel*.

30.

Michael flew forth – in Glory and in Good
 A Goodly work of him from whom all Glory
 And Good arise; the portal past, he stood; 235
 Before him the young Cherubs and Saint hoary
 (I say *young* – begging to be understood
 By looks, not years – and should be very sorry
 To state they were not older than Saint Peter,
 But merely that they seemed a little sweeter). 240

31.

The Cherubs and the Saint bowed down before
 That Archangelic Hierarch, the first
 Of Essences Angelical, who wore
 The aspect of a God, but this ne'er nurst
 Pride in his heavenly bosom, in whose core 245
 No thought save for his Maker's service durst
 Intrude – however glorified and high –
 He knew him but the Viceroy of the Sky.

32.

He and the Sombre silent Spirit met –
 They knew each other both for good and ill – 250
 Such was their power that neither could forget
 His former friend, & future foe⁶⁵ – but still
 There was a high, immortal, proud regret
 In either's eye, as if 'twere less their will
 Than destiny to make the eternal years 255
 Their date of war, and their "Champ Clos"⁶⁶ the Spheres.

65: *His former friend, and future foe:* Sathan had been the brightest of the archangels until he rebelled and was defeated. Michael and he are destined to come into final conflict at Armageddon. See *Isaiah* 27 1, *Daniel* 12 1, *Revelation* 20 1-3, and such pictorial works as Blake's *Michael binding Satan*.

66: *Their "Champ Clos" the Spheres:* a *champ clos* was a field enclosed for a judicial duel or tournament: Mary Queen of Scots uses the phrase *en champs clos* in Chapter 25 of Scott's *The Abbot* (1820). The *spheres* are the universal bounds of Ptolomaic astronomy.

33.

But here they were in neutral space – we know
 From Job⁶⁷ that Sathan hath the power to pay
 A heavenly visit thrice a year or so,
 And that “the Sons of God”,⁶⁸ like those of Clay, 260
 Must keep him company; and we might show
 From the same book in how polite a way
 The dialogue is held between the Powers
 Of Good and Evil – but ’twould take up hours,

34.

And this is not a theologic tract 265
 To prove with Hebrew and with Arabic
 If Job be allegory or a fact,
 But a true narrative, and thus I pick
 From out the whole but such and such an act
 As sets aside the slightest thought of trick – 270
 ’Tis every tittle true – beyond suspicion –
 And accurate as any other vision. –

67: *Job*: at the start of the Book of Job, when Satan – whose first appearance in the Bible this is – visits Heaven, the tone between him and God is urbane, despite Satan’s unchallenged dominion over the world. In 1812 the physician and theologian John Mason Good, F.R.S., had published a translation of *Job*, in which he had written that the book *appears to have descended as fact, in a regular stream of belief, in the very country which forms the scene of the history, from the supposed time of its occurrence to the present day* (p.xiv). Later he refers to the opposite opinion of Warburton – Pope’s editor – that *it is both a dramatic and allegorical composition, the character of Job being a mere fiction, or loosely grounded on history* (p.li). Good shows himself familiar with many Eastern languages, including (see 1.266) Hebrew and Arabic. (**Coleridge, enlarged.**) Byron was once questioned about *Job*, but made several evasive replies (*H.V.S.V.*, p.121). Also in 1812, Good edited the letters of Junius, using material in the possession of George Woodfall, whose father had been Junius’ printer: it was from his edition that the theory grew that Philip Francis had been Junius. See below, sts.74-84.

68: “the Sons of God”: another overt quotation, from *Job* 1, 6. Also *Genesis* 6, 2: *And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the Sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.* Byron was sufficiently impressed by this to use it as his epigraph to *Heaven and Earth*, written immediately after this poem.

35.⁶⁹

The Spirits were in Neutral space, before
 The gate of heaven; like Eastern thresholds⁷⁰ is
 The place where Death's grand cause is argued o'er, 275
 And Souls dispatched to that world or to this,
 And therefore Michael and the Other wore
 A civil aspect – though they did not kiss,
 Yet still between his Darkness and his Brightness
 There passed a mutual glance of great politeness. 280

36.

The Archangel bowed – not like a modern beau,
 But with a graceful Oriental bend –
 Pressing one radiant arm just where below
 The heart in good men is supposed to tend;⁷¹
 He turned as to an Equal; not too low 285
 But kindly; Sathan met his ancient friend
 With more hauteur, as might an old Castilian⁷²
 Poor Noble meet a mushroom rich civilian. –

69: contrast Milton's depiction of the meeting between Michael and Satan at *Paradise Lost*, VI 246-95:

... At his approach

*The great Arch-Angel from his warlike toile
 Surceas'd, and glad as hoping here to end
 Intestin Warr in Heav'n, th'Arch-foe subdu'd
 Or Captive dragd in Chains, with hostil frown
 And visage all enflam'd first thus began.
 Author of evil, unknown till thy revolt,
 Unnam'd in Heav'n, now plenteous, as thou seest
 These Acts of hateful strife, hateful to all,
 Though heaviest by just measure on thy self
 And thy adherents: how hast thou disturbd
 Heav'ns blessed peace, and into Nature brought
 Miserie, uncreated till the crime
 Of thy rebellion! How has thou instilld
 Thy malice into thousands, once upright
 And faithful, now prov'd false!*

There may also be an echo here of the encounter between Roderick and Count Julian in Southey's *Roderick, Last of the Goths*, Book XXI.

70: *Eastern thresholds*: in the Levant in Byron's time, trials of those accused of actions prejudicial to the safety of a city would be conducted at the city's gates. See also *Deuteronomy* 16, 18-20: *Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgement. Thou shalt not wrest judgement; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. (Coleridge, enlarged.)*

71: *Pressing one radiant arm just where below / The heart in good men is supposed to tend*: the implication of his gesture may not be entirely clear to Michael. In William Beckford's *Vathek*, the pre-Adamite kings, worshippers even in the afterlife of the Dark Spirit Eblis, "regarded one another with looks of the deepest dejection, each holding his right hand, motionless, on his heart". Beckford's note reads, "Sandys observes, that the application of the right hand to the heart is the customary mode of eastern salutation; but the perseverance of the votaries of Eblis in this attitude, was intended to express their devotion to him both in heart and hand" (*Vathek*, ed. Lonsdale, p.112 and n.). Byron admired *Vathek*, and had several copies, one at Missolonghi; see BLJ XI 76n.

72: *Castilian*: Spanish, from the old kingdom of Castile.

37.

He merely bent his diabolic brow
 An instant, and then raising it, he stood 290
 In act to assert his right or wrong, and show
 Cause why King George by no means could or should
 Make out a case to be exempt from woe
 Eternal, more than other kings endued
 With better sense and hearts, whom History mentions, 295
 Who long have “paved Hell with their good intentions.”⁷³

38.

Michael began,⁷⁴ “What wouldst thou with this Man,
 “Now dead, & brought before the Lord? What ill
 “Hath he wrought since his mortal race began,
 “That thou canst claim him? Speak,⁷⁵ and do thy will, 300
 “If it be just; if in his earthly span⁷⁶
 “He hath been greatly failing to fulfil
 “His duties as a king and mortal, Say,
 “And he is thine; if not, Let him have way!” –

73: “paved hell with their good intentions”: Dr Johnson said, at or around Easter 1775, *Sir, Hell is paved with good intentions*. (Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, Oxford 1904 p.591). He was echoing a common proverb. Byron uses the phrase again at *Don Juan* VIII, 25 8, claiming in a note that it is from the Portuguese, and elaborates on it in VIII, 26. It occurs in Chapter VII of Scott’s *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819), and Byron quotes it in his *Ravenna Journal* (BLJ VIII 106) close by a reference to the same novel.

74: *Michael began* – “What wouldst thou with this Man, / Now dead, and brought before the Lord?": the courtesy and gentlemanly deference shown in the competition between Michael and Sathan for the soul of George is a covert reference to a passage in the brief *General Epistle of Jude* (5-10) and may be taken as a rebuke to Southey for his ill manners in addressing the supposed Satanic School in the preface to his *Vision: Yet Michael the Archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves*. See *Fiction, Fair and Foul* (Works, XXXIV pp.367-8) for John Ruskin’s admiration of the greater “euphemy” of Byron’s passage, and his pointing out the inadequacy of the *Authorised Version’s durst not bring against him a railing accusation*, which should read *durst not blaspheme against him*. Southey’s instinctive ignorance of Christian ethics – as well as Byron’s superior knowledge of the Bible – is well illustrated here. Byron was proud of his ability to *beat the Canters with their own weapons* (*H.V.S.V.*, p.569).

75: TEXT: *Speak*,: *Speak!* (all editions).

76: TEXT: *his earthly span*: this earthly span (Liberal, Wright, Coleridge, Oxford Byron) his earthly span (CPW) 304: *let him have way!*: let him have way. (all editions).

39.

“Michael!” replied the Prince of Air,⁷⁷ “even here, 305
 “Before the gate of him thou servest, must
 “I claim my Subject, and will make appear
 “That as he was my worshipper in dust,
 “So shall he be in Spirit – although dear
 “To thee and thine because nor wine nor lust 310
 “Were of his weaknesses – yet on the throne
 “He reigned o’er Millions to serve me alone.

40.

“Look to our earth – or rather mine – it was,
 “Once, more thy master’s – but I triumph not
 “In this poor planet’s conquest, nor, Alas! 315
 “Need he thou servest envy me my lot –
 “With all the myriads of bright worlds which pass
 “In worship round him he may have forgot
 “Yon weak creation of such paltry things;
 “I think few worth damnation save their kings, 320

41.

“And these but as a kind of quit-rent⁷⁸ to
 “Assert my right as Lord; and even had
 “I such an inclination, ’twere (as you
 “Well know) superfluous – they are grown so bad
 “That Hell has nothing better left to do 325
 “Than leave them to themselves, so much more mad⁷⁹
 “And evil by their own internal curse –
 “Heaven cannot make them better – nor I worse.

77: St Paul refers to the Devil thus in *Ephesians* 2, 2: *In time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.* See also Pope, *Epistle to Bathurst*, ll.349-56:

*The Dev’l was piqu’d such saintship to behold,
 And long’d to tempt him like good Job of old:
 But Satan now is wiser than of yore,
 And tempts by making rich, not making poor.
 Rouz’d by the Prince of Air, the whirlwinds sweep
 The surge, and plunge his Father in the deep;
 Then full against his Cornish lands they roar,
 And two rich ship-wrecks bless the lucky shore.*

Compare the imagery describing Sathan in st.24, above.

78: *quit-rent*: a small, nominal rent. Sathan demands the souls of kings only, as evidence that earth acknowledges him as its ruler.

79: TEXT: *Than leave them to themselves so much more mad*: Than leave them to themselves: so much more mad (all editions).

42.

“Look to the earth – I said – & say again –
 “When this old, blind, mad, helpless, weak, poor worm⁸⁰ 330
 “Began in youth’s first bloom & flush to reign,
 “The world and he both wore a different form –
 “And Much of earth and all the watery plain
 “Of Ocean called him king;⁸¹ through many a storm
 “His Isles had floated on the Abyss of Time – 335
 “For the rough Virtues chose them for their clime. –

43.

“He came to his Sceptre young – he leaves it old –
 “Look to the state in which he found his realm
 “And left it – and his annals too behold –
 “How to a Minion first he gave the helm⁸² – 340
 “How grew upon his heart a thirst for gold⁸³ –
 “The beggar’s vice, which can but overwhelm
 “The meanest hearts – and for the rest, but Glance
 “Thine eye along America and France! –

80: *When this old, blind, mad, helpless, weak, poor worm:* compare the first line of Shelley’s *Sonnet: England in 1819: An old, mad, blind, despised and dying king* ... It is interesting to contrast Shelley’s innocent anger and idealism with Sathan’s more tactical and guarded contempt. The line should also be compared with *King Lear*, III ii 19-20: *Here I stand, your slave, / A poor, infirm, weak, and despis’d old man* ...

81: *much of earth - and all the watery plain / Of Ocean called him king:* Byron exercises a double standard, or allows Sathan to: George is accused here of failing British imperialism, later of warring against freedom.

82: *to a Minion first he gave the helm:* George’s first prime minister was his close friend and tutor, the Earl of Bute.

83: *a thirst for gold:* Byron is perhaps putting unfair accusations into Sathan’s mouth, for George was neither greedy, or profligate, although his son certainly was. CPW VI draws attention to the influence here of the satires of “Peter Pindar” (John Wolcot), especially his *Ode upon Odes* of 1787. Here George and his Queen are depicted as crudely parsimonious: Madame Mara the singer, and Mrs Siddons the actress, both perform for them, but are unpaid (first edition, pp.17-19). The satirist comments:

*Extravagance I never dar’d defend –
 The greatest Kings should save a Candle-End;
 Since ‘tis an Axiom sure, the more Folks save,
 The more, indisputably, they must have.
 Crown’d Heads, of saving should appear Examples;
 And Britain really boasts two pretty Samples!* (p.63).

44.

“’Tis true he was a tool from first to last⁸⁴ 345
 “(I have the workmen safe)⁸⁵ but as a tool
 “So let him be consumed! From out the past
 “Of ages – since Mankind have known the rule
 “Of Monarchs – from the bloody rolls amassed
 “Of Sin and Slaughter – from the Caesar’s school, 350
 “Take the worst pupil – and produce a reign
 “More drenched with gore – more cumbered with the slain!

45.

“He ever warred with freedom and the free⁸⁶ –
 “Nations as men – home Subjects – foreign foes –
 “So that they uttered the word ‘Liberty!’ 355
 “Found George the third their first opponent; whose
 “History was ever stained as his will be
 “With national and individual woes?
 “I grant his household abstinence; I grant
 “His neutral virtues – which most monarchs want; 360

46.

“I know he was a constant consort – own
 “He was a decent Sire, and middling lord;
 “All this is much, & most upon a throne –
 “As temperance, if at Apicius’ board,⁸⁷
 “Is more than at an Anchorite’s⁸⁸ supper shown. 365
 “I grant him all the kindest can accord –
 “And this was well for him – but not for those
 “Millions who found him what Oppression chose. –

84: *he was a tool from first to last*: another forensic economy with the truth from Sathan. George used his ministers just as much as they used him, and overrode them often, for instance on Catholic Emancipation.

85: *(I have the workmen safe)*: George outlived all the ministers of his active years.

86: *He ever warred with freedom and the free*: Sathan affects to regard George’s tyranny not with delight, as at a successful conquest, but with stern distaste, as if an offence against freedom were an offence against him, the arch-rebel of all time. European tyrants are by this account correct to adduce God as their justification. Byron may be allowing Sathan some forensic latitude.

87: Apicius was a famous gourmet of the early Roman Empire. According to Martial (*Ep.* 3 22) he killed himself when reduced circumstances threatened to force him to eat more plainly. Juvenal also refers to him at *Satire IV*, 23, and Byron makes further use of him at *Don Juan XV* 65, 5-6, referring nine lines later to Lucullus. See also *The Age of Bronze*, XII 514-17, addressed to Louis XVIII:

*Why wouldst thou leave calm Hartwell’s green abode,
 Apician table, and Horatian Ode,
 To rule a people who will not be ruled,
 And love much rather to be scourged than schooled?*

88: *Anchorite’s supper*: an anchorite is an ascetic living in seclusion.

47.

“The new World shook him off – the old yet groans
 “Beneath what he & his prepared, if not 370
 “Completed; he leaves heirs on many thrones
 “To all his vices, without what begot
 “Compassion for him – his tame virtues; drones
 “Who sleep, or despots who have now forgot
 “A lesson which shall be re-taught them, wake 375
 “Upon the throne of Earth – but let them quake!

48.⁸⁹

“Five Millions of the Primitive, who hold
 “The faith which makes ye great on earth, implored
 “A *part* of that vast *all* they held of old –
 “Freedom to worship – not alone your Lord, 380
 “Michael! but you – & you, Saint Peter! Cold⁹⁰
 “Must be your Souls, if you have not abhorred
 “The Foe to Catholic participation
 “In all the license of a Christian Nation. –

49.

“True,⁹¹ he allowed them to pray God – but as 385
 “A Consequence of Prayer refused the law
 “Which would have placed them upon the same base
 “With those who did not hold the Saints in awe” —
 But here Saint Peter started from his place,
 And cried, “You may the prisoner withdraw – 390
 “Ere Heaven shall ope her portals to this Guelf⁹²
 “While I am Guard, may I be damned myself!⁹³ –

89: Sathan is a practised advocate, and appeals successfully here to his jury’s self-interest. Byron’s assumption is that all saints and angels are Catholics, who naturally resent George’s interference with the political liberty of those Christians whose religion permits saints and angels to be worshipped as well as the Trinity. 384: For a contrast with Sathan’s eloquence in the preceding stanzas, see Southey, *A Vision of Judgement*, Part V:

*But when he stood in the Presence,
 Then was the Fiend dismay’d, though with impudence clothed as a garment;
 And the big tongues were mute, and the lips which had scattered
 Accusation and slander, were still. No time for evasion
 This, in the Presence he stood: no place for flight; for dissembling
 No possibility there.*

90: TEXT: *Michael!*: Michael, (all editions) *Peter* – : Peter! (all editions).

91: TEXT: *True*: True! (all editions).

92: *Guelf*: The Hanoverians were descended from the medieval Guelphs, but the Guelphs supported the Papacy against the claims of the Empire, so George has traduced the ancient family tradition, and should be declared unworthy of the name. However, George also opposed Napoleon, who had his Imperial coronation ceremony modelled on Charlemagne’s, so perhaps in that broader perspective he does qualify. It certainly makes for an effective rhyme, as it does also at *Don Juan III*, 47, 8.

93: “*Ere Heaven shall ope her portals to this Guelf* / “*While I am Guard, may I be damned myself!*”: a strange sexual metaphor for the Saint to employ. Heaven is in this Freudian analysis the sexually desirable object, with Peter as the jealous guardian of her chastity. Byron perhaps remembers Moore, Song (“Why, the world are all thinking about it”) last verse:

*Oh! Phyllis, that kiss may be sweeter
 Than ever by mortal was given;*

50.

“Sooner will I with Cerberus⁹⁴ exchange
 “My office (and *his* is no Sinecure)
 “Than see this royal Bedlam bigot⁹⁵ range 395
 “The azure fields of heaven – of that be sure!”⁹⁶
 “Saint!” replied Sathan, “you do well to avenge
 “The wrongs he made your Satellites endure –
 “And if to this exchange you should be given
 “I’ll try and coax *our* Cerberus up to heaven.” 400

51.

