This is the best of the “Turkish Tales,” and the least acknowledged and written-about. Its single-span narrative is simple but gripping, its terminal battle-sequence exciting, (compare the rushed battle at the end of Bride, or Byron’s indifference about an entire war near the end of Lara). Its heroine (either though, or because, she is dead), is a moving figure, and its economy-version Byronic hero memorable – his depiction is without the annoying qualities which makes us query the masculinity of Conrad, or doubt Byron’s objectivity in depicting Lara. Byron achieves an impersonality in The Siege of Corinth which is unusual. The poem sums up everything which is effective about the “Turkish Tales,” without possessing any of their weaknesses. That the heroine can only appear as a ghost – and that the “hero” is more than usually iron-souled in his immovability (for the inspiration of this, see the borrowing from Vathek, confessed by Byron in his note to 598) may have something to do with this.

Francesca and Alp

Alp, the protagonist, really is what The Giaour is only suspected of being – a renegade. Renegades, those who changed political or religious allegiance either from conviction, or from calculation, were by 1815 to the forefront of Byron’s mind, perhaps with the double reneging of Marshal Ney before the eyes of all. Ney had transferred allegiance from Napoleon to the Bourbons, then transferred it back to Napoleon at the start of the Hundred Days – assisted Napoleon at Waterloo – helped him lose – and at last been shot for treason on December 7th 1815, less than a month after Siege was finished. The idea that such self-defeating inconsistency might be not a weakness, but dictated by historical necessity, would have impressed Byron.

After 1817, Byron associated the word renegado above all with Southey, in his youth a republican and “pantistocrat,” but now in early middle age an enthusiastic Poet Laureate, hymning the Hanoverians, the Bourbons, the Hohenzollerns, the Habsburgs, the Romanovs – anyone, as Byron thought, who would pay him, and most who would never read a word he wrote. Given his own changeability, and his capacity for doubting everything and seeing life in many different perspectives, Byron found Southey’s example unnerving – he himself could easily become one such. The prostitute poet who sings The Isles of Greece in Don Juan’s third canto is thus at once Byron, and Southey.

The Siege of Corinth
A Poem

Guns, Trumpets, Blunderbusses, Drums, and Thunder.²

TO
JOHN HOBHOUSE, ESQ.,
THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED BY HIS FRIEND.
January 22, 1816.

ADVERTISEMENT

“The grand army of the Turks, (in 1715), under the Prime Vizier, to open to themselves a way into the heart of the Morea, and to form the siege of Napoli di Romania, the most considerable place in all that country,* thought it best in the first place to attack Corinth, upon which they made several storms. The garrison being weakened, and the governor seeing it was impossible to hold out against so mighty a force, thought it fit to beat a parley; but while they were treating about the articles, one of the magazines in the Turkish army, wherein they had six hundred barrels of powder, blew up by accident, whereby six or seven hundred men were killed; which so enraged the infidels, that they would not grant any capitulation, but stormed the place with so much fury, that they took it, and put most of the garrison, with Signior Minotti, the governor, to the sword. The rest, with Antonio Bembo, provveditor extraordinary, were made prisoners of war.” – History of the Turks, vol. iii. p. 151.

*Napoli di Romania is not now the most considerable place in the Morea, but Tripolitza, where the Pacha resides, and maintains his government. Napoli is near Argos. I visited all three in 1810-11; and, in the course of journeying through the country from my first arrival in 1809, I crossed the Isthmus eight times in my way from Attica to the Morea, over the mountains, or in the other direction, when passing from the Gulf of Athens to that of Lepanto. Both the routes are picturesque and beautiful, though very different; that by sea has more sameness; but the voyage being always within sight of land, and often very near it, presents many attractive views of the islands Salamis, Ægina, Poro, &c. and the coast of the continent.

In the year since Jesus died for men,³
Eighteen hundred years and ten,
We were a gallant company,
Riding o’er land, and sailing o’er sea.
Oh! but we went merrily!
We forded the river, and clomb the high hill,
Never our steeds for a day stood still;
Whether we lay in the cave or the shed,
Our sleep fell soft on the hardest bed;
Whether we couched in our rough capote,
On the rougher plank of our gliding boat,
Or stretched on the beach, or our saddles spread,
As a pillow beneath the resting head,
Fresh we woke upon the morrow:
All our thoughts and words had scope,
We had health, and we had hope,
Toil and travel, but no sorrow.
We were of all tongues and creeds;
Some were those who counted beads,

²: Unlike the irrelevant Dantesque epigraphs to Corsair, this is a jocular one, inaccurately remembered from Pope, Imitations of Horace, Satires, II, i, 26: Gun, Drum, Trumpet, Blunderbuss, & Thunder?
³: The lines printed in red were sketched by B. for inclusion in Siege, excluded at his part-suggestion, and not published until 1832.
Some of mosque, and some of church,
And some, or I mis-say, of neither;
Yet through the wide world might ye search,
Nor find a motlier crew nor blither.