Here Michael interposed, “Good Saint! & Devil!
 “Pray, not so fast – you both outrun discretion –
 “Saint Peter! You were wont to be more civil –
 “Sathan! excuse this warmth of his expression,
 “And condescension to the Vulgar’s level – 405
 “Even Saints sometimes forget themselves in Session.
 “Have you got more to say?” “No.” “If you please,
 “I’ll trouble you to call your witnesses.”

52.

Then Sathan turned & waved his swarthy hand,
 Which stirred with it’s electric qualities 410
 Clouds farther off than we can understand,
 Although we find him sometimes in our skies;
 Infernal thunder shook both Sea and Land
 In all the planets, and Hell’s batteries
 Let off the Artillery, which Milton mentions 415
 As one of Sathan’s most sublime inventions.⁹⁷ –

*But your lip, love, is only St. Peter,
 And keeps but the key to your heaven! – Little’s Poems (1801) p.24.*

94: *Cerberus*: the many-headed dog who guards the entrance to Hades in the Graeco-Roman myth. Byron’s precedent for employing him in a Christian context may be *Inferno* VI 13; although Dante demotes him to the Circle of the Gluttonous. As with Sathan’s reference to Charon’s ferry (1.573) the way Byron conflates Christianity with paganism is discreetly disorientating. In Dante the pagan details subserve the Christian myth: Byron mixes the two more promiscuously. He may be influenced here in part by Aristophanes’ *The Frogs*.

95: *Bedlam*: lunatic. The word is a contraction of the title of The Royal Bethlehem Hospital for the Insane (moved to Lambeth from Moorfields in 1815) which was a popular weekend resort for Londoners, rather as the Zoo is today. The vulgar reference would have been very offensive so soon after the end of George’s reign, during the last years of which, for instance, *King Lear* was banned from the British stage.

96: **TEXT:** *be sure* – : be sure! (all editions).

97: *Artillery*: see *Paradise Lost*, VI 568-608; also *The Curse of Kehama*, XXII 11.

53.⁹⁸

This was a Signal unto such damned souls
 As have the privilege of their damnation
 Extended far beyond the mere controuls
 Of worlds past present or to come; no station 420
 Is theirs particularly in the rolls
 Of Hell assigned, but where their Inclination
 Or business carries them in search of game,
 They may range freely – being damned the same. –

54.

They are proud of this – as very well they may – 425
 It being a sort of knighthood – or gilt key
 Stuck in their loins⁹⁹ – or like to an “Entré”
 Up the back stairs, or such Free Masonry;
 I borrow my comparisons from Clay,
 Being clay myself. Let not those Spirits be 430
 Offended with such base low likenesses –
 We know their posts are nobler far than these.

55.

When the great Signal ran from Heaven to Hell –
 About ten million times the distance reckoned
 From our sun to it’s earth – as we can tell 435
 How much time it takes up, even to a second,
 For every ray that travels to dispel
 The fogs of London – through which dimly beacons
 The Weathercocks are gilt, some thrice a year –
 If that the *Summer* is not too severe¹⁰⁰ – 440

98: The idea of the Roving Damned may have been suggested to Byron by the following, in Quevedo’s *Of Hell Reformed: a great many of the Damn’d had Contriv’d an Escape; and ... there was a Design to call in four or five Regiments of Hypocrites, and Vsurers, under colour forsooth of Establishing a better Intelligence betwixt Earth, and Hell, with a few Hundred other Fopperies; and had gone on till this time, if Lucifer would have found Ears.* (*Visions* tr. L’Estrange, p.261.) Byron’s regiments have Sathan’s permission to travel.

99: *gilt key / Stuck in their loins*: a golden key protruding from below the hem of the coat was the insignia of the Lord Chamberlain. (**Wright.**) The stanza contains several other obscenities; for *post*, see *Don Juan*, X 232.

100: *If that the Summer is not too severe –* : Horace Walpole is credited with having said, “The summer has set in with its usual severity”. (**Wright.**)

56.

I say that I can tell – 'twas half a minute –
 I know the Solar beams take up more time
 Ere, packed up for their journey, they begin it –
 But then their Telegraph¹⁰¹ is less sublime –
 And if they ran a race they would not win it 445
 'Gainst Sathan's Couriers bound for their own clime;
 The Sun takes up some years for every ray
 To reach it's Goal – the Devil not half a day. –

101: *Telegraph*: crude telegraphs had been invented between 1816 and 1819.

57.¹⁰²

Upon the verge of Space – about the size
 Of Half a crown – a little speck¹⁰³ appeared 450
 (I've seen a something like it in the Skies
 In the Ægean ere a Squall) it neared
 And growing bigger took another guise –
 Like an aërial Ship¹⁰⁴ it tacked, and steered,

102: In his description of the cloud of multi-tongued witnesses Byron is not only referring to the Tower of Babel (*Genesis* 11, 1-9) but also travestyng a passage describing the damned in Southey's *Vision*, Part IV:

*From the opposite region
 Heavy and sulphurous clouds roll'd on, and completed the circle.
 There with the Spirits accurs'd, in congenial darkness enveloped,
 Were the Souls of the Wicked, who wilful in guilt and error,
 Chose the service of sin, and now were abiding its wages.
 Change of place to them brought no reprieve from anguish;
 They in their evil thoughts and desires of impotent malice,
 Envy and hate, and blasphemous rage, and remorse unavailing,
 Carried a Hell within, to which all outer affliction,
 So it abstracted the sense, might be deem'd a remission of torment.
 At the edge of the cloud, the Princes of Darkness were marshall'd:
 Dimly descried within were wings and truculent faces;
 And in the thick obscure there struggled a mutinous uproar,
 Railing, and fury, and strife, that the whole deep body of darkness
 Roll'd like a troubled sea, with a wide and a manifold motion.*

He may in addition be alluding to a passage in Southey's *Roderick, Last of the Goths*, about the quasi-Napoleonic hoard whom Roderick's moral lassitude has let loose upon Spain:

*... on the Moors he call'd;
 And like a cloud of locusts, whom the South
 Wafts from the plains of wasted Africa,
 The Mussulmen upon Iberia's shore
 Descend. A countless multitude they came;
 Syrian, Moor, Saracen, Greek renegade,
 Persian and Copt and Tartar, in one bond
 Of erring faith conjoin'd, ... strong in the youth
 And heat of zeal, ... a dreadful brotherhood,
 In whom all turbulent vices were let loose;
 While Conscience, with their impious creed accurst,
 Drunk as with wine, had sanctified to them
 All bloody, all abominable things. (Roderick, first part)*

103: *Half a crown* ...: silver coin worth two shillings and six pence (12 ½p) ... *a little speck*: compare *The Ancient Mariner*, III 2 1: *it seemed a little speck* ... The comparison is between the approach of the Peripatetic Damned to bear witness against George, and that of the Ship of Death, whose crew cast dice for the dying men on the Mariner's vessel.

104: *Like an aërial ship it tacked, and steered*: see, again, *The Ancient Mariner*, III 3 4: *It plunged and tacked and veered*. For Shelleyan parallels on which Byron may facetiously be commenting also, compare *The Witch of Atlas*, XLV-LI, or *Prometheus Unbound*, IV iv 206-35: behind Shelley's ships lies almost certainly one in Southey's *The Curse of Kehama*, where the heroine Kailyal is taken by the god Ereenia to his heavenly bower in a self-steering airship, described thus:

*An Angel's head, with visual eye,
 Through trackless space, directs its chosen way;
 Nor aid of wing, nor foot nor fin,
 Requires to voyage o'er the obedient sky.
 Smooth as the swan when not a breeze at even
 Disturbs the surface of the silver stream*

Or was steered (I am doubtful of the grammar 455
Of the last phrase, which makes the Stanza stammer,

58.

But take your choice)¹⁰⁵ and then it grew a Cloud –
And so it was – a Cloud of Witnesses¹⁰⁶ –
But such a Cloud! No land e'er saw a Crowd
Of locusts¹⁰⁷ numerous as the Heavens saw these – 460
They shadowed with their myriads Space; their loud
And varied cries were like those of Wild Geese
(If Nations may be likened to a Goose)
And realised the phrase of “Hell broke loose”.¹⁰⁸ –

59.

Here crashed a sturdy oath of stout John Bull,¹⁰⁹ 465
Who damned away his eyes as heretofore;
There Paddy brogued “By Jasus!” – “What’s your Wull?”¹¹⁰
The temperate Scot exclaimed; the French Ghost swore
In certain terms I shan’t¹¹¹ translate in full,
As the first Coachman will; and midst the roar¹¹² 470
The voice of Jonathan¹¹³ was heard to express,
“Our president¹¹⁴ is going to war, I guess.”¹¹⁵ –

Through air and sunshine sails the Ship of Heaven ...

*... Recumbent there the Maiden glides along
On her aërial way,
How swift she feels not, though the swiftest wind
Had flagg'd in flight behind. (Kehama, VII, 21-31)*

105: *take your choice:* *Take Your Choice!* is the title of a 1776 pamphlet by Major John Cartwright, demanding franchise reform and annual parliaments. Byron spoke in favour of Cartwright in his last Lords speech (CMP 43-5). It is not clear what kind of joke, if any, is intended.

106: *Cloud of Witnesses:* see *Hebrews*, 12, 1: ... *seeing we ... are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside ... the sin which doth so easily beset us, and ... run with patience the race that is set before us ...* Byron had used the phrase on April 12 1812, in his second speech in the Lords, in favour of Catholic Emancipation: (CMP 42). ... *a ‘cloud of witnesses’ are gone above from that gallant army which they [the government] so generously and piously dispatched [to the battle of Walcheren], to recruit the “noble army of martyrs”.*

107: *locusts:* see the locust-cloud from the bottomless pit in *Revelation* 9.

108: *the phrase of “Hell broke loose”:* it occurs in *Paradise Lost* at IV 918. See also Tasso, *Gerusalemme Liberata*, IX 15.

109: *John Bull:* traditional generic figure for a Briton. Character created by John Arbuthnot in 1712.

110: *What’s your Wull?:* What’s your will? (Scots). The phrase occurs in Scott’s *The Antiquary* (1816) Chapter 1 (see also *Old Mortality*, Chapter 37) – as does a damnable coachman – Byron’s first thought here having been *Hackney*: see also Byron’s own note to 816, and editorial notes to 651, 807 and 816.

111: **TEXT:** *shan’t:* sha’nt (Liberal, Wright, CPW).

112: **TEXT:** *midst the roar:* midst the war (Liberal, Wright, Coleridge).

113: *Jonathan:* American figure to complement John Bull and Paddy. Name said initially to have been applied (“Brother Jonathan” as in 2 *Samuel*) by Washington to Jonathan Trumbull, Governor of Connecticut.

114: **TEXT:** *president:* President (all editions).

115: *I guess:* Byron was convinced that Americans used this phrase constantly in conversation, and was disappointed when they did not do so. See BLJ III 256 and *H.V.S.V.* p.299.

60.

Beside these were the Spaniard, Dutch, and Dane;
 In short, an universal Shoal of Shades,
 From Otaheite's Isle¹¹⁶ to Salisbury Plain, 475
 Of all climes and professions, years and trades,
 Ready to swear against the Good king's reign,
 Bitter as Clubs in Cards are against Spades,¹¹⁷
 All summoned by this grand "Sub pœna",¹¹⁸ to
 Try if kings mayn't be damned, like me or you. 480

61.¹¹⁹

When Michael saw this Host, he first grew pale,
 As Angels can; next, like Italian twilight
 He turned all colours, as a Peacock's tail,
 Or Sunset streaming through a Gothic Skylight
 In some old Abbey, or a Trout not stale, 485
 Or distant lightning on the horizon *by* night,
 Or a fresh rainbow, or a Grand review
 Of thirty regiments in red, green, and blue. –

62.

Then he addressed himself to Sathan: "Why –
 "My Good old friend – for such I deem you, though 490
 "Our different parties make us fight so shy –
 "I ne'er mistake you for a *personal* foe –
 "Our difference is *political* – and I
 "Trust that, whatever may occur below,
 "You know my great respect for you – and this 495
 "Makes me regret whate'er you do amiss.

116: *Otaheite's isle*: Tahiti, made famous by the mutiny on HMS *Bounty*, in 1789. Byron gave an account of the event in his 1823 poem *The Island*.

117: *Clubs ... Spades*: spades normally rank above clubs in card games.

118: "*Sub pœna*": official summons to appear before a court, under penalty if the summons is disobeyed (Latin).

119: A *happily* blushing Archangel occurs at *Paradise Lost*, VIII 618-19: but for a much more striking parallel to Michael here, see Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, plates 22-3:

Once I saw a Devil in a flame of fire, who arose before an Angel that sat on a cloud, and the Devil uttered these words: The worship of God is Honouring his gifts in other men each according to his genius and loving the greatest men best, those who envy or calumniate great men hate God, for there is no other God.

The Angel hearing this became almost blue but mastering himself he grew yellow, & at last white pink & smiling ...

Blake's angel eventually goes over to the other side and becomes a devil. There is no recorded evidence that Byron had ever read or even heard of Blake: and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* is only known to have been given nine individual printings between 1793 and 1825 (see *Blake's Poetry and Designs*, ed. Johnson and Grant, p.82): in which case, great minds are thinking alike. For Byron's conscious covert reference here, see the passage from *The Curse of Kehama*, quoted in note to l. 224.

63.
 “Why, my dear Lucifer,¹²⁰ would you abuse
 “My call for Witnesses? I did not mean
 “That you should half of Earth & Hell produce –
 “‘Tis even superfluous, since two honest clean 500
 “True testimonies¹²¹ are enough – we lose
 “Our time, nay, our Eternity!¹²² between
 “The accusation and defence¹²³ if we
 “Hear both – ’twill stretch our Immortality.”

64.
 Sathan replied, “To me the matter is 505
 “Indifferent, in a personal point of view;
 “I can have fifty better Souls than this
 “With far less trouble than we have gone through
 “Already, and I merely argued his
 “Late Majesty of Britain’s case with you 510
 “Upon a point of form – you may dispose
 “Of him; I’ve kings enough below, God knows.” –

65.
 Thus spoke the Demon (late called “multifaced”
 By multo-scribbling Southey).¹²⁴ “Then we’ll call
 “One or two persons of the myriads placed 515
 “Around our Congress, and dispense with all
 “The rest,” quoth Michael. “Who may be so graced
 “As to speak first? there’s choice enough – who shall
 “It be?” Then Sathan answered, “There are many,
 “But you may choose Jack Wilkes¹²⁵ as well as any”. 520

120: *Lucifer*: Michael changes Sathan’s name nostalgically to its prelapsarian form – as Peter does at l.136. There we may suspect simple memory-lapse; here Michael seems defensive and placatory: in either case, the saints seem not to have taken the implications of Lucifer’s unsuccessful rebellion fully to heart.

121: *two ... testimonies*: the two witnesses here may a parody of those called for at *Revelation*, 11 3: ... *I will give power unto my two witnesses*. However, Junius and Wilkes lack the authority of the Johannine pair.

122: TEXT: *Eternity!*: Eternity, (Coleridge) eternity, (Liberal, Wright, McGann)

123: “*The accusation and the defence if we*: The accusation and the defence: if we (all editions).

124: “*multifaced*”: Junius, soon to enter, answers this description (see notes below to sts.74-80) but see *A Vision of Judgement*, Part V, where Southey’s Fiend – a mixture of Hindu god, Shakespearean Rumour and Miltonic Discord, is angered at the shamefaced silence of Wilkes and Junius when they confront George:

*Caitiffs, are ye dumb? cried the multifaced Demon in anger;
 Think ye then by shame to shorten the term of your penance?*

125: *Jack Wilkes*: John Wilkes (1725-97). One of the most important figures in eighteenth century British politics. Although opportunist and deeply corrupt (he was condemned by the Lords for writing a lewd *Essay on Woman*, in imitation of Pope) he caused many rulings to be passed defining the laws about press freedom and individual liberty. Cross-eyed (l.521) and repulsive, he was a brilliant conversationalist and politician. A foe of George in his active days, he reneged in old age. He was elected MP for Middlesex seven times and expelled from the Commons on four of them, often amid scenes of ferocious mob rule: he was everything Southey feared and detested. In a note to *A Vision*, Southey quotes Franklin (see l.671): *It is really an extraordinary event, to see an outlaw and exile, of bad personal character, not worth a farthing, come over from France, set himself up as a candidate for*

66.¹²⁶

A merry, cock-eyed, curious looking Sprite
 Upon the instant started from the throng
 Drest in a fashion now forgotten quite –
 For all the fashions of the flesh stick long
 By people in the next world, where unite 525
 All the costumes since Adam's, right or wrong,
 From Eve's fig-leaf down to the petticoat
 Almost as scanty of days less remote.¹²⁷ –

67.

The Spirit looked around upon the crowds
 Assembled – & exclaimed, “My friends of all 530
 “The Spheres – we shall catch cold amongst these Clouds,
 “So let's to business – why this general call?
 “If those are freeholders¹²⁸ I see in shrouds,
 “And 'tis for an Election that they bawl,
 “Behold a Candidate with unturned-Coat! 535
 “Saint Peter, may I count upon your vote?”¹²⁹

the capital of the kingdom, miss his election only by being too late in his application, and immediately carrying it for the principal county ... this capital ... is now a daily scene of lawless riot and confusion. Mobs patrolling the street at noonday, some knocking down all that will not roar for Wilkes and liberty; courts of justice afraid to give judgement against him ... soldiers firing among the mobs, and killing men, women, and children, which seems only to have produced an universal sullenness, that looks like a great black cloud coming on, ready to burst in a general tempest ... (AVOJ, V 224n).

126: This contains the only eroticism in the poem, apart from some jokes in st.54. It is a good way of introducing Wilkes, who was a notorious rake. His *merry cock-eye* may refer to more than his squint; 524-5 may imply an Islamic reward for heroes in damnation as well as in bliss; *Adam's, right or wrong* depicts Adam in postlapsarian clothes or – Byron can't decide – in prelapsarian nudity; and the last two lines economically embrace all temptresses from Eve to those of Byron's own day. However, the stanza might be seen as ending with a limp Southeyan dactyl, as if to express how out-of-place wicked thoughts are in such chaste times as these.

127: ... *the petticoat*: see for example Gillray, *The Fashionable Mamma, or Lady Godina's Rout*, two cartoons of 1796 showing how scanty dress was.

128: *freeholders*: the Middlesex, or Westminster, franchise was given to those with freeholds of 40s (£2) a year or more. Elections there thus had a popular cast quite atypical of pre-1832 politics, and Wilkes exploited the fact to the full.

129: Wilkes' mood here contrasts strikingly with that given him by Southey, in *A Vision of Judgement*, Part V:

*Beholding the foremost,
 Him by the cast of his eye oblique, I knew as the firebrand
 Whom the unthinking populace held for their idol and hero,
 Lord of Misrule in his day. But how was that countenance alter'd
 Where emotion of fear or shame had never been witness'd;
 That invincible forehead abash'd; and those eyes wherein malice
 Once had been wont to shine with wit and hilarity tempered.
 Into how deep a gloom their mournful expression had settled!*

Standing for election in Middlesex, Wilkes once asked for a vote only to be told, “I'd rather vote for the devil.” “Naturally,” he answered, “but as your friend is not standing, may I hope for your support?” (Watson, *The Reign of George III*, p.98n).

68.

“Sir,” replied Michael, “you mistake – these things
 “Are of a former life, & what we do
 “Above is more August; to judge of kings
 “Is the tribunal met; so now you know.” 540
 “Then I presume those Gentlemen with wings,”
 Said Wilkes, “are Cherubs – and that Soul below
 “Looks much like George the third, but to my mind
 “A good deal older – Bless me! is he blind?”

69.

“He is what you behold him, and his doom 545
 “Depends upon his deeds,” the Angel said.
 “If you have aught to arraign in him, the tomb
 “Gives license to the humblest beggar’s head
 “To lift itself against the loftiest.” “Some,”
 Said Wilkes, “don’t wait to see them laid in lead, 550
 “For such a liberty – and I, for one,
 “Have told them what I thought beneath the Sun.” –

70.

“Above the Sun repeat, then, what thou hast
 “To urge against him,” said the Archangel. “Why,”
 Replied the Spirit, “since old scores are past, 555
 “Must I turn evidence? In faith, not I;
 “Besides, I beat him hollow at the last
 “With all his lords & commons;¹³⁰ in the Sky
 “I don’t like ripping up old stories, since
 “His conduct was but natural in a prince; 560

71.

“Foolish no doubt, and wicked, to oppress
 “A poor unlucky devil without a shilling –
 “But then I blame the man himself much less
 “Than Bute or Grafton¹³¹ and shall be unwilling
 “To see him punished here for their excess, 565
 “Since they were both damned long ago and still in
 “Their place below. For me, I have forgiven,
 “And vote his ‘habeas corpus’¹³² into heaven.”

130: *lords and commons*: Lords and Commons (all editions).

131: *Bute and Grafton*: The Earl of Bute (1713-92) was George’s first prime minister, an inadequate on whom George nevertheless relied for advice even after he had been forced from office. Wilkes hounded him through his journal *The North Briton*: a common jibe was that he was the lover of Queen Charlotte, George’s mother. The Earl of Grafton (1735-1811) was a subsequent choice of George, and held office in the early stages of the American War of Independence, when the issue of Wilkes’ elections in Middlesex was in question. Both these men were mediocrities, and there is no justification for Wilkes’ assertion that they used George politically. Simply being monarch gave him more substance than either; though both were very dear to him. Wilkes is made pointedly not to refer to Lord North, George’s subsequent creature whom he trounced thoroughly.

132: *‘habeas corpus’*: Latin for “thou shalt have the body”. The law requiring the person of an alleged malefactor to be brought before a judge and for the cause of his apprehension to be stated. Thus the legal safeguard against wrongful imprisonment by tyrannical authority. Under Pitt’s premiership the

72.¹³³

“Wilkes,” said the Devil, “I understand all this;
 “You turned to half a Courtier ere you died, 570
 “And seem to think it would not be amiss
 “To grow a whole one on the other side
 “Of Charon’s ferry;¹³⁴ you forget that his
 “Reign is concluded; whatsoe’er betide,
 “He won’t be Sovereign more; you’ve lost your labour, 575
 “For at the best he will but be your neighbour.”

73.

“However, I knew what to think of it,
 “When I beheld you in your jesting way,
 “Flitting and whispering round about the spit
 “Where Belial,¹³⁵ upon duty for the day, 580
 “With Fox’s lard was basting William Pitt,¹³⁶
 “His pupil; I knew what to think, I say –
 “That fellow even in Hell breeds farther ills –
 “I’ll have him gagged¹³⁷ – ’twas one of his own Bills.

law had been suspended for a given term, with George’s approval: Wilkes now jests about it. Compare *Beppo*, 47, 6: *I like the Habeas Corpus (when we’ve got it)*.

133: Sathan (now just “the Devil”) here accuses Wilkes of the kind of apostasy for which Byron despises Southey, though since Wilkes’ change of heart is purely genial, the effect is quite different.

134: *Charon*: The ferryman of souls over Lethe, the river of death. Greek myth appropriated by Christianity. See the Sistine *Last Judgement* again, or Gillray’s parody of one of its details in *Charon’s Boat* (1807); or Lucian’s satire *Kataplous (The Journey Downwards)* a major source for *The Vision of Judgement*.

135: *Belial*: a double-dyed devil. See I *Samuel*, 2, 12: *Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial: they knew not the Lord*. Or *Corinthians*, II 2, 16: *... what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial?* At *Paradise Lost* II 108-17, Belial could *make the worse appear / The better reason, to perplex and dash / Maturest counsels*; he is thus an appropriate roaster of politicians.

136: *With Fox’s lard was basting William Pitt*: Charles James Fox (1749-1806) and William Pitt the Younger (1759-1806) were rivals, Fox being a Whig and Pitt a Tory. The syntax of the stanza is obscure: “his” in l.582 refers ambiguously to both Belial and Fox, either of whom may therefore have been tutor to Pitt; and “That fellow” in l.583 and “him / his” in l.584 refer either to Wilkes or Fox: ll.583-4 are Sathan’s thoughts during the basting. The bills are Pitt’s “Gagging Acts” of 1795, restricting assembly and free speech. Fox, who was obese – hence the lard – spent most of his career in opposition to Pitt. Neither, evidently, is among the peripatetic damned: both share a syntactical symbiosis with both Wilkes and Belial, as well as a comical-sadistic one with each other. The lines are cruel: but Byron atones in *The Age of Bronze* (1823) ll.9-20, where Pitt and Fox are *the intellectual race / Of giants [who] stand, like Titans, face to face*.

137: *gagged*: compare the gagging of the plebeian conspirators at *Marino Faliero*, V 101. Refers also to the Gagging Acts (see previous note).

74.

“Call Junius!”¹³⁸ From the crowd a Shadow stalked, 585
 And at the name there was a general Squeeze,
 So that the very Ghosts no longer walked
 In comfort at their own aërial ease
 But were all rammed, and jammed (but to be balked
 As we shall see) and jostled heads¹³⁹ and knees – 590
 Like wind compresst and pent within a bladder,
 Or like a human cholic, which is sadder.

75.

The Shadow came – a tall, thin, grey-haired figure,¹⁴⁰
 That looked as it had been a Shade on earth –
 Quick in it’s motions, with an air of vigour – 595
 But nought to mark it’s breeding or it’s birth –
 Now it waxed little – then again grew bigger –
 With now an air of gloom, or savage mirth –
 But as you gazed upon it’s features they
 Changed every instant – to *what*, none could say. 600

138: *Junius*: a virulent critic of George’s policies under Grafton during 1769-72, attacking him, in a famous series of pseudonymous letters, over America, Ireland, and civil liberties. No-one ever found who Junius was, though Byron discusses several possibilities in st.74. Junius functions as Byron’s self-image – as St. Bartholomew serves Michaelangelo in *The Last Judgement* (see ll.156-7nn, above). On November 11 1813 Byron wrote in his journal ... *the man must be alive, and will never die without disclosure. I like him; – he was a good hater.* (BLJ III 215 – see also *Don Juan* XIII 7, 1-2).

139: TEXT: *heads*: hands (all editions; MCGANN records the Ms. reading).

140: TEXT: *The Shadow came –* : The Shadow came! (all editions). *grey*: perhaps gray in m.s. (all editions have gray). *The Shadow*: Junius signed himself *Stat Nominis Umbra* (Here Stands the Shadow of a Name, or, A Shadow Stands for the Name). The words *Stat magni nominis umbra occur* in Lucan’s *Pharsalia* (I, 135) where they describe the faded glory of Pompey. Junius borrows the idea, changing it from sad to mysterious.

76.¹⁴¹

The more intently the Ghosts gazed the less
 Could they distinguish whose the features were –
 The devil himself seemed puzzled even to guess –
 They varied like a dream – now here, now there –
 And several people swore from out the press 605
 They knew him perfectly, and one could swear –
 He was his father – upon which another
 Was sure he was his mother's cousin's brother,

141: Junius is in his saturnine inscrutability a parody of earlier Byronic heroes: see *Lara* I 85-94, *The Giaour* 832-75, and *The Corsair* I 206-26. But see also Death in *Paradise Lost*, II 666-73:

*The other shape,
 If shape it might be calld that shape had none
 Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,
 Or substance might be calld that shadow seemd,
 For each seemd either; black it stood as Night,
 Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell ...*

Death's mother (l.620) is Sin. Brougham had quoted these lines in defending Queen Caroline in her "Trial" for adultery, making them into a reference to George IV, whose evidence he could not quote: ... *who is the party? I know nothing about this shrouded, this mysterious being, this retiring phantom, this uncertain shape.* See Trevelyan, *British History in the Nineteenth Century*, p.193n.

Byron embodied the same amorphousness himself. See Lady Blessington: *I am sure, that if ten individuals undertook the task of describing Byron, no two, of the ten, would agree on their verdict respecting him, or convey any portrait that resembled the other, and yet the description of each might be correct, according to his or her received opinion; but the truth is, the chameleon-like character or manner of Byron renders it difficult to portray him, and the pleasure he seems to take in misleading his associates in their estimate of him increases the difficulty of the task.* (*Conversations of Lord Byron*, ed. Lovell pp.71-2.) See also Lady Adeline Amundeville in *Don Juan*, XVI st.97 (based in part on Lady Blessington):

*So well she acted, all and every part
 By turns – with that vivacious versatility
 Which many people take for want of heart.
 They err – 'tis merely what is called mobility,
 A thing of temperament and not of art,
 Though seeming so, from its supposed facility;
 And false – though true; for surely they're sincerest
 Who are strongly acted on by what is nearest.*

Junius possesses the same mobile quality to a supernatural degree; he is indifferent as to the social effect he makes, and refuses to be acted on by anyone; hence he only questionably possesses identity at all, yet is a subject of endless curiosity. All assume relationship with him, on no evidence. See also *I Corinthians* 9, 19-23: *I am made all things to all men*; and, very pertinently, 10, 21: *Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils.* Paul acknowledges yet abhors the facility: Byron exploits it throughout his ottava rima satires with unscrupulous glee.

77.

Another that he was a duke – or knight –
 An orator – a lawyer – or a priest – 610
 A Nabob¹⁴² – a Man Midwife; but the Wight
 Mysterious changed his countenance at least
 As oft as they their minds,¹⁴³ though in full sight
 He stood, the puzzle only was increased –
 The Man was a phantasmagoria¹⁴⁴ in 615
 Himself, he was so volatile and thin!

78.

The moment that you had pronounced him *one*,
 Presto! his face changed & he was another –
 And when that change was hardly well put on,
 It varied till I don't think his own mother 620
 (If that he had a mother)¹⁴⁵ would her son
 Have known, he shifted so from one to t'other,
 Till guessing from a pleasure grew a task,
 At this epistolary "Iron Mask!"¹⁴⁶

142: *Nabob*: in this case, an Englishman who had become rich in India. Sir Philip Francis, a possible Junius (ll.631-2n) answered this description. The word is from the Urdu *nawwab*, "deputy governor".

143: TEXT: *As oft as they their minds, though in full sight*: As oft as they their minds: though in full sight (all editions).

144: *phantasmagoria*: a relatively new word, from popular magic lantern shows. The OED. gives 1802 as its first use; an 1803 Gillray cartoon, *A Phantasmagoria*, shows the ghost of a skeletal Britannia conjured by witch-appeasers of Napoleon, led by Fox (above, l.581). At *Don Juan*, P.M. rough draft, II l.1071 (*Manuscripts of the Younger Romantics, Byron II*, p.147) Byron rejects the word (it was to have described the dreams of his former life with which Juan was not cursed); he uses it here. See also *Don Juan* II l.744: *Quite a celestial kaleidoscope*; no sooner had the kaleidoscope been invented (Murray sent him one – see BLJ VI 77 and 109) than Byron used the word.

145: *his own mother / (If that he had a mother)*: compare *Don Juan*, II l.811; also the altered accuser at *Marmion*, I xxviii, or *Roderick*, end of Book XIV, where the hero meets his mother, but she does not recognise him.

146: TEXT: *"Iron Mask!"*: "iron mask." (Liberal, MCGANN) "Iron Mask." (Wright, Coleridge). A reference to another famous mystery, that of the prisoner who was masked and incarcerated for forty years by Louis XIV, dying in 1703. It seems that he was probably one Count Girolamo Mattioli, who had double-crossed Louis over the surrender of an Italian castle. See note to l.664 below. (Coleridge.)

79.

For sometimes he like Cerberus would seem 625
 “Three gentlemen at once” (as sagely says
 Good M^{rs}. Malaprop)¹⁴⁷ then you might deem
 That he was not even *one* – now many rays
 Were flashing round him – & now a thick steam
 Hid him from sight – like fogs on London days – 630
 Now Burke,¹⁴⁸ now Tooke, he grew to people’s fancies –
 And certes often like Sir Philip Francis.

80.

I’ve an hypothesis – ’tis quite my own –
 I never let it out till now, for fear
 Of doing people harm about the throne – 635
 And injuring some minister or peer,
 On whom the stigma might perhaps be blown;
 It is – My gentle Public, Lend thine ear!¹⁴⁹
 ’Tis that what Junius we are wont to call
 Was – *really, truly*¹⁵⁰ – Nobody at all. 640

147: “*Three gentlemen at once*” (as sagely says / *Good Mrs Malaprop*): a line from Sheridan’s *The Rivals* (1775), IV ii. It occurs shortly after the unmasking of Jack Absolute. Mrs Malaprop, forsaking her usual pattern of verbal mismanagement, says, ... *you are not like Cerberus, three gentlemen at once, are you?* Sheridan (1751-1816) was also a politician, and friend of both Byron and Fox. Byron had quoted the Sheridan line earlier in his *Observations upon an Article in Blackwood’s Magazine*, when he complained of the way he was identified in the popular mind with all his different poetic heroes. See CMP 90.

Sheridan’s *The Critic* (1779) is a major influence on *The Vision*, with Mr. Puff transmuting into Southey: *I make no secret of the trade I follow – among friends and brother authors ... I love to be frank on the subject, and to advertise myself viva voce. I am, Sir, a Practitioner in Panegyric, or to speak more plainly – a Professor of the Art of Puffing, at your service – or anybody else’s (Sheridan’s Plays, ed. Price, p.352).* Puff can write about *army bread or stucco v. brickwork, both in the style of JUNIUS* (p. 357); he even offers at one point *to reinforce BYRON* – Admiral Byron, the poet’s grandfather (p.358). *The Critic* was a play very close to Byron’s heart: he described it as *the best farce ... it is only too good for a farce* (BLJ III 239).

148: *Burke*: Edmund Burke, 1729-97, conservative political thinker, an unlikely Junius. *Tooke*: John Horne Tooke, 1736-1812, writer, friend of Wilkes, unsuccessful politician who took up the pen against Junius. *Sir Philip Francis*: 1740-1818: friend of the Prince Regent, politician, enemy of Warren Hastings. From 1773 to 1781 he served in India on the Council of Bengal, returning to England with a fortune made at gambling; hence perhaps *Nabob* at 611. He married his second wife encouraging her belief that he had been Junius. One of Junius’ parting shots was, *I am the sole depositary of my own secret, and it shall perish with me.* It did, though see B.’s letter to H. (BLJ VI 19) for the strong suspicion, common at the time, and now virtually accepted, that Francis was in fact Junius.

149: *Lend thine ear!*: for precedents for Byron’s use in m.s. of mid-sentence capitals when the verb is in the imperative, see *Say* at ll.180 and 303 and *Glance* at l.343.

150: *really, truly*: compare *Beppo* l.729, where the protagonist’s cultural identity, and perhaps circumcision, is queried using this phrase as preliminary.

81.¹⁵¹

I don't see wherefore letters should not be
 Written without hands, since we daily view
 Them written without heads, and books, we see,
 Are filled as well without the latter too –
 And really till we fix on Somebody 645
 For certain sure to claim them as his due,
 Their Author, like the Niger's Mouth,¹⁵² will bother
 The World to see if *there* be Mouth or Author.

82.

“And who and what art thou?” the Archangel said.
 “For that you may consult my title-page,” 650
 Replied this mighty Shadow of a Shade.¹⁵³
 “If I have kept my secret half an age
 “I scarce shall tell it now.” “Can'st thou upbraid,”
 Continued Michael, “George Rex – or allege
 “Aught further?” Junius answered, “You had better 655
 “First ask him for *his* answer to my letter;¹⁵⁴

83.

“My charges upon record will outlast
 “The Brass of both his epitaph and tomb.”¹⁵⁵
 “Repent'st thou not,” said Michael, “of some past
 “Exaggeration? Something which may doom 660
 “Thyself if false, as him if true? Thou wast
 “Too bitter – is it not so? – in thy gloom
 “Of Passion?” “Passion!” cried the Phantom dim;
 “I loved my country, and I hated him.¹⁵⁶

151: The idea of books written by authors devoid of heads prepares the way for Southey, who enters soon.

152: *Their Author, like the Niger's Mouth*: the Niger, which has a delta 36,000 kilometres square, was indeed an excellent metaphor for Junius when Byron wrote *The Vision*. No-one knew where either its source or its mouth was; whether it flowed east, west, north or south; whether it discharged into the Atlantic, into the Mediterranean, or whether it dried up in the middle of Africa. In *The Quarterly Review* XLIX (April 1821) pp.25-50, Byron would have read a critique of two books examining the claim that the Niger and the Nile are the same river; and he may, in the present context, have remembered a quotation (p.48) describing the Nile's alluvial delta during the rains as *one vast flood of inky fluid*. In the October *Quarterly* for 1821 (which Byron presumably did not read in time) another review denies (p.56) all possibility of the Niger ending in the Atlantic. Not until 1830 was it discovered that it did. For further discussion, see the *Quarterly* for January 1816, pp.470-1.