But some are dead, and some are gone,
And some are scattered and alone,
And some are rebels on the hills
That look along Epirus’ valleys,
Where Freedom still at moments rallies,
And pays in blood Oppression’s ills;
And some are in a far countree,
And some all restlessly at home;
   But never more, oh! never, we
Shall meet to revel and to roam.
But those hardy days flew cheerily!
And when they now fall drearily,
My thoughts, like swallows, skim the main,
And bear my spirit back again
Over the earth, and through the air,
A wild bird and a wanderer.
'Tis this that ever wakes my strain,
And oft, too oft, implores again
The few who may endure my lay,
To follow me so far away.
Stranger, wilt thou follow now,
And sit with me on Acro-Corinth’s brow?

1.

Many a vanished year and age,
And tempest’s breath, and battle’s rage,
Have swept o’er Corinth; yet she stands
A fortress formed to Freedom’s hands.
The whirlwind’s wrath, the earthquake’s shock
Have left untouched her hoary rock,
The keystone of a land, which still,
Though fall’n, looks proudly on that hill,
The landmark to the double tide
That purpling rolls on either side,
As if their waters chafed to meet,
Yet pause and crouch beneath her feet.
But could the blood before her shed
Since first Timoleon’s brother bled,\(^4\)
Or baffled Persia’s despot\(^5\) fled,
Arise from out the earth which drank
The stream of slaughter as it sank,
That sanguine ocean would o’erflow
Her isthmus idly spread below:
Or could the bones of all the slain,
Who perished there, be piled again,
That rival pyramid would rise

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\(^4\): Timoleon was a king of Corinth who first saved his brother’s life, but then killed him for plotting.
\(^5\): King Xerxes, defeated at Salamis. Protagonist of Aeschylus’ *The Persians.*
More mountain-like, through those clear skies
Than yon tower-capped Acropolis,
Which seems the very clouds to kiss. 25

2.
On dun Cithæron’s ridge appears
The gleam of twice ten thousand spears;
And downward to the Isthmian plain,
From shore to shore of either main,
The tent is pitched, the crescent shines
Along the Moslem’s leaguering lines;
And the dusk Spahi’s bands advance
Beneath each bearded pasha’s glance;
And far and wide as eye can reach
The turbaned cohorts throng the beach;
And there the Arab’s camel kneels, 6
And there his steed the Tartar wheels;
The Turcoman hath left his herd,*
The sabre round his loins to gird;
And there the volleying thunders pour,
Till waves grow smoother to the roar.
The trench is dug, the cannon’s breath
Wings the far hissing globe of death;
Fast whirl the fragments from the wall,
Which crumbles with the ponderous ball;
And from that wall the foe replies,
O’er dusty plain and smoky skies,
With fires that answer fast and well
The summons of the Infidel.

* The life of the Turcomans is wandering and patriarchal: they dwell in tents.

3.
But near and nearest to the wall
Of those who wish and work its fall,
With deeper skill in war’s black art
Than Othman’s sons, and high of heart
As any chief that ever stood
Triumphant in the fields of blood;
From post to post, and deed to deed,
Fast spurring on his reeking steed,
Where sallying ranks the trench assail,
And make the foremost Moslem quail;
Or where the battery, guarded well,
Remains as yet impregnable,
Alighting cheerly to inspire
The soldier slackening in his fire;
The first and freshest of the host
Which Stamboul’s Sultan there can boast,
To guide the follower o’er the field,
To point the tube, the lance to wield,

6: Compare Hebrew Melodies, On Jordan’s Banks, first line.
Or whirl around the bickering blade –
Was Alp, the Adrian renegade?

4.