153: *Shadow of a Shade*: see note to l.593. The phrase occurs in Volume I Chapter VI of *The Antiquary* (1897 Dent edition, I 76), where it refers to the residual Jacobite opinions of Sir Arthur Wardour. Scott had previously used it in *Guy Mannering*, Volume II Chapter VIII (Dent 1897 edition, II 91) to describe the Episcopal Church of Scotland.

154: *my letter*: part of Junius' letter to George (it appeared in *The Public Advertiser* of December 19 1769) is printed below, in the note to l.664.

155: *My charges upon record will outlast / The Brass of both his epitaph and tomb*: Byron may here be echoing Southey's words in his Letter to William Smith (p.28): *I brand him on the forehead with the name of SLANDERER. Salve the mark as you will, Sir, it is ineffaceable! You must bear it with you to your Grave, and the remembrance will outlast your Epitaph*. See also Shakespeare, Sonnet 65: *Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea, / But sad mortality o'ersways their power ...* Byron's re-writing indicates a deliberate incorporation of the quotation(s), which increase the dizzying omnireferentiality of Junius' "character". *Brass* clearly also implies Hanoverian brazenness.

84.

“What I have written I have written¹⁵⁷ – Let
 “The rest be on his head or mine!” So spoke
 Old “Nominis Umbra”,¹⁵⁸ and while speaking yet
 Away he melted in celestial smoke.
 Then Sathan said to Michael,¹⁵⁹ “Don’t forget
 “To call George Washington – & John Horne Tooke – 670
 “And Franklin;”¹⁶⁰ but at this time there was heard
 A cry for room, though not a phantom stirred.

156: The dignity and laconic eloquence Byron here imagines for Junius is an answer to Southey, *A Vision of Judgement*, Part V:

*Nameless the libeller lived, and shot his arrows in darkness;
 Undetected he pass’d to the grave, and leaving behind him
 Noxious works on earth, and the pest of an evil example,
 Went to the world beyond, where no offences are hidden.
 Mask’d had he been in his life, and now a visor of iron
 Rivetted around his head, had abolish’d his features for ever.
 Speechless the slanderer stood, and turn’d his face from the Monarch
 Iron-bound as it was,...so insupportably dreadful
 Soon or late to conscious guilt is the eye of the injured.*

“*I loved my country - and I hated him:* Whether the historical Junius hated George with the personal feeling the line implies, each reader may judge from the following, dated December 19 1769: *Taking it for granted, as I do very sincerely, that you have personally no design against the constitution, nor any view inconsistent with the good of your subjects, I think you cannot hesitate long upon the choice, which it equally concerns your interest, and your honour to adopt. On one side, you hazard the affections of all your English subjects; you relinquish every hope of repose to yourself, and you endanger the establishment of your family for ever. All this you venture for no object whatsoever, or for such an object, as it would be an affront to you to name. Men of sense will examine your conduct with suspicion; while those who are incapable of comprehending to what degree they are injured, afflict you with clamours equally insolent and unmeaning. Supposing it possible that no fatal struggle should ensue, you determine at once to be unhappy, without the hope of a compensation either for interest or ambition. If an English king be hated or despised, he must be unhappy; and this perhaps is the only political truth, which he ought to be convinced of without experiment. But if the English people should no longer confine their resentment to a submissive representation of their wrongs; if, following the glorious example of their ancestors, they should no longer appeal to the creature of the constitution, but to that high Being, who gave them the rights of humanity, whose gifts it were sacrilege to surrender, let me ask you, Sir, upon what part of your subjects would you rely for assistance?* (*Letters of Junius*, 1772, vol.II pp.41-2).

157: “*What I have written I have written – let / The rest be on his head or mine!*”: Pilate’s words about his inscription (*John* 19, 22) have added to them a version of the crowd’s earlier cry, *His blood be on us and on our children* (*Matthew* 27, 25). Junius, like both New Testament parties, refuses to repent: but in offering to take George’s guilt he offers to exchange his moral identity with those of both Georges III and IV (*us and ... our children* – see sts.76-8n).

158: “*Nominis Umbra*”: see note to l.593.

159: Sathan’s discomfiture here echoes *Revelation* 12, 10: *the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.*

160: *George Washington ... John Horne Tooke ... Franklin:* Washington, 1732-99, first President of the U.S.A. For Tooke, see l.631-2n. Benjamin Franklin, 1706-90, American statesman. Sathan may be able to call upon the Blessed as his witnesses, but all three seem among the Peripatetic Damned.

85.¹⁶¹

At length with jostling, elbowing, and the aid
 Of Cherubim appointed to that post,
 The devil Asmodeus¹⁶² to the circle made 675
 His way, and looked as if his journey cost
 Some trouble; when his burthen¹⁶³ down he laid,
 “What’s this?” cried Michael, “Why, ’tis not a Ghost?”
 “I know it,” quoth the Incubus,¹⁶⁴ “but he
 “Shall be one – if you leave the affair to me. 680

86.

“Confound the renegado! I have sprained
 “My left wing, he’s so heavy¹⁶⁵ – one would think
 “Some of his works about his neck were chained;¹⁶⁶
 “But to the point – while hovering o’er the brink
 “Of Skiddaw¹⁶⁷ (where as usual it still rained) 685
 “I saw a taper far below me wink –
 “And stooping, caught this fellow at a libel –
 “No less on History than the Holy Bible.

87.

“The former is the Devil’s Scripture, and
 “The latter yours, Good Michael!¹⁶⁸ So the affair 690
 “Belongs to all of us, you understand;
 “I snatched him up just as you see him there
 “And brought him off for sentence out of hand –
 “I’ve scarcely been ten minutes in the air –
 “At least a quarter it can hardly be; 695
 “I dare say that his wife is still at tea.”¹⁶⁹ –

161: see the reception the god Indra gives Ereenia when he brings the (still living) heroine Kailyal to Heaven in *The Curse of Kehama*, Book VII:

*What hast thou done, Ereenia, said the God,
 Bringing a mortal here?*

162: *Asmodeus*: a devil from The Book of Tobit; though Byron here refers to his role in *Le Diable Boiteux* (1707) by Alain René le Sage, in which Asmodee lifts the roofs off Madrid houses, so that the protagonist, Don Cleofas, can see the people within. These include a patronless poet reduced to writing (on the walls for lack of paper) a tragedy called *Le deluge universel*, set entirely on the Ark. (**Coleridge, enlarged.**) Previous references to Asmodeus are in *Granta, A Medley* (1806) st.1, and *Waltz*, (1812) l.223. In Gillray’s *Le Diable Boiteux* (1805) Charles James Fox is Asmodeus.

163: TEXT: *burthen*: burden (all editions).

164: *Incubus*: demon said to visit people as they sleep.

165: *I have sprained my left wing, / He’s so heavy*: compare *Don Juan IV* 3-5, where *Pegasus ... sprains a wing, and down we tend, / Like Lucifer when hurled from Heaven for sinning.*

166: *his works ... about his neck*: see *Revelation*, 22 12-15: ... *my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be ... blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may ... enter in through the gates into the city. For without are ... idolaters, and whomsoever loveth and maketh a lie.*

167: *Skiddaw*: mountain visible behind Greta Hall, Southey’s Cumberland home. Asmodeus could not have seen Southey’s *taper wink* while *hovering over its brink*: Southey’s study faces in the opposite direction, away from the mountain.

168: TEXT: *good Michael!*: good Michael; (Liberal, Wright, MCGANN) good Michael: (Coleridge)

169: *I dare say that his wife is still at tea*: Edith Southey eventually went mad. The line echoes Byron’s jibe at the Lakers’ *tea-drinking neutrality of morals and their convenient treachery in politics* in his

88.

Here Sathan said, "I know this man of old,
 "And have expected him for some time here;
 "A sillier fellow you will scarce behold
 "Or more conceited in his petty sphere – 700
 "But surely it was not worth while to fold
 "Such trash below your wing, Asmodeus dear!
 "We had the poor wretch safe (without being bored
 "With carriage) coming of his own accord. –

89.

"But since he's here, let's see what he has done." 705
 "Done!" cried Asmodeus, "he anticipates
 "The very business you are now upon –
 "And Scribbles as if head Clerk to the Fates.
 "Who knows to what his ribaldry may run
 "When such an Ass as this, like Balaam's,¹⁷⁰ prates?" 710
 "Let's hear," quoth Michael, "what he has to say –
 "You know we're bound to that in every way."

90.

Now the Bard, glad to get an audience, which
 By no means often was his case below,
 Began to cough & hawk, and hem, and pitch 715
 His voice into that awful note of woe
 To all unhappy hearers within reach
 Of poets – when the tide of rhyme's in flow –
 But stuck fast with his first Hexameter,¹⁷¹
 Not one of all whose gouty feet would stir.¹⁷² 720

long note to *Don Juan* V 1175-6. The note, supposedly on Bacon's inaccuracies, was composed on January 6 1821 (see BLJ VIII 14.)

170: *such an Ass as this, like Balaam's, prates:* see *Numbers* 22, 22-31, except the Biblical ass recognises the Angel of the Lord where Balaam, the hired prophet, does not. As a devil, Asmodeus would naturally sneer at the beast's spiritual awareness. See also *Don Juan*, XII 26, 5-6: *a curse against Murray (I suspect him as a Tory – of softening my M.S. – if he has – by the Ass by Balaam! [sic] He shall endure my indignation – BLJ V 159):* and *The Dunciad* (1743) II 253-6:

*So swells each wind-pipe; Ass intones to Ass,
 Harmonic twang! of leather, horn, and brass;
 Such as from lab'ring lungs th'Enthusiast blows,
 High sound, attemp' red from the vocal nose ...*

171: *his first Hexameter:* In fact: *'Twas at that sober hour when the light of day is receding ...*

172: *feet would stir.* Said with a strong stress on *feet* and two weaks ones on *would stir*, this forms a dactyl. See next note.

91.

But ere the spavined Dactyls¹⁷³ could be spurred
 Into recitative, in great dismay
 Both Cherubim & Seraphim were heard
 To murmur loudly through their long array –
 And Michael rose ere he could get a word 725
 Of all his foundered verses under way,
 And cried, “For Godsake!¹⁷⁴ Stop, my friend! ’twere best¹⁷⁵ –
 ‘*Non Di, Non homines*’¹⁷⁶ – you know the rest.”¹⁷⁷ –

92.

A general bustle spread throughout the throng,
 Which seemed to hold all verse in detestation – 730
 The Angels had of course enough of song
 When upon service,¹⁷⁸ and the Generation
 Of Ghosts had heard too much in life not long
 Before, to profit by a new occasion;
 The Monarch, mute till then, exclaimed, “What? What? 735
 “*Pye come again!*¹⁷⁹ – No more – no more of that!”¹⁸⁰

173: *spavined Dactyls*: a spavin is a crippling tumour growing between two bones in a horse’s leg. A dactyl is a metrical foot containing one strong stress followed by two weak. The Preface to Southey’s own *Vision* correctly gives Wellington as an example of a dactyl. However, the dactyls in his first hexameter lie in the syllables *’Twás-at-that, sóber-hour* and *dáy-is-re-*.

174: *For Godsake!*: Michael speaks crudely; but God is injured by the facetiousness remotely implicit in Southey’s poem.

175: TEXT: “*For Godsake! Stop my friend! ’twere best*: “For God’s sake stop, my friend! ’twere best (all editions).”

176: *Non Di, Non homines*: From Horace’s *Art of Poetry*, ll.372-3, except that Michael inverts the subjects, perhaps in the interest of the rhythm: *Mediocribus esse poetis / non homines, non di, non concessere columnae ...* (Neither men nor gods nor booksellers can tolerate mediocre poetry). Byron had Englished the lines in 1811 in *Hints from Horace*, ll.585-6: *... middling poets’ mediocres volumes / Are damn’d alike by gods, and men, and columns*. Byron had been haunted by the lines ever since Brougham had opened his 1808 article on *Hours of Idleness* with them: *The poesy of this young lord belongs to the class which neither gods nor men are said to permit* (*Edinburgh Review*, January 1808, p.285). *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* had emerged from Byron’s reaction to the insult.

177: ... you know the rest: compare *Don Juan*, Canto VI ll.1-2.

178: *The Angels had of course enough of song / When upon service*: see *Cain*, I 132-6:

Cain:	... I have heard His seraphs sing; and so my father saith.
Lucifer:	They say – what they must sing and say, on pain Of being that which I am – and thou art – Of spirits and men.
Cain:	And what is that?
Lucifer:	Souls who dare use their immortality – Souls who dare look the Omnipotent tyrant in His everlasting face, and tell him, that His evil is not good!

179: TEXT: *What? What? / Pye come again!*: What! what! / *Pye come again?* (all editions).

180: “*What? What? ... No more, no more*: such mundane repetitions formed George’s most famous verbal mannerism. See this, reported by Fanny Burney: “Was there ever,” cried he, “such stuff as great part of Shakespeare? only one must not say so! But what think you? —What? — is there not sad stuff? What? — what?” (Fanny Burney, *Diaries*, ed. M.Masefield p.99). However, he never spoke this way when mad: it was always greeted as a sign of his returning sanity. Southey’s George is gifted with a more ideal style of speech than was the historical one:

93.

The tumult grew – an universal cough
 Convulsed the skies, as during a debate
 When Castlereagh¹⁸¹ has been up long enough
 (Before he was first minister of state, 740
 I mean – the *slaves hear now*).¹⁸² Some cried “Off! Off!”
 As at a farce, till, grown quite desperate,
 The Bard Saint Peter prayed to interpose
 (Himself an Author)¹⁸³ only for his prose. –

*Father ... from whom no secrets are hidden,
 What should I say? Thou knowest that mine was an arduous station,
 Full of cares, and with perils beset. How heavy the burthen
 Thou alone canst tell! Short-sighted and frail Thou hast made us,
 And thy judgements who can abide? But surely as thou knowest
 The desire of my heart hath been always the good of my people,
 Pardon my errors, O Lord, and in mercy accept the intention!
 As in thee I have trusted, so let me not now be confounded. (A Vision of Judgement, VII).*

Pye: Henry James Pye, 1745-1813, the previous Laureate: a far less distinguished talent than Southey's. George had been mentally incapable since before Southey succeeded. *No more – no more of that!*: this line is repeated precisely, but in tragic circumstances and with no exclamation mark, in *The Two Foscari* (1820). At V 13, Francis Foscari, the Doge, whose son has just died, is being greeted by a delegation who intend to ask him to abdicate. They refer respectfully to his bereavement, and are answered with the line. But see also the depressed Falstaff at *Henry IV ii*, III ii 191: *No more of that, Master Shallow, no more of that.*

181: Castlereagh: Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh, 1769-1822. Foreign Secretary who created the continental coalition against Napoleon in 1813 and represented Britain at the Congress of Vienna, which met to redraw the map of Europe after Waterloo. Here he tried to ensure that the systems imposed were less oppressive than the other allies would have had them; but he got little credit for it. A fumbling and tedious orator, he committed suicide in acute depression by cutting his throat with a pen-knife (see *Don Juan* X, 59, 4) and his body was execrated by the London crowds while on its way to interment. Byron detested him above all contemporary politicians, and associated Southey with him (see *Don Juan*, Dedication, *passim*). His cruel epitaph on him is well-known: *Posterity will ne'er survey / A nobler grave than this. / Here lie the bones of Castlereagh – / Stop, traveller, — —*. Before Waterloo Byron said, *I don't want my countrymen beaten. But I will tell you what I do want. I want to see Lord Castlereagh's head carried on a pole beneath that window*. On hearing of Napoleon's defeat, he said: *I am d—d sorry for it. I didn't know but I might live to see Lord Castlereagh's head on a pole. But I suppose I sha'nt now.* (*H.V.S.V.*, pp.124, 126.)

182: The slaves hear now: a self-paraphrase, from sts.22-3 of *The Irish Avatar*, where the Irish ignominiously applaud Castlereagh. The poem was written just before *The Vision*.

183: (Himself an Author): supposedly of *I and II Peter*, in the New Testament.

94.

The Varlet was not an ill-favoured knave, 745
 A good deal like a Vulture in the face¹⁸⁴
 With a hook nose and a Hawk's eye which gave
 A smart & sharper-looking sort of grace
 To his whole aspect, which though rather grave
 Was by no means so ugly as his case, 750
 But that indeed was hopeless as can be –
 Quite a poetic felony “*de se*.”¹⁸⁵ –

95.

Then Michael blew his trump, & stilled the noise
 With one still greater, as is yet the mode
 On earth besides; except some grumbling voice 755
 Which now & then will make a slight inroad
 Upon decorous silence, few will twice
 Lift up their lungs when fairly overcrowded;¹⁸⁶
 And now the Bard could plead his own bad cause
 With all the attitudes of Self-Appause. 760

184: *A good deal like a Vulture in the face*: Southey had a “prominent” nose, but Byron, on meeting him in 1813, had envied his appearance. See BLJ III 122, 127 and 214. To compare Southey with birds of prey and then to say that his case belies his aspect is perhaps a reference to *Revelation* 19 17-18: *And I saw an angel ... and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men ...* Southey, the allusion would imply, has traduced his calling and gone over to the enemy.

185: *felony “de se”*: suicide. When Castlereagh committed personal suicide (after *The Vision's* writing) his lackey Southey had already committed poetic suicide. For a rehearsal of the idea, see *Fragment of an Epistle to Thomas Moore* (CPW III 274) ll.9-10. For further apt thoughts, see Byron's letter to his wife of November 18 1818 (BLJ VI 80-1) about Sir Samuel Romilly. See also *The Critic*, I ii: SNEER: *And you bore all with patience, no doubt?* PUFF: *Why, yes – though I made some occasional attempts at felo-de-se.*

186: *fairly overcrowded*: Byron's use of this strange phrase echoes Scott, *Rob Roy*, Chapter XVII (*fairly overcrowded*) and *The Bride of Lammermoor*, also Chapter XVII (*overcrowded* only). Scott on each occasion draws our attention to the fact that he is quoting Spenser. The word *ouercraw* occurs at *The Faerie Queene*, I, ix, 50, 5: the past participle *ouercrawed* occurs only in the 1597 printing of *The Shephearde's Calender, Februarie*, l.142 (all other versions have *ouerawed*). *The Faerie Queene* use is not very apt in the present context, for in the stanza Redcrosse Knight is ‘ouercraw(ed)’ by Despayre, who is hardly a prototype for Michael. Byron's memory is of the *Rob Roy* passage, in which Frank Osbaldistone is *fairly overcrowded* by Diana Vernon's insistence that friendship is the only relationship possible between them. (See also Hamlet's line to Horatio at V ii 345: *The potent poison quite o'ercrows my spirit.*)

96.¹⁸⁷

He said (I only give the heads) he said
 He meant no harm in scribbling – 'twas his way –
 Upon all topics – 'twas, besides, his bread –
 Of which he buttered both sides; 'twould delay
 Too long the assembly (he was pleased to dread) 765
 And take up rather more time than a day
 To name his works; he would but cite a few –
 Wat Tyler – Rhymes on Blenheim – Waterloo.¹⁸⁸ –

97.

He had written – praises of a Regicide¹⁸⁹ –
 He had written praises of all kings whatever – 770
 He had written for republics far and wide,
 And then against them bitterer than ever –
 For Pantisocracy he once had cried
 Aloud, a scheme less moral than 'twas clever¹⁹⁰ –
 Then turned a hearty Antijacobin¹⁹¹ – 775
 Had turned his coat – & would have turned his skin.

187: In March 1820 Byron had gone over the charges here in his unpublished *Some Observations upon an Article in Blackwoods Magazine XXIX*: he mentions, in one long sentence, *Wat Tyler, the Life of Kirke White*, the poems on Blenheim and Waterloo, Pantisocracy, and others, including Southey's love for Mary Wollstonescraft. See CMP 101. But the prose is full of animus, where the verse is jovial. The sexual innuendo would be especially out of place here.

188: *Wat Tyler – Rhymes on Blenheim – Waterloo*: *Wat Tyler* was the revolutionary tragedy written by Southey in 1794, and pirated in 1817. *Rhymes on Blenheim* is one of the best known of all Southey's poems: called in fact *The Battle of Blenheim*, it was written in 1798. *The Poet's Pilgrimage to Waterloo* was published in 1816. Ideologically it varies greatly from the two others mentioned.

189: *He had written praises of a Regicide*: *Lines on Marten the Regicide* was published in 1797, and commemorates the imprisonment of Henry Marten, who sat in judgement on Charles I and was imprisoned in Chepstow Castle.

190: *For Pantisocracy he once had cried*: from 1794 to 1796 Coleridge, Southey and others had planned to set up a community by the Susquehanna river in America. It was to be governed according to an utopian blueprint derived from Godwin's *Political Justice*. The only tangible result was that Coleridge married the sister of Southey's fiancée. Pantisocracy ("the equal government of all") was to have been based on common ownership of all property and a tabula rasa educative programme for the first new generation. The young men's vision was naive. Southey would have bent the egalitarian principle so far as to include at least one servant: Coleridge was nervous about admitting women, feeling sceptical about their spiritual disinterestedness. Southey finally backed out of the scheme, under family pressure and from other practical motives; Coleridge felt betrayed. Byron's imputation of immorality, a point he seized with vulgar delight at frequent intervals in his discussions of Southey, is wrong – love was certainly not to be free in pantisocracy, and even divorce was a point about which the instinctively monogamous Southey and the theoretically monogamous Coleridge could not agree.

191: *Antijacobin*: political reactionary. The Jacobins were the leading party in revolutionary France. *The Anti-jacobin* had been a reactionary periodical during the 1790s, and had often parodied Southey's poems.

98.

He had sung against all battles, and again
 In their high praise & glory; he had called
 Reviewing “the ungentle craft”¹⁹² §, and then
 Become as base a critic as e’er¹⁹³ crawled – 780
 Fed, paid & pampered by the very men
 By whom his Muse & Morals had been mauled –
 He’d written much blank-verse, & blanker prose –
 And more of both than any body knows.

NOTE: § : See “Life of H. Kirke White”.

99.

He had written Wesley’s life¹⁹⁴ – here turning round 785
 To Sathan, “Sir, I’m ready to write yours
 “In two Octavo volumes nicely bound –
 “With notes and preface – all that most allures
 “The pious purchaser – and there’s no ground
 “For fear – for I can choose my own reviewers¹⁹⁵ – 790
 “So let me have the proper documents,
 “That I may add you to my other Saints.”

100.

Sathan bowed, & was silent. “Well, if you
 “With amiable Modesty decline
 “My offer what says Michael? There are few 795
 “Whose Memoirs could be rendered more divine;
 “Mine is a pen of all work – not so new
 “As it was once – but I would make you shine
 “Like your own trumpet – by the way, my own
 “Has more of brass in’t,¹⁹⁶ and is as well blown.¹⁹⁷ 800

192: “*the ungentle craft*”: see Byron’s note. Henry Kirke White was a young Nottingham writer who had died in 1806 at the age of twenty-one. Southey had befriended him, and in the year after his death edited *Remains of Henry Kirke White*, with an Account of his Life. Here he says, *apropos* of the first brutal review Kirke White’s work received, ... *the opinion of a reviewer ... has more effect ... than it ... would have ... if the mystery of the ungentle craft were more generally understood.* (*Remains*, vol.I p.23.) He italicises the phrase, as if quoting a previous writer.

193: TEXT: *eer*: ere (all editions).

194: *He had written Wesley’s life*: Southey’s *The Life of Wesley and the Rise and Progress of Methodism* (1820), was not well received by Methodists, and brought his understanding of Christianity seriously into question.

195: *I can chose my own reviewers*: Southey to his friend Grosvenor Bedford, whom he had chosen (see Curry, *New Letters* II 105n) to review Roderick, 21 July 1816: *I will not burn your letter. What care I tho posterity should discover that you reviewed my books, because I wanted to make money by them; - there is neither sin nor shame in my standing in need of such “sweet remuneration,” nor in your contributing to promote me.* (Bodleian M.S. Eng Letters c.25.292).

196: TEXT: *in’t*: in it (all editions).

197: *I would make you shine / “Like your own trumpet – by the way, my own / “Has more of brass in’t, and is as well blown*: Southey is made to allude to Corinthians, 13, 1: *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.* (L.)

101.

“But talking about trumpets – here’s my ‘Vision’!¹⁹⁸
 “Now you shall judge – all people – yes – you shall
 “Judge with *my* Judgement!¹⁹⁹ – & by my decision
 “Be guided who shall enter heaven or fall!²⁰⁰
 “I settle all these things by intuition – 805
 “Times present, past, to come, Heaven, Hell, and All,
 “Like King Alfonso!²⁰¹ (§§) When I thus see double
 “I save the Deity some Worlds of trouble.”²⁰²

NOTE: §§: King Alfonso speaking of the Ptolomean system said that “had he been consulted at the Creation of the world he would have spared the Maker some absurdities”.

102.

He ceased, and drew forth an M.S., and no
 Persuasion on the part of devils or Saints 810
 Or Angels now could stop the torrent, so
 He read the first three lines of the Contents;
 But at the fourth, the whole Spiritual show
 Had vanished, with variety of scents,
 Ambrosial & sulphureous, as they sprang 815
 Like Lightning off from his “melodious twang.”²⁰³ (§§§)

NOTE: §§§: See Aubrey’s account of the Apparition which “disappeared with a curious perfume” & “a melodious twang”: or see “The Antiquary”, volume first. –

198: TEXT: “*my Vision*”: my Vision! (Liberal, Wright, MCGANN) my ‘Vision!’ (Coleridge).

199: TEXT: *Judge with my Judgement!*: Judge with my judgment! (all editions).

200: TEXT: *fall –* : fall! (Liberal, MCGANN) fall. (Wright, Coleridge).

201: TEXT: *Alfonso –* : Alfonso! (Liberal, MCGANN) Alfonso. (Wright, Coleridge).

202: *King Alfonso*: See note above. Byron may have read of the scepticism of Alfonso X of Castile (1221-84) in Pierre Bayle’s *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique: Il y a donc aparence que ce fut en considerant cette multitude de spheres dont le système de Ptolomé est composé, tant de cercles eccentriques, tant d’épicycles, tant de librations, tant de deferans, qu’il [“Alphonse”] échapa de dire que si Dieu l’eût appelé à son conseil quand il fit le monde, il lui eût donné de bons avis* (Rotterdam 1702, Vol, I p.852 – **Coleridge**.) Byron’s insult to Southey blunts the suave blasphemy of the original: Bayle is merely trying to enlist Alfonso as a Copernican before his time. The Laird of Monkbarns refers to Alfonso in Scott’s *The Antiquary*, Chapter 6. *When I thus see double*: a very covert Biblical reference, to the Sermon on the Mount: *The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon* (Matthew VI 22-4 – **Looper**.) Southey’s double vision, with one eye on his supposed God and one on his supposed political paymasters, thus stands self-condemned.

203: “*melodious twang*”: see Byron’s own note, which refers to the following: Anno. 1670, not far from Cyrencester, was an Apparition: Being demanded, whether a good Spirit, or a bad? returned no answer, but disappeared with a curious Perfume and a most melodious Twang. Mr. W. Lilly believes it was a Farie. (John Aubrey, *Miscellanies*, 1696, p.67.) Southey being neither good nor bad but morally indifferent in his self-seeking, qualifies as a parallel fairy. The passage is quoted with fair approximation by the eponymous protagonist in Chapter 9 of *The Antiquary*, a novel which itself features several apparitions, mostly fakes.

103.²⁰⁴

Those grand Heroics acted as a Spell –
 The Angels stopped their ears & plied their pinions –
 The devils ran howling deafened down to Hell –
 The Ghosts fled gibbering for their own dominions²⁰⁵ 820
 (For 'tis not yet decided where they dwell
 And I leave every man to his opinions)
 Michael took refuge in his Trump – but lo!
 His teeth were set on edge²⁰⁶ – he could not blow!

204: *Those Grand Heroics:* the humour in the chaos depicted here is in part derived from Horace again (see l.728). At the end of the *Ars Poetica* (ll.463-5) Horace warns the young men whom he is addressing of the terrible fate of a mad poet: *certe furit, ac velut ursus, / obiecto caveae valuit si frangere clatros, / indoctum doctumque fugat recitator acerbus ...* Byron had himself modernised the passage in *Hints from Horace*, which he wrote in 1811, but which was not published in his lifetime (he thought of publishing it in 1821, while *The Vision* was germinating): ... *haunted with a rhyming rage, / Fear'd like the bear just bursting from his cage; / If free, all fly his versifying fit, / Fatal at once to simpleton or wit ...* The whole Horatian passage (ll.793-804) is worth reading in the context of *The Vision*, as is the next Biblical one. Byron is very carefully and covertly setting Southey up as a transgressor against both the literary and religious standards of the society he claims to be defending. For *Hints*, see also note to st.105.

205: *The Ghosts fled gibbering ...:* for the universal consternation and exit here, see *Ezekiel: Thou ... hast defiled thyself in thine idols which thou hast made ... therefore have I made thee a reproach unto the heathen, and a mocking to all countries. Those that be near, and those that be far from thee, shall mock thee, which art infamous and most vexed* (22 4-6) ... *Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret they can hide from thee ... All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more* (28 19).

206: *His teeth were set on edge:* See *Ezekiel, 18, I: The word of the Lord came unto me again, saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?* God goes on to tell the prophet that the proverb (which refers to moral buck-passing – see also Jeremiah 31, 29) will no longer apply to a man if he ... *be just, and do that which is lawful and right, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel ... hath executed true judgment between man and man hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live.*

104.

825

Saint Peter – who has hitherto been known
 For an impetuous Saint – upraised his keys
 And at the fifth line knocked the poet down –
 Who fell like Phaeton²⁰⁷ – but more at ease –
 Into his lake – for there he did not drown,²⁰⁸
 A different web being by the Destinies
 Woven for the Laureate’s final wreath – whene’er
 Reform shall happen, either here or there.²⁰⁹ –

830

207: *Phaeton*: son of Apollo, took over the chariot of the sun for a day, but his incompetence at handling the horses nearly burnt up creation. He was knocked from the chariot by Zeus. Southey, boring the beyond to dispersion, and being knocked from his cloud, is a parody. See *Metamorphoses*, beginning of Book II: also the destruction of the wicked Arvalan in Book XI of *The Curse of Kehama*: trying to overtake and ravish the heroine Kailyal (even though he is himself dead), he goes to a witch for assistance, is given a chariot and dragons, and tries to fly to Kailyal’s heavenly bower; but is cast down from the sky to the icy desert by the spell protecting her. However, in XIX 13 of the same poem the quasi-angelic Glendoveer, Ereenia, ascends to the throne of Seeva (Siva) to beg for assistance, and is also cast down, this time with words of Divine comfort ringing in his ears: so Southey could find more than one sort of mythic parallel for his own imagined fate if he wished. Gillray portrays Canning as Phaeton in *Phaeton Alarm’d!* (1808) with Pitt as Apollo.

208: *Into his lake – for there he did not drown –* : Southey gets wetted and cast down in Part XII of his own *Vision*, too:

*I stoopt to the fountain,
 Eager to drink thereof, and to put away all that was earthly.
 Darkness came over me then at the chilling touch of the water,
 And my feet methought sunk, and I fell precipitate.*

see, once again, Ezekiel: *Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God; behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations ... they shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas* (28 6-8).

209: Southey was terrified of reforming or revolutionary movements, and Byron often exulted in what he professed to see as their imminent success. See *Don Juan* VIII, sts.50-1.

105.

He first sunk to the bottom, like his works,
 But soon rose to the surface, like himself,²¹⁰ (§§§§)
 For all Corrupted things are buoyed like Corks, 835
 By their own rottenness – light as an Elf,
 Or Wisp that flits o'er a Morass²¹¹ – he lurks
 It may be, still, like dull books on a shelf²¹²
 In his own den, to scrawl some “Life” or “Vision” –
 As Wellborn says, “the Devil turned Precisian.”²¹³ – 840

210: *He first sunk to the bottom – like his works – / But soon rose to the surface – like himself:* compare the 1742 *Dunciad*, II:

*He ... climbed a stranded lighter's height,
 Shot to the black abyss, and plunged down-right.
 The Senior's judgment all the crowd admire,
 Who but to sink the deeper, rose the higher. (287-90)*

However, the joke about the man rising as the works sink is an echo of a note Byron had written in 1811 to l. 617 of *Hints from Horace* (see note to st.103) but which, like *Hints*, had never seen the light of day. I quote the meaty part: “A literary friend of mine, walking out one lovely evening last summer, on the eleventh bridge of the Paddington canal, was alarmed by the cry of ‘one in jeopardy’: he rushed along, collected a body of Irish haymakers (supping on buttermilk in an adjacent paddock), procured three rakes, one eel-spear and a landing-net, and at last (horresco referens) pulled out--his own publisher. The unfortunate man was gone forever, and so was a large quarto wherewith he had taken the leap, which proved, on enquiry, to have been Mr. Southey's last work [The Curse of Kehama]. Its ‘alacrity of sinking’ was so great, that it has never since been heard of; though some maintain that it is at this moment concealed at Alderman Birch's pastry premises, Cornhill. Be this as it may, the coroner's inquest brought in a verdict of *felo de bibliopolâ* against ‘a quarto unknown’; and circumstantial evidence being strong against The Curse of Kehama it will be tried by its peers next session in Grub-Street ...”. The joke would have been in poor taste in 1811, based as it was on the real case of a publisher (Payne of Payne and Mackinlay) throwing himself into the Paddington Canal (see also II 101, 113).

211: *Wisp that flits o'er a Morass:* echoes Scott, *The Monastery*, Chapter 3, where the White Lady of Avenel (see VII 225) appears to the protagonists as they struggle through a “morass”. She is, however, a benevolent spirit. However, see also *Manfred*, I i 192–5:

*When the moon is on the wave,
 And the glow-worm in the grass,
 And the meteor on the grave,
 And the wisp on the morass ... (CPW IV 60)*

The spirit who says these lines is not benevolent; it is the voice which will compel Manfred *Thyself to be thy proper Hell!* (I i 251).

212: ... *like dull books on a shelf:* see the 1742 *Dunciad*, I:

*Round him much Embryo, much Abortion lay,
 Much future Ode, and abdicated Play;
 Nonsense precipitate, like running Lead,
 That slipp'd through Cracks and Zig-zags of the Head;
 All that on Folly Frenzy could beget,
 Fruits of dull Heat, and Sooterkins of Wit. (121-6)*

213: for a parallel to Southey's supposed end in gloomy isolation and empty self-communion, see the description of Arvalan's fate in *The Curse of Kehama*, Book XI: ...

*All human sounds are lost
 Amid those deserts of perpetual frost,
 Old Winter's drear domain,
 Beyond the limits of the living World,*

NOTE §§§§: A drowned body lies at the bottom till rotten – it then floats; as most people know. – – – –

106.

As for the rest – to come to the Conclusion
 Of this true dream – the telescope²¹⁴ is gone
 Which kept my optics free from all delusion,²¹⁵
 And showed me what I in my turn have shown;
 All I saw farther in the last confusion 845
 Was that King George slipped into heaven for one²¹⁶ –
 And when the tumult dwindled to a calm,
 I left him practising the hundredth Psalm.²¹⁷

Ravenna, October 4th 1821.

Mem: This poem was begun on May 7th 1821 but left off the same day: –
 resumed about the 20th of September of the same year –
 & concluded as dated. – – – –

/
 /NB/
 /

*Beyond Kehama's reign.
 Of utterance and of motion soon bereft,
 Frozen to the ice-rock, there behold him lie,
 Only the painful sense of Being left,
 A Spirit who must feel, and cannot die,
 Bleaching and bare beneath the polar sky.*

As Wellborn says - "the Devil turned Precisian.": From Philip Massinger's *A New Way to Pay old Debts* (1633) I, i, 5-7.

214: *telescope:* George III was often depicted, in caricature, using a telescope to aid his vision. See Caretta, *George III and the Satirists from Hogarth to Byron*, illustrations to pp.93, 320, 324, 325, and 344. Byron implies, in a brief but objective moment of empathy (stress *my* and *all* in l. 843) that where he, the poet, has been in need of a telescope for the duration of the poem, the monarch, now in his celestial body, no longer needs one.

215: *kept my optics free from all delusion:* a glance back at l.807, and Southey's capacity for seeing double.

216: *for one:* in cricket, a batsman may encourage his companion to "go for one" if the ball has been hit sufficiently, but just sufficiently, far. One run, though a humble score, is better than no runs at all. George's is thus the lowliest beatitude available. When at Harrow Byron, though an expert bat, always had, because of his deformed foot, to have someone else to run for him. For Biblical evidence that Heaven will after all favour at least a selection of royalty, see *Revelation 21, 24: And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it [the City of Light]: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.*

217: *the hundredth Psalm:* this reads, in its entirety:

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord he is God: It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: Be thankful unto him, and bless his name: For the Lord is good: his mercy is everlasting: And his truth endureth to all generations.

However, it must be noted that George is merely *left ... practising* the psalm. What will happen when he tries to join in with the celestial choirs we do not know. As (see 1.9 above) they are all *singing out of tune* anyway, his voice will perhaps go unheard.

The Vision of Judgement. *Written Ravenna May 7th 1821, put aside that day, resumed Ravenna 20th September, finished 4th October 1821; first published in Liberal No 1, October 15th 1822, reprinted with preface and errata in Liberal No 1 second issue, January 1st 1823;* Paris 1822; Dugdale London 1822 (with Southey's Vision of Judgement, as The Two Visions); New York 1823; Carlile London 1824; 1825; c. 1830 (anon); c.1870; ed. Mary le H Redman, Cambridge 1926; ed. E. M. Earl 1929, Rpt. Salzburg, Aus.; Portland, Oreg.: U of Salzburg, 1998; int. R. Ellis Roberts, Raven Press 1932; ed. F. B. Pinion 1958. The Vision of judgment, facsimile of The Liberal, first edition second issue, January 1st 1823 int. Lionel Madden (1973) Opposing visions: Byron's and Southey's Vision of judgement, ed. H. J. Donaghy (Idaho 1976) Cochran, Peter. The Vision of Judgement (UDD, University of Glasgow 1993). [MSS: draft, incomplete proof, JMA; a copy of the poem is made on ff. 28 to 44 of the commonplace book of Major Thomas Wildman: William Andrews Clark Library, University of California, Los Angeles.]

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Appendix: Robert Southey, *A Vision of Judgement* (text only), from the first edition (Longmans, 1821).

TO THE KING

SIR,

ONLY to your Majesty can the present publication with propriety be addressed. As a tribute to the sacred memory of our late revered Sovereign, it is my duty to present it to Your Majesty's notice; and to whom could an experiment, which, perhaps, may be considered hereafter as of some importance to English Poetry, be so fitly inscribed, as to the Royal and munificent Patron of science, art, and literature?

We owe much to the House of Brunswick; but to none of that illustrious House more than Your Majesty, under whose government the military renown of Great Britain has been carried to the highest point of glory. From that pure glory there has been nothing to detract; the success was not more splendid than the cause was good; and the event was deserved by the generosity, the justice, the wisdom, and the magnanimity of the counsels which prepared it. The same perfect integrity has been manifested in the whole administration of public affairs. More has been done than was ever before attempted, for mitigating the evils incident to our stage of society; for imbuing the rising race with those sound principles of religion on which the welfare of states has its only secure foundation; and for opening new regions to the redundant enterprize and industry of the people. Under Your Majesty's government, the Metropolis is rivalling in beauty those cities which it has long surpassed in greatness: science, arts, and letters are flourishing beyond all former example; and the last triumph of nautical discovery and of the British flag, which had so often been essayed in vain, has been accomplished. The brightest portion of British history will be that which records the improvements, the works, and the achievements of the Georgian Age.

That Your Majesty may long continue to reign over a free and prosperous people, and that the blessings of the happiest form of government which has ever been raised by human wisdom under the favour of Divine Providence may, under Your Majesty's protection, be transmitted unimpaired to posterity, is the prayer of

YOUR MAJESTY'S

Most dutiful Subject and Servant

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

PREFACE.

I.

Having long been of opinion that an English metre might be constructed in imitation of the ancient hexameter, which would be perfectly consistent with the character of our language, and capable of great richness, variety, and strength, I have now made the experiment. It will have some disadvantages to contend with, both among learned and unlearned readers; among the former especially, because, though they may divest themselves of all prejudice against an innovation, which has generally been thought impracticable, and might even be disposed to regard the attempt favourably, nevertheless they will, from inveterate association, be continually reminded of rules which are inapplicable to our tongue; and looking for quantity where emphasis only ought to be expected, will perhaps less easily be reconciled to the measure, than those persons who consider it simply as it is. To the one class it is necessary that I should explain the nature of the verse; to the other, the principle of adaption which has been followed.

First, then, to the former, who, in glancing over these long lines, will perceive that they have none of the customary characteristics of English versification, being neither marked by rhyme, nor by any certain number of syllables, nor by any regular recurrence of emphasis throughout the verse. Upon clear observation, they will find that (with a very few exceptions,) there is a regular recurrence of emphasis in the last five syllables of every line, the first and the fourth of those syllables being accented, the others not. These five syllables form two of the feet by which the verse is measured, and which are called dactyls and trochees, the dactyl consisting of one long syllable and two short ones, as exemplified in the name of Wellington; the trochee, of one long and one short, as exemplified in the name of Nelson. Of such feet, there are six in every verse. The first four are disposed according to the judgement and convenience of the writer; that is, they may be all dactyls or all trochees, or any mixture of both in any arrangement: but the fifth is always a dactyl, and the sixth always a trochee, except in some rare instances, when, for the sake of variety, or of some particular effect, a trochee is admitted in the fifth place. One more remark will suffice for this preliminary explanation. These feet are not constituted each by a separate word, but are made up of one or more, or of parts of words, the end of one and the beginning of another, as may happen. A verse of the Psalms, originally pointed out by Harris of Salisbury, as a natural and perfect hexameter, will exemplify what has been said:

Why do the | heathen | rage, and the | people i-|-magine a | vain thing?

This, I think, will make the general construction of the metre perfectly intelligible to those persons who may be unacquainted with the rules of Latin versification; those especially who are still to be called gentle readers, in this ungentle age. But it is not necessary to understand the principle upon which the verse is constructed, in order to feel the harmony and power of a metrical composition; .. if it were, how few would be capable of enjoying poetry! In the present case, any one who reads a page of these hexameters aloud, with just that natural regard to emphasis which the sense of the passage indicates, and the usual pronunciation of the words requires, will perceive the rhythm, and find no more difficulty in giving it its proper effect, than in reading blank verse. This has often been tried, and with invariable success. If, indeed, it were not so, the fault would be in the composition, not in the measure.

The learned reader will have perceived by what has already been said, that in forming this English measure in imitation, rather than upon the model of the ancient hexameter, the trochee has been substituted for the spondee, as by the Germans. This substitution is rendered necessary by the nature of our pronunciation, which is so rapid, that I believe the whole vocabulary of the language does not afford a single instance of a genuine native spondee. The spondee, of course, is not excluded from the verse; and where it occurs, the effect, in general, is good. This alteration was necessary; but it is not the only one which, upon mature consideration and fair trial, it has been deemed expedient to make. If every line were to begin with a long syllable, the measure would presently appear exotic and forced, as being directly opposite to the general character of all our dignified metres, and indeed to the genius of the English language. Therefore the license has been taken of using any foot of two or three syllables at the beginning of a line; and sometimes, though less frequently, in the second, third, or fourth place. The metre, thus constructed, bears the same analogy to the ancient hexameter that our ten-syllable or heroic line does to iambic verse: iambic it is called, and it is so in its general movement; but it admits of many other feet, and

would, in fact, soon become insupportably monotonous without their frequent intermixture.

II.

Twenty years ago, when the rhythmical romance of Thalaba was sent from Portugal to the press, I requested, in the preface to that poem, that the author might not be supposed to prefer the rhythm in which it was written, abstractedly considered, to the regular blank verse, the noblest measure, in his judgement, of which our admirable language is capable: it was added, that the measure which was there used, had, in that instance, been preferred, because it suited the character of the poem, being, as it were, the Arabesque ornament of an Arabian tale. Notwithstanding this explicit declaration, the duncery of that day attacked me as if I had considered the measure of Thalaba to be in itself essentially and absolutely better than blank verse. The duncery of this day may probably pursue the same course on the present occasion. With that body I wage no war, and enter into no explanations. But to the great majority of my readers, who will take up the book without malevolence, and having a proper sense of honour in themselves, will believe the declarations of a writer whose veracity they have no reason to doubt, I will state what are the defects, and what the advantages, of the metre which is here submitted to their judgement, as they appear to me after this fair experiment of its powers.

It is not a legitimate inference, that because the hexameter has been successfully introduced in the German language, it can be naturalized as well in English. The English is not so well adapted for it, because it does not abound in like manner with polysyllabic words. The feet, therefore, must too frequently be made up of monosyllables, and of distinct words, whereby the verse is resolved and decomposed into its component feet, and the feet into their component syllables, instead of being articulated and inosculated throughout, as in the German, still more in the Greek, and most in the Latin measure. This is certainly a great defect. From the same cause the *cæsura* generally coincides with a pause in the sentence; but, though this breaks the continuity of the verse, it ought perhaps rather to be considered as an advantage; for the measure, like blank verse, thus acquires a greater variety. It may possibly be objected, that the four first feet are not metrical enough in their effect, and the two last too much so. I do not feel the objection; but it has been advanced by one, whose opinion upon any question, and especially upon a question of poetry, would make me distrust my own, where it happened to be different. Lastly, the double-ending may be censured as double rhymes used to be; but that objection belongs to the duncery.

On the other hand, the range of the verse being from thirteen syllables to seventeen, it derives from that range an advantage in the union of variety with regularity, which is peculiar to itself. The capability which is thus gained, may perhaps be better appreciated by a few readers from their own sense of power, than it is exemplified in this experiment.

I do not, however, present the English hexameter as something better than our established metres, but as something different, and which therefore, for that reason, may sometimes advantageously be used. Take our blank verse, for all in all, all its gradations, from the elaborate rhythm of Milton, down to its loosest structure in the early dramatists, and I believe that there is no measure comparable to it, either in our own or in any other language, for might and majesty, and flexibility and compass. And this is affirmed, not as the predilection of a young writer, or the preference of one inexperienced in the difficulties of composition, but as an opinion formed and confirmed during the long and diligent study, and the long and laborious practice of the art. But I am satisfied also that the English hexameter is a legitimate and good

measure, with which our literature ought to be enriched. "I first adventure; follow me who list!"

III.

I am well aware that the public are peculiarly intolerant of such innovations; not less than the populace used to be of any foreign fashion, whether of foppery or convenience. Would that this literary intolerance were under the influence of a saner judgement, and regarded the morals rather than the manner of a composition; the spirit rather than the form! Would that it were directed against those monstrous combinations of horrors and mockery, lewdness and impiety, with which English poetry has, in our days, first been polluted! For more than half a century English literature had been distinguished by its moral purity, the effect, and in turn, the cause of an improvement in national manners. A father might, without apprehension of evil, have put into the hands of his children any book which issued from the press, if it did not bear, either in its title-page or frontispiece, manifest signs that it was intended as furniture for the brothel. There was no danger in any work which bore the name of a respectable publisher, or was to be procured at any respectable bookseller's. This was particularly the case with regard to our poetry. It is now no longer so; and woe to those by whom the offence cometh! The greater the talents of the offender, the greater is his guilt, and the more enduring will be his shame. Whether it be that the laws are in themselves unable to abate an evil of this magnitude, or whether it be that they are remissly administered, and with such injustice that the celebrity of an offender serves as a privilege whereby he obtains impunity, individuals are bound to consider that such pernicious works would neither be published nor written, if they were discouraged as they might, and ought to be, by public feeling; every person, therefore, who purchases such books, or admits them into his house, promotes the mischief, and thereby, as far as in him lies, becomes an aider and abettor of the crime.

The publication of a lascivious book is one of the worst offences that can be committed against the well-being of society. It is a sin, to the consequences of which no limits can be assigned, and those consequences no after repentance in the writer can counteract. Whatever remorse of conscience he may feel when his hour comes (and come it must!) will be of no avail. The poignancy of a death-bed repentance cannot cancel one copy of the thousands which are sent abroad; and as long as it continues to be read, so long is he the pandar of posterity, and so long is he heaping up guilt in his soul in perpetual accumulation.

These remarks are not more severe than the offence deserves, when applied to those immoral writers who have not been conscious of any evil intention in their writings, who would acknowledge a little levity, a little warmth of colouring, and so forth, in that sort of language with which men gloss over their favourite vices, and deceive themselves. What then should be said of those for whom the thoughtlessness and inebriety of wanton youth can no longer be pleaded, but who have written in sober manhood and with deliberate purpose? . . . Men of diseased hearts and depraved imaginations, who, forming a system of opinions to suit their own unhappy course of conduct, have rebelled against the holiest ordinances of human society, and hating that revealed religion which, with all their efforts and bravadoes, they are unable entirely to disbelieve, labour to make others as miserable as themselves, by infecting them with a virus that eats into the soul! The school which they have set up may properly be called the Satanic school; for though their productions breathe the spirit of Belial in their lascivious parts, and the spirit of Moloch in those loathsome images of atrocities and horrors which they delight to represent, they are more especially

characterised by a Satanic spirit of pride and audacious impiety, which still betrays the wretched feeling of hopelessness wherewith it is allied.

This evil is political as well as moral, for indeed moral and political evils are inseparably connected. Truly it has been affirmed by one of our ablest and clearest reasoners, that “the destruction of governments may be proved by and deduced from the general corruption of the subjects’ manners, as a direct and natural cause thereof, by a demonstration as certain as any in the mathematics.” There is no maxim more frequently enforced by Machiavelli, than that where the manners of a people are generally corrupted, there the government cannot long subsist, . . . a truth which all history exemplifies; and there is no means whereby that corruption can be so surely and rapidly diffused, as by poisoning the waters of literature.

Let the rulers of the state look to this, in time! But, to use the words of South, if “our physicians think the best way of *curing* a disease is to *pamper* it, . . . the Lord in mercy prepare the kingdom to suffer, what He by miracle only can prevent!”

No apology is offered for these remarks. The subject led to them; and the occasion of introducing them was willingly taken, because it is the duty of every one, whose opinion may have any influence, to expose the drift and aim of those writers who are labouring to subvert the foundations of human virtue and of human happiness.

IV.

Returning to the point from whence I digressed, I am aware not only that any metrical innovation which meets the eye of the reader generally provokes his displeasure, but that there prevails a particular prejudice against the introduction of hexameters in our language. The experiment, it is alleged, was tried in the Elizabethan age, and failed, though made under the greatest possible advantages of favour, being encouraged by that great patron of literature, Sir Philip Sidney, (in letters, as well as in all other accomplishments and all virtues, the most illustrious ornament of that illustrious court,) and by the Queen herself.

That attempt failed, because it was made upon a scheme which inevitably prevented its success. No principle of adaption was tried. Sidney and his followers wished to subject the English pronunciation to the rules of Latin prosody: but if it be difficult to reconcile the public to a new tune in verse, it is plainly impossible to reconcile them to a new pronunciation. There was the farther obstacle of unusual and violent elisions; and, moreover, the easy and natural order of our speech was distorted by the frequent use of forced inversions, which are utterly improper in an uninflected language. Even if the subjects for the experiment had been judiciously chosen, and well composed in all other respects, these errors must have been fatal; but Sidney, whose prose is so full of imagery and felicitous expressions that he is one of our greatest poets in prose, and whose other poems contain beauties of a high order, seems to have lost all ear for rhythm, and all feeling of poetry, when he was engaged in metrical experiments.

What in Sidney’s hands was uncouth and difficult, was made ridiculous by Stanihurst, whose translation of the first four books of the *Æneid* into hexameters is one of the most portentous compositions in any language. No satire could so effectually have exposed the measure to derision. The specimens which Abraham Fraunce produced were free from Stanihurst’s eccentricities, and were much less awkward and constrained than Sidney’s. But the mistaken principle upon which the metre was constructed was fatal, and would have proved so even if Fraunce had possessed greater powers of thought and diction. The failure therefore was complete,

and for some generations it seems to have prevented any thought of repeating the experiment.

Goldsmith, in later days, delivered an opinion in its favour, observing, that all the feet of the ancient poetry are still found in the versification of living languages, and that it is impossible the same measure, composed of the same times, should have a good effect upon the ear in one language, and a bad effect in another. He had seen, he says, several late specimens of English hexameters and sapphics, so happily composed, that they were, in all respects, as melodious and agreeable to the ear as the works of Virgil and Horace. What these specimens were I have not discovered: ... the sapphics may possibly have been those by Dr. Watts. Proofs of the practicability of the hexameter were given about twenty years ago, by some translations from the Messiah of Klopstock, which appeared in the Monthly Magazine; and by an eclogue, entitled The Showman, printed in the second volume of the Annual Anthology. These were written by my old friend Mr. William Taylor of Norwich, the translator of Burger's Lenora: ... of whom it would be difficult to say, whether he is more deservedly admired by all who know him for the variety of his talents, the richness and ingenuity of his discourse, and the liveliness of his fancy, or loved and esteemed by them for the goodness of his heart. In repeating the experiment upon a more adequate scale, and upon a subject suited to the movement, I have fulfilled one of the hopes and intentions of my early life.

A VISION OF JUDGEMENT

I. THE TRANCE.

'Twas at that sober hour when the light of day is receding,
 And from surrounding things the hues wherewith the day has adorn'd them
 Fade, like the hopes of youth, till the beauty of earth is departed:
 Pensive, though not in thought, I stood at the window, beholding
 Mountain and lake and vale; the valley disrobed of its verdure;
 Derwent retaining yet from eve a glassy reflection
 Where his expanded breast, then still and smooth as a mirror,
 Under the woods reposed; the hills that, calm and majestic,
 Lifted their heads in the silent sky, from far Glaramara
 Bleacrag, and Maidenmawr, to Grizedal and westernmost Withop.
 Dark and distinct they rose. The clouds had gather'd above them
 High in the middle air, huge, purple, pillowy masses,
 While in the west beyond was the last pale tint of the twilight :
 Green as a stream in the glen whose pure and chrysolite waters
 Flow o'er a schistous bed, and serene as the age of the righteous.
 Earth was hushed and still; all motion and sound were suspended:
 Neither man was heard, bird, beast, nor humming of insect,
 Only the voice of the Greta, heard only when all is in stillness.
 Pensive I stood and alone, the hour and the scene had subdued me,
 And as I gazed in the west, where Infinity seem'd to be open,
 Yearn'd to be free from time, and felt that this life is a thralldom.

Thus as I stood, the bell which awhile from its warning had rested,
 Sent forth its note again, toll, toll, through the silence of evening.
 'Tis a deep dull sound that is heavy and mournful at all times
 For it tells of mortality always. But heavier this day
 Fell on the conscious ear its deeper and mournfuller import,
 Yea, in the heart it sunk; for this was the day when the herald
 Breaking his wand should proclaim, that George our King was departed.
 Thou art released! I cried: thy soul is deliver'd from bondage!
 Thou who hast lain so long in mental and visual darkness,
 Thou art in yonder heaven! thy place is in light and in glory.

Come, and behold! ... methought a startling Voice from the twilight
 Answered; and therewithal I felt a stroke as of lightning,
 With a sound like the rushing of winds, or the roaring of waters.
 If from without it came, I knew not, so sudden the seizure;
 Or if the brain itself in that strong flash had expended
 All its electric stores. Of strength and of thought it bereft me;
 Hearing, and sight, and sense were gone; and when I awaken'd ,
 'Twas from a dream of death, in silence and uttermost darkness;
 Knowing not where or how, nor if I was rapt in the body,
 Nor if entranced, or dead. But all around me was blackness,
 Utterly blank and void, as if this ample creation
 Had been blotted out, and I were alone in the chaos.
 Yet had I even then a living hope to sustain me
 Under that awful thought, and I strengthen'd my spirit with prayer.

Comfort I sought and support, and both were found in retiring
 Into that inner world, the soul's strong hold and her kingdom.
 Then came again the Voice, but then no longer appalling,

Like the voice of a friend it came: O son of the Muses!
 Be of good heart, it said, and think not that thou art abandon'd;
 For to thy mortal sight shall the Grave unshadow its secrets;
 Such as of yore the Florentine saw, Hell's perilous chambers
 He who trod in his strength; and the arduous Mountain of Penance,
 And the regions of Paradise, sphere within sphere intercircled.
 Child of Earth, look up! and behold what passes before thee.

II. THE VAULT.

SO by the unseen comforted, raised I my head in obedience,
 And in a vault I found myself placed, arch'd over on all sides.
 Narrow and low was that house of the dead. Around it were coffins,
 Each in its niche, and palls, and urns, and funeral hatchments;
 Velvets of Tyrian dye, retaining their hues unfaded;
 Blazonry vivid still, as if fresh from the touch of the limner;
 Nor was the golden fringe, nor the golden broidery tarnish'd.

Whence came the light whereby that place of death was discover'd?
 For there was no lamp, whose wonderous flame inextinguish'd,
 As with a vital power endued, renewing its substance,
 Age after age unchanged, endureth in self-subsistence:
 Nor did the cheerful beam of day, direct or reflected,
 Penetrate there. That low and subterranean chamber
 Saw not the living ray, nor felt the breeze; but for ever
 Closely immured, was seal'd in perpetual silence and darkness.
 Whence then this lovely light, calm, pure, and soft, and cerulean,
 Such as the sapphire sheds? And whence this air that infuses
 Strength while I breathe it in, and a sense of life, and a stillness,
 Filling the heart with peace, and giving a joy that contents it?
 Not of the Earth that light; and these paradisiacal breathings,
 Not of the Earth are they!

These thoughts were passing within me,
 When there arose around a strain of heavenly music,
 Such as the hermit hears when Angels visit his slumbers.
 Faintly it first began, scarce heard; and gentle its rising,
 Low as the softest breath that passes in summer at evening
 O'er the Eolian strings, felt there when nothing is moving,
 Save the thistle-down, lighter than air, and the leaf of the aspen.
 Then as it swell'd and rose, the thrilling melody deepen'd;
 Such, methought, should the music be, which is heard in the cloister,
 By the sisterhood standing around the beatified Virgin,
 When with her dying eyes she sees the firmament open,
 Lifts from the bed of dust her arms towards her beloved,
 Utters the adorable name, and breathes out her soul in a rapture.

Well could I then believe such legends, and well could I credit
 All that the poets old relate of Amphion and Orpheus;
 How to melodious sounds wild beasts their strength have surrender'd,
 Men were reclaim'd from the woods, and stones in harmonious order
 Moved, as their atoms obey'd the mysterious attraction of concord.
 This was a higher strain; a mightier, holier virtue
 Came with its powerful tones. O'ercome by the piercing emotion,
 Dizzy I grew, and it seem'd as though my soul were dissolving.
 How might I bear unmov'd such sounds? For, like as the vapours

Melt on the mountain side, when the sun comes forth in his splendour.
 Even so the vaulted roof and whatever was earthly
 Faded away; the Grave was gone, and the dead was awaken'd.

III. THE AWAKENING.

THEN I beheld the King. From a cloud which cover'd the pavement
 His reverend form uprose: heavenward his face was directed,
 Heavenward his eyes were raised, and heavenward his arms were extended.
 Lord, it is past! he cried; the mist, and the weight, and the darkness; ..
 That long and weary night, that long drear dream of desertion.
 Father, to Thee I come! My days have been many and evil;
 Heavy my burthen of care, and grievous hath been my affliction.
 Thou hast releas'd me at length. O Lord, in Thee have I trusted;
 Thou art my hope and my strength! ... And then in profound adoration,
 Crossing his arms on his breast, he bent and worshipp'd in silence.

Presently one approach'd to greet him with joyful obeisance;
 He of whom in an hour of woe, the assassin bereaved us
 When his counsels most, and his resolute virtue were needed.
 Thou, said the Monarch, here? Thou, Perceval, summon'd before me? ...
 Then as his waken'd mind to the weal of his country reverted,
 What of his son, he ask'd, what course by the Prince had been follow'd.
 Right in his Father's steps hath the Regent trod, was the answer:
 Firm hath he proved and wise, at a time when weakness or error
 Would have sunk us in shame, and to ruin have hurried us headlong.
 True to himself hath he been, and Heaven has rewarded his counsels.

Peace is obtain'd then at last, with safety and honour! the Monarch
 Cried, and he clasp'd his hands; ... I thank Thee, O merciful Father!
 Now is my heart's desire fulfill'd.

With honour surpassing

All that in elder time had adorn'd the annals of England,
 Peace hath been won by the sword, the faithful minister answer'd.
 Paris hath seen once more the banners of England in triumph
 Wave within her walls, and the ancient line is establish'd.
 While that man of blood, the tyrant, faithless and godless,
 Render'd at length the sport, as long the minion of Fortune,
 Far away, confined in a rocky isle of the ocean,
 Fights his battles again, and pleased to win in the chamber
 What he lost in the field, in fancy conquers his conqueror.
 There he reviles his foes, and there the ungrateful accuses
 For his own defaults the men who too faithfully serv'd him;
 Frets and complains and intrigues, and abuses the mercy that spared him.
 Oh that my King could have known these things! could have witnessed how
 England
 Check'd in its full career the force of her enemy's empire,
 Singly defied his arms and his arts, and baffled them singly,
 Roused from their lethal sleep with the stirring example the nations,
 And the refluent tide swept him and his fortune before it.
 Oh that my King, ere he died, might have seen the fruit of his counsels!

Nay, it is better thus, the Monarch piously answer'd;
 Here I can bear the joy; it comes as an earnest of Heaven.
 Righteous art Thou, O Lord ! long-suffering, but sure are thy judgements.

Then having paused awhile, like one in devotion abstracted,
 Earthward his thoughts recurr'd, so deeply the care of his country
 Lay in that royal soul reposed: and he said, Is the spirit
 Quell'd which hath troubled the land? and the multitude freed from delusion,
 Know they their blessings at last, and are they contented and thankful?

Still is that fierce and restless spirit at work, was the answer;
 Still it deceiveth the weak, and inflameth the rash and the desperate.
 Even now, I ween, some dreadful deed is preparing;
 For the Souls of the Wicked are loose, and the Powers of Evil
 Move on the wing alert. Some nascent horror they look for,
 Be sure! some accursed conception of filth and of darkness
 Ripe for its monstrous birth. Whether France or Britain be threaten'd,
 Soon will the issue show; or if both at once are endanger'd,
 For with the ghosts obscene of Robespierre, Danton, and Hebert,
 Faux and Despard I saw, and the band of rabid fanatics,
 They whom Venner led, who rising in frantic rebellion
 Made the Redeemer's name their cry of slaughter and treason.

IV. THE GATE OF HEAVEN.

THUS as he spake, methought the surrounding space dilated.
 Over head I beheld the infinite ether; beneath us
 Lay the solid expanse of the firmament spread like a pavement:
 Wheresoever I look'd, there was light and glory around me.
 Brightest it seem'd in the East, where the New Jerusalem glitter'd.
 Eminent on a hill, there stood the Celestial City;
 Beaming afar it shone; its towers and cupolas rising
 High in the air serene, with the brightness of gold in the furnace,
 Where on their breadth the splendour lay intense and quiescent:
 Part with a fierier glow, and a short quick tremulous motion,
 Like the burning pyropus; and turrets and pinnacles sparkled,
 Playing in jets of light, with a diamond-like glory coruscant.
 Groves of all hues of green their foliage intermingled,
 Tempering with grateful shade the else unendurable lustre.
 Drawing near, I beheld what over the portal was written:
 This is the Gate of Bliss, it said; through me is the passage
 To the City of God, the abode of beatified Spirits.
 Weariness is not there, nor change, nor sorrow, nor parting;
 Time hath no place therein; nor evil. Ye who would enter,
 Drink of the Well of Life, and put away all that is earthly.

O'er the adamantine gates an Angel stood on the summit.
 Ho! he exclaim'd, King George of England cometh to judgement!
 Hear Heaven! Ye Angels hear! Souls of the Good and the Wicked
 Whom it concerns, attend! Thou, Hell, bring forth his accusers!
 As the sonorous summons was utter'd, the Winds, who were waiting,
 Bore it abroad through Heaven; and Hell, in her nethermost caverns,
 Heard, and obey'd in dismay.

Anon a body of splendour
 Gather'd before the gate, and veil'd the Ineffable Presence,
 Which, with a rushing of wings, came down. The sentient ether
 Shook with that dread descent, and the solid firmament trembled.
 Round the cloud were the Orders of Heaven ... Archangel and Angel,

Principality, Cherub and Seraph, Thrones, Dominations,
 Virtues, and Powers. The Souls of the Good, whom Death had made perfect,
 Flocking on either hand, a multitudinous army,
 Came at the awful call. In semicircle inclining,
 Tier over tier they took their place: aloft, in the distance,
 Far as the sight could pierce, that glorious company glisten'd.
 From the skirts of the shining assembly, a silvery vapour
 Rose in the blue serene, and moving onward it deepen'd,
 Taking a denser form; the while from the opposite region
 Heavy and sulphurous clouds roll'd on, and completed the circle.
 There with the Spirits accurst, in congenial darkness envelop'd,
 Were the Souls of the Wicked, who wilful in guilt and in error,
 Chose the service of sin, and now were abiding its wages.
 Change of place to them brought no reprieve from anguish;
 They in their evil thoughts and desires of impotent malice,
 Envy, and hate, and blasphemous rage, and remorse unavailing,
 Carried a Hell within, to which all outer affliction,
 So it abstracted the sense, might be deem'd a remission of torment.
 At the edge of the cloud, the Princes of Darkness were marshall'd:
 Dimly descried within were wings and truculent faces;
 And in the thick obscure there struggled a mutinous uproar,
 Railing, and fury, and strife, that the whole deep body of darkness
 Roll'd like a troubled sea, with a wide and a manifold motion.

V.
 THE ACCUSERS.

ON the cerulean floor by that dread circle surrounded,
 Stood the soul of the King alone. In front was the Presence
 Veil'd with excess of light; and behind was the blackness of darkness.
 Then might be seen the strength of holiness, then was its triumph,
 Calm in his faith he stood, and his own clear conscience upheld him.

When the trumpet was blown, and the Angel made proclamation –
 Lo, where the King appears! Come forward ye who arraign him!
 Forth from the lurid cloud a Demon came at the summons.
 It was the Spirit by whom his righteous realm had been troubled;
 Likeliest in form uncouth to the hideous Idols whom India
 (Long by guilty neglect to hellish delusions abandon'd,)
 Worships with horrible rites of self-immolation and torture.
 Many-headed and monstrous the Fiend; with numberless faces,
 Numberless bestial ears erect to all rumours, and restless,
 And with numberless mouths which were fill'd with lies as with arrows.
 Clamours arose as he came, a confusion of turbulent voices,
 Maledictions, and blatant tongues, and viperous hisses;
 And in the hubbub of senseless sounds the watchwords of faction,
 Freedom, Invaded Rights, Corruption, and War, and Oppression,
 Loudly enounced were heard.

But when he stood in the Presence,
 Then was the Fiend dismay'd, tho' with impudence clothed as a garment;
 And the big tongues were mute, and the lips which had scatter'd
 Accusation and slander, were still. No time for evasion
 This, in the Presence he stood: no place for flight; for dissembling
 No possibility there. From the souls on the edge of darkness,
 Two he produced, prime movers and agents of mischief, and bade them
 Show themselves faithful now to the cause for which they had labour'd.

Wretched and guilty souls, where now their audacity? Where now
 Are the insolent tongues so ready of old at rejoinder?
 Where the lofty pretences of public virtue and freedom?
 Where the gibe, and the jeer, and the threat, and envenom'd invective,
 Calumny, falsehood, fraud, and the whole ammunition of malice?
 Wretched and guilty souls, they stood in the face of their Sovereign,
 Conscious and self-condemn'd, confronted with him they had injur'd,
 At the Judgement-seat they stood.

Beholding the foremost,
 Him by the cast of his eye oblique, I knew as the firebrand
 Whom the unthinking populace held for their idol and hero,
 Lord of Misrule in his day. But how was that countenance alter'd
 Where emotion of fear or shame had never been witness'd;
 That invincible forehead abash'd; and those eyes wherein malice
 Once had been wont to shine with wit and hilarity temper'd,
 Into how deep a gloom their mournful expression had settled!
 Little avail'd it now that not from a purpose malignant,
 Not with evil intent he had chosen the service of evil;
 But of his own desires the slave, with profligate impulse,
 Solely by selfishness moved, and reckless of aught that might follow.
 Could he plead in only excuse a confession of baseness?
 Could he hide the extent of his guilt; or hope to atone for
 Faction excited at home, when all old feuds were abated,
 Insurrection abroad, and the train of woes that had follow'd!
 Discontent and disloyalty, like the teeth of the dragon,
 He had sown on the winds; they had ripen'd beyond the Atlantic;
 Thence in natural birth sedition, revolt, revolution;
 France had received the seeds, and reap'd the harvest of horrors, . .
 Where . . . where should the plague be stay'd? Oh, most to be pitied
 They of all souls in bale, who see no term to the evil
 They by their guilt have rais'd, no end to their inner upbraidings!

Him I could not choose but know, nor knowing but grieve for.
 Who might the other be, his comrade in guilt and in suffering,
 Brought to the proof like him, and shrinking like him from the trial?
 Nameless the libeller lived, and shot his arrows in darkness;
 Undetected he pass'd to the grave, and leaving behind him
 Noxious works on earth, and the pest of an evil example,
 Went to the world beyond, where no offences are hidden.
 Mask'd had he been in his life, and now a visor of iron
 Rivetted around his head, had abolish'd his features for ever.
 Speechless the slanderer stood, and turn'd his face from the Monarch
 Iron-bound as it was, . . so insupportably dreadful
 Soon or late to conscious guilt is the eye of the injured.

Caitiffs, are ye dumb? cried the multifaced Demon in anger;
 Think ye then by shame to shorten the term of your penance?
 Back to your penal dens! . . . And with horrible grasp gigantic
 Seizing the guilty pair, he swung them aloft, and in vengeance
 Hurl'd them all abroad, far into the sulphurous darkness.
 Sons of Faction, be warn'd! And ye, ye Slanderers! learn ye
 Justice, and bear in mind, that after death there is judgement.
 Whirling, away they flew. Nor long himself did he tarry,
 Ere from the ground where he stood, caught up by a vehement whirlwind,
 He too was hurried away; and the blast with lightning and thunder
 Vollying aright and aleft amid the accumulate blackness,

Scatter'd its inmates accurst, and beyond the limits of ether
 Drove the hircine host obscene: they howling and groaning
 Fell precipitate, down to their dolorous place of endurance.
 Then was the region clear; the arrowy flashes which redden'd
 Through the foul thick throng, like sheeted argentry floating
 Now o'er the blue serene, diffused an innocuous splendour,
 In the infinite dying away. The roll of the thunder
 Ceased, and all sounds were hush'd, till again from the gate adamantine
 Was the voice of the Angel heard thro' the silence of Heaven.

VI.
 THE ABSOLVERS.

HO! he exclaim'd, King George of England standeth in judgement!
 Hell hath been dumb in his presence. Ye who on earth arraign'd him,
 Come ye before him now, and here accuse or absolve him!
 For injustice hath here no place.

From the Souls of the Blessed
 Some were there then who advanced; and more from the skirts of the meeting,
 Spirits who had not yet accomplish'd their purification,
 Yet being cleansed from pride, from faction and error deliver'd,
 Purged of the film wherewith the eye of the mind is clouded,
 They, in their better state, saw all things clear; and discerning
 Now in the light of truth what tortuous views had deceived them,
 They acknowledged their fault, and own'd the wrong they had offer'd;
 Not without ingenuous shame, and a sense of compunction,
 More or less, as each had more or less to atone for.
 One alone remain'd, when the rest had retir'd to their station:
 Silently he had stood, and still unmoved and in silence,
 With a steady mien, regarded the face of the Monarch.
 Thoughtful awhile he gazed; severe, but serene, was his aspect;
 Calm, but stern; like one whom no compassion could weaken,
 Neither could doubt deter, nor violent impulses alter:
 Lord of his own resolves, . . . of his own heart absolute master.
 Aweful Spirit! his place was with ancient sages and heroes:
 Fabius, Aristides, and Solon, and Epaminondas.

Here then at the Gate of Heaven we are met! said the Spirit;
 King of England! albeit in life opposed to each other,
 Here we meet at last. Not unprepared for the meeting
 Ween I; for we had both outlived all enmity, rendering
 Each to each that justice which each from each hath withholden.
 In the course of events, to thee I seem'd as a Rebel,
 Thou a tyrant to me; . . . so strongly doth circumstance rule men
 During evil days, when right and wrong are confounded.
 Left to our hearts we were just. For me, my actions have spoken,
 That not for lawless desires, nor goaded by desperate fortunes,
 Nor for ambition, I chose my part; but observant of duty,
 Self-approved. And here, this witness I willingly bear thee, . . .
 Here, before Angels and Men, in the aweful hour of judgement, . . .
 Thou too didst act with upright heart, as befitted a Sovereign,
 True to his sacred trust, to his crown, his kingdom, and people.
 Heaven in these things fulfill'd its wise, tho' inscrutable purpose,
 While we work'd its will, doing each in his place as became him.

Washington! said the Monarch, well hast thou spoken and truly,

Just to thyself and to me. On them is the guilt of the contest,
 Who, for wicked ends, with foul arts of faction and falsehood,
 Kindled and fed the flame: but verily they have their guerdon.
 Thou and I are free from offence. And would that the nations,
 Learning of us, would lay aside all wrongful resentment,
 All injurious thought, and honouring each in the other
 Kindred courage and virtue, and cognate knowledge and freedom,
 Live in brotherhood wisely conjoined. We set the example.
 They who stir up strife, and would break that natural concord,
 Evil they sow, and sorrow will they reap for their harvest.

VII. THE BEATIFICATION.

WHEN that Spirit withdrew, the Monarch around the assembly
 Look'd, but none else came forth; and he heard the voice of the Angel, . .
 King of England, speak for thyself! here is none to arraign thee.
 Father, he replied, from whom no secrets are hidden,
 What should I say! Thou knowest that mine was an arduous station,
 Full of cares, and with perils beset. How heavy the burthen
 Thou alone canst tell! Short-sighted and frail hast Thou made us,
 And Thy judgements who can abide? But as surely Thou knowest
 The desire of my heart hath been alway the good of my people,
 Pardon my errors, O Lord, and in mercy accept the intention!
 As in Thee I have trusted, so let me not now be confounded.

Bending forward he spake with earnest humility. Well done,
 Good and faithful servant! then said a Voice from the Brightness,
 Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. . . . The ministering Spirits
 Clapt their pennons therewith, and from that whole army of Angels
 Songs of thanksgiving and joy resounded, and loud hallelujahs;
 While on the wings of Winds uprais'd, the pavilion of splendour
 Where inscrutable light enveloped the Holy of Holies,
 Moved, and was borne away, thro' the empyrean ascending.

Beautiful then on its hill appear'd the Celestial City,
 Soften'd, like evening suns, to a mild and bearable lustre.
 Beautiful was the ether above; and the sapphire beneath us,
 Beautiful was its tone, to the dazzled sight as refreshing
 As the fields with their loveliest green at the coming of summer,
 When the mind is at ease, and the eye and the heart are contented.

Then methought we approach'd the gate. In front of the portal,
 From a rock where the standard of man's Redemption was planted,
 Issued the Well of Life, where whosoever would enter,
 So it was written, must drink, and put away all that is earthly.
 Earth among its gems, its creations of art and of nature,
 Offers not aught whereto that marvellous Cross may be liken'd
 Even in dim similitude, such was its wonderful substance.
 Pure it was and diaphanous. It had no visible lustre;
 Yet from It alone whole Heaven was illuminate alway;
 Day and Night being none in the upper firmament, neither
 Sun, nor Moon, nor Stars; but from that Cross as a fountain
 Flow'd the Light uncreated; light all-sufficing, eternal,
 Light which was, and which is, and which will be, for ever and ever;
 Light of light, which, if daringly gazed on, would blind an Archangel,

Yet the eye of weak man may behold, and beholding is strengthened.
 Ye, while we wander below, opprest with our bodily burthen,
 And in the shadow of death, this Light is in mercy vouchsafed us,
 So we seek it with humble heart; and the soul that receives it
 Hath with it healing and strength, peace, love, and life everlasting.

Thither the King drew nigh, and kneeling he drank of the water.
 Oh what a change was wrought! In the semblance of age he had risen,
 Such as at last he appear'd, with the traces of time and affliction
 Deep on his faded form, when the burthen of years was upon him.
 Oh what a change was wrought! For now the corruptible put on
 Incorruption; the mortal put off mortality. Rising
 Rejuvenescent he stood in a glorified body, obnoxious
 Never again to change, nor to evil and trouble and sorrow,
 But for eternity form'd, and to bliss everlasting appointed.

VIII. THE SOVEREIGNS.

LIFT up your heads, ye Gates; and ye everlasting Portals,
 Be ye lift up! For lo! a glorified Monarch approacheth,
 One who in righteousness reign'd, and religiously govern'd his people.
 Who are these that await him within? Nassau the Deliverer,
 Him I knew; and the Stuart, he who, serene in his meekness,
 Bow'd his anointed head beneath the axe of rebellion,
 Calm in that insolent hour, and over his fortune triumphant.

Queen of the eagle eye, thou too, O matchless Eliza,
 Excellent Queen, wert there! and thy brother's beautiful spirit;
 O'er whose innocent head there hover'd a silvery halo,
 Such as crowns the Saint when his earthly warfare is ended.

There too was he of the sable mail, the hero of Cressy,
 Flower of chivalry, he, in arms and in courtesy peerless.
 There too his royal sire I saw, magnificent Edward,
 He who made the English renown, and the fame of his Windsor
 In the Orient and Occident known, from Tagus to Tigris.
 Lion-hearted Richard was there, redoubtable warrior,
 At whose irresistible presence the Saracen trembled;
 At whose name the Caliph exclaim'd in dismay on Mohammed,
 Syrian mothers grew pale, and their children were scared into silence.
 Born in a bloody age, did he in his prowess exulting
 Run like a meteor his course, and fulfil the service assign'd him,
 Checking the Mussulman power in the height of its prosperous fortune;
 But that leonine heart was with virtues humaner ennobled,
 (Otherwhere else, be sure, his doom had now been appointed,) Friendship,
 Disdain of wrong, and generous feeling redeem'd it,
 Magnanimity there had its seat, and the love of the Muses.

There with the Saxon Kings who founded our laws and our temples,
 (Gratefully still to be named while these endure in remembrance,
 They, for the pious work!) I saw the spirit of Alfred;
 Alfred than whom no Prince with loftier intellect gifted,
 Nor with a finer soul, nor in virtue more absolute, ever
 Made a throne twice-hallow'd, and reign'd in the hearts of his people.
 With him the Worthies were seen who in life partook of his labours,

Shared his thoughts, and with him for the weal of posterity travail'd;
 Some who in cloisters immured, and to painful Study devoted
 Day and night, their patient and innocent lives exhausted,
 And in meekness possess'd their souls; and some who in battle
 Put the Raven to flight: and some who intrepid in duty
 Reach'd the remotest East, or invading the kingdom of Winter,
 Plough'd with audacious keel the Hyperborean Ocean.
 I could perceive the joy which fill'd their beatified spirits
 While of the Georgian age they thought, and the glory of England.

IX.
 THE ELDER WORTHIES.

LIFT up your heads, you Gates; and ye everlasting Portals.
 Be ye lift up! Behold the Worthies are there to receive him,
 They who in later days, or in elder ages ennobled
 Britain's dear name. Bede I beheld, who, humble and holy,
 Shone like a single star, serene in a night of darkness.
 Bacon also was there, the marvellous Friar; and he who
 Struck the spark from which the Bohemian kindled his taper;
 Thence the flame, long and hardly preserv'd, was to Luther transmitted,
 Mighty soul, and he lifted his torch, and enlighten'd the nations.

 Thee too, Father Chaucer! I saw, and delighted to see thee,
 At whose well undefiled I drank in my youth, and was strengthen'd;
 With whose mind immortal so oft I have communed, partaking
 All its manifold moods, and willingly moved at its pleasure.
 Bearing the palm of martyrdom, Cranmer was there in his meekness
 Holy name to be ever revered! And Cecil, whose wisdom
 'Stablish'd the Church and State, Eliza's pillar of council.
 And Shakespeare, who in our hearts for himself hath erected an empire
 Not to be shaken by Time, nor e'er by another divided.
 But with what love did I then behold the face of my master, . .
 Spenser, my master dear! with whom in boyhood I wander'd
 Through the regions of Faery Land, in forest or garden
 Spending delicious hours, or at tilt and tourney rejoicing;
 Yea, by the magic of verse enlarged, and translated in spirit,
 In the World of Romance free denizen I; . . . till awakening,
 When the spell was dissolved, this real earth and its uses
 Seem'd to me weary, and stale, and flat.

With other emotion

Milton's severer shade I saw, and in reverence humbled
 Gazed on that soul sublime: of passion now as of blindness
 Heal'd, and no longer here to Kings and to Hierarchs hostile,
 He was assoil'd from taint of the fatal fruit; and in Eden
 Not again to be lost, consorted and equal with Angels.
 Taylor too was there, from whose mind of its treasures redundant
 Streams of eloquence flow'd, like an inexhaustible fountain:
 And the victor of Blenheim, alike in all virtues accomplish'd,
 Public or private, he; the perfect soldier and statesman,
 England's reproach and her pride, her pride for his noble achievements,
 Her reproach for the wrongs he endured: And Newton, exalted
 There above those orbs whose motions from earth he had measured,
 Thro' infinity ranging in thought: And Berkeley, angelic
 Now in substance as soul, that kingdom enjoying where all things
 Are what they seem, and the good and the beautiful there are eternal.

X.
THE WORTHIES OF THE GEORGIAN AGE.

THESE with a kindred host of great and illustrious spirits
 Stood apart, while a train whom nearer duty attracted
 Thro' the Gate of Bliss came forth to welcome their Sovereign.
 Many were they and glorious all. Conspicuous among them
 Wolfe was seen: And the seaman who fell on the shores of Owhyhee,
 Leaving a lasting name, to humanity dear as to science:
 And the mighty musician of Germany, ours by adoption,
 Who beheld in the King his munificent pupil and patron.
 Reynolds, with whom began that school of art which hath equall'd
 Richest Italy's works, and the masterly labours of Belgium,
 Came in that famous array: and Hogarth, who followed no master,
 Nor by pupil shall e'er be approach'd, alone in his greatness.
 Reverend in comely mien, of aspect mild and benignant,
 There, too, Wesley I saw and knew, whose zeal apostolic,
 Tho' with error alloy'd, hath on earth its merited honour,
 As in Heaven its reward. And Mansfield the just and intrepid;
 Wise Judge, by the craft of the Law ne'er seduced from its purpose;
 And when the misled multitude raged like the winds in their madness,
 Not to be moved from his rightful resolves. And Burke I beheld there,
 Eloquent statesman and sage, who, tho' late, broke loose from his trammels,
 Giving then to mankind what party too long had diverted.
 Here, where wrongs are forgiven, was the injured Hastings beside him:
 Strong in his high deserts, and in innocence happy, tho' injured,
 He, in his good old age, outlived persecution and malice.
 Even where he had stood a mark for the arrows of slander,
 He had his triumph at last, when moved with one feeling, the Senate
 Rose in respect at his sight, and atoned for the sin of their fathers.

Cowper, thy lovely spirit was there, in death disenchanted
 From that heavy spell which had bound it in sorrow and darkness,
 Thou wert there, in the kingdom of peace and of light everlasting.
 Nelson also was there in the kingdom of peace, tho' his calling
 While upon earth he dwelt, was to war and the work of destruction.
 Not in him had that awful ministry deaden'd, or weaken'd
 Quick compassion, and feelings that raise while they soften our nature.
 Wise in council, and steady in purpose, and rapid in action,
 Never thought of self from the course of his duty seduced him,
 Never doubt of the issue unworthily warp't his intention.
 Long shall his memory live, and while his example is cherish'd,
 From the Queen of the Seas, the sceptre shall never be wrested.

XI.
THE YOUNG SPIRITS.

YE whom I leave unnam'd, ye other Worthies of Britain,
 Lights of the Georgian age, ... for ye are many and noble,
 How might I name ye all, whom I saw in this glorious vision? ...
 Pardon ye the imperfect tale! Yet some I beheld there,
 Whom should I pretermit, my heart might rightly upbraid me,
 That its tribute of honour, poor tho' it be, was withholden.
 Somewhat apart they came, in fellowship gather'd together,
 As in goodly array they follow'd the train of the worthies.

Chosen spirits were these, of the finest elements temper'd,
 And embodied on earth in mortality's purest texture;
 But in the morning of hope, in the blossom of virtue and genius,
 They were cut down by death. What then, . . . were it wise to lament them,
 Seeing the mind bears with it its wealth, and the soul its affections?
 What we sow, we shall reap; and the seeds whereof earth is not worthy
 Strike their roofs in a kindlier soil, and ripen to harvest.

Here were the gallant youths of high heroic aspiring,
 Who, so fate had allow'd, with the martial renown of their country
 Would have wedded their names, for perpetual honour united;
 Strong of heart and of mind, but in undistinguishing battle,
 Or by pestilence stricken, they fell, unknown and confounded
 With the common dead. Oh! many are they who were worthy,
 Under the Red Cross flag, to have wielded the thunders of Britain,
 Making her justice felt, and her proper power upholding
 Upon all seas and shores, wheresoever her rights were offended,
 Followers of Nelson's path, and the glorious career of the Wellesley.
 Many are they, whose bones beneath the billows have whiten'd,
 Or in foreign earth they have moulder'd, hastily cover'd,
 In some wide and general grave.

Here also were spirits
 To have guided, like Cecil of old, the counsels of England;
 Or have silenced and charm'd a tumultuous Senate, like Canning,
 When to the height of his theme, the consummate Orator rising,
 Makes our Catilines pale, and rejoices the friends of their country.

Others came in that goodly band whom benigner fortune
 Led into pleasanter ways on earth: the children of Science
 Some, whose unerring pursuit would, but for death, have extended
 O'er the unknown and material, Man's intellectual empire,
 Such their intuitive power; like Davy, disarming destruction
 When it moves on the vapour; or him, who discovering the secret
 Of the dark and ebullient abyss, with the fire of Vesuvius
 Arm'd the chemist's hand: well then might Eleusinian Ceres
 Yield to him, from whom the seas and the mountains conceal'd not
 Nature's mystery, hid in their depths.

Here lost in their promise
 And prime, were the children of Art, who should else have deliver'd
 Works and undying names to grateful posterity's keeping,
 Such as Haydon will leave on earth; and he who, returning
 Rich in praise to his native shores, hath left a remembrance
 Long to be honour'd and loved on the banks of Thames and of Tiber;
 So may America, prizing in time the worth she possesses,
 Give to that hand free scope, and boast hereafter of Allston.

Here too, early lost and deplored, were the youths whom the Muses
 Mark'd for themselves at birth, and with dews from Castalia sprinkled:
 Chatterton first, (for not to his affectionate spirit
 Could the act of madness innate for guilt be accounted):
 Marvellous boy, whose antique songs and unhappy story
 Shall, by gentle hearts, be in mournful memory cherish'd
 Long as thy ancient towers endure, and the rocks of St. Vincent,
 Bristol! my birth-place dear. What though I have chosen a dwelling
 Far away, and my grave shall not be found by the stranger
 Under thy sacred care, nathless in love and in duty

Still am I bound to thee, and by many a deep recollection!
 City of elder days, I know how largely I owe thee;
 Nor least for the hope and the strength that I gather'd in boyhood,
 While on Chatterton musing, I fancied his spirit was with me
 In the haunts which he loved upon earth. 'Twas a joy in my vision
 When I beheld his face ... And here was the youth of Loch Leven,
 Nipt, like an April flower, that opens its leaves to the sunshine,
 While the breath of the East prevails. And Russell and Bampfylde,
 Bright emanations they! And the Poet, whose songs of childhood
 Trout and the groves of Clifton heard; not alone by the Muses
 But by the Virtues loved, his soul in its Youthful aspirings
 Sought the Holy Hill, and his thirst was for Siloa's waters.
 Was I deceived by desire, or, Henry, indeed did thy spirit
 Know me, and meet my look, and smile like a friend at the meeting?

XII.
 THE MEETING.

LIFT up your heads, ye Gates; and ye everlasting Portals,
 Be ye lift up! Behold the splendent train of the Worthies
 Halt; and with quicker pace a happier company issues
 Forth from the Gates of Bliss: the Parents, the Children, and Consort,
 Came to welcome in Heaven the Son, the Father, and Husband!
 Hour of perfect joy that o'er pays all earthly affliction;
 Yea, and the thought whereof supporteth the soul in its anguish!

 There came from England's blossom of hope, .. the beautiful Princess;
 She in whose wedded bliss all hearts rejoiced, and whose death-bell,
 Heard from tower to tower through the islands, carried a sorrow,
 Felt by all like a private grief, which, sleeping or waking,
 Will not be shaken away, but possesses the soul and disturbs it.
 There was our late-lost Queen, the nation's example of virtue;
 In whose presence vice was not seen, nor the face of dishonour,
 Pure in heart, and spotless in life, and secret in bounty,
 Queen, and Mother, and Wife unproved. .. The gentle Amelia
 Stretch'd her arms to her father there, in tenderness shedding
 Tears, such as Angels weep. That hand was toward him extended
 Whose last pressure he could not bear, when merciful Nature,
 As o'er her dying bed he bent in severest anguish,
 Laid on his senses a weight, and suspended the sorrow for ever.
 He hath recover'd her now: all, all that was lost is restored him; ..
 Hour of perfect bliss that o'er pays all earthly affliction!
 They are met where Change is not known, nor Sorrow, nor Parting.
 Death is subdued, and the Grave, which conquers all, hath been conquer'd.

 When I beheld them meet, the desire of my soul overcame me;
 And when with harp and voice the loud hosannahs of welcome
 Fill'd the rejoicing sky, as the happy company enter'd
 Through the everlasting Gates; I, too, press'd forward to enter: ...
 But the weight of the body withheld me. I stooped to the fountain,
 Eager to drink thereof, and to put away all that was earthly.
 Darkness came over me then at the chilling touch of the water,
 And methought sunk, and I fell precipitate. Starting,
 Then I awoke, and beheld the mountains in twilight before me,
 Dark and distinct; and instead of the rapturous sound of hosannahs,
 Heard the bell from the tower, toll! toll! thro' the silence of evening.