From Venice – once a race of worth
His gentle sires – he drew his birth;
But late an exile from her shore,
Against his countrymen he bore
The arms they taught to bear; and now
The turban girt his shaven brow.
Through many a change had Corinth passed
With Greece to Venice’ rule at last;
And here, before her walls, with those
To Greece and Venice equal foes,
He stood a foe, with all the zeal
Which young and fiery converts feel,
Within whose heated bosom throngs
The memory of a thousand wrongs.
To him had Venice ceased to be
Her ancient civic boast – “the Free;”
And in the palace of St Mark
Unnamed accusers in the dark
Within the “Lion’s mouth” had placed
A charge against him uneffaced –
He fled in time, and saved his life,
To waste his future years in strife,
That taught his land how great her loss
In him who triumphed o’er the Cross,
’Gainst which he reared the Crescent high,
And battled to avenge or die.

5.

Coumourgi – he whose closing scene *
Adorned the triumph of Eugene,
When on Carlowitz’ bloody plain,
The last and mightiest of the slain,
He sank, regretting not to die,
But cursed the Christian’s victory –
Coumourgi – can his glory cease,
That latest conqueror of Greece,
Till Christian hands to Greece restore
The freedom Venice gave of yore?
A hundred years have rolled away
Since he refixed the Moslem’s sway,
And now he led the Mussulman,
And gave the guidance of the van

7: Adrian: from Venice, situated on the Adriatic. The renegade, who had changed either religious or political allegiance, or both, was one of the changeable B.’s favourite figures, Southey being an important example. But see the comical Beppo (like Alp, from Venice), who had become A Renegado of indifferent fame (Beppo, 94, 8). Both Hassan and the nameless monk presume the Giaour to be a renegade: see Giaour 614 and 812; but the poem is not clear about it. Alp is named after Alp-Arslan, an eleventh century Seljuk leader.

8: The Lion’s mouth was a kind of post-box at the top of the Giant’s Stairs at the Ducal Palace in Venice, into which anonymous accusations could be placed.
To Alp, who well repaid the trust
By cities levelled with the dust;
And proved, by many a deed of death,
How firm his heart in novel faith.

* Ali Comourgi, the favourite of three sultans, and Grand Vizier to Achmet III, after recovering Peloponnesus from the Venetians in one campaign, was mortally wounded in the next, against the Germans, at the battle of Peterwaradin, (in the plain of Carlowitz) in Hungary, endeavouring to rally his guards. He died of his wounds next day. His last order was the decapitation of General Breunner, and some other German prisoners; and his last words, “Oh that I could thus serve all the Christian dogs!” a speech and act not unlike one of Caligula. He was a young man of great ambition and unbounded presumption; on being told that Prince Eugene, then opposed to him, “was a great general,” he said, “I shall become a greater, and at his expense.”

6.

The walls grew weak; and fast and hot
Against them poured the ceaseless shot,
With unabating fury sent,
From battery to battlement;
And thunder-like the pealing din
Rose from each heated culverin;
And here and there some crackling dome
Was fired before the exploding bomb;
And as the fabric sank beneath
The shattering shell’s volcanic breath,
In red and wreathing columns flashed
The flame, as loud the ruin crashed,
Or into countless meteors driven,
Its earth-stars melted into heaven;
Whose clouds that day grew doubly dun,
Impervious to the hidden sun,
With volumed smoke that slowly grew
To one wide sky of sulphurous hue.

7.

But not for vengeance, long delayed,
Alone, did Alp, the renegade,
The Moslem warriors sternly teach
His skill to pierce the promised breach –
Within those walls a maid was pent
His hope would win, without consent
Of that inexorable sire,
Whose heart refused him in its ire,
When Alp, beneath his Christian name,10
Her virgin hand aspired to claim.
In happier mood, and earlier time,
While unimpeached for traitorous crime,
Gayest in gondola or hall,
He glittered through the Carnival;
And tuned the softest serenade

9: Caligula is said to have wished the entire Roman population had one neck, so that he could sever it at a stroke.
10: Alp’s Christian name had been Lanciotto: compare Beppo, 97, 8.
That e’er on Adria’s waters played
At midnight to Italian maid.

8.

And many deemed her heart was won;
For sought by numbers, given to none,
Had young Francesca’s hand remained
Still by the church’s bond unchained:
And when the Adriatic bore
Lanciotto to the Paynim shore,
Her wonted smiles were seen to fail,
And pensive waxed the maid and pale;
More constant at confessional,
More rare at masque and festival;
Or seen at such, with downcast eyes,
Which conquered hearts they ceased to prize.
With listless look she seems to gaze;
With humbler care her form arrays;
Her voice less lively in the song;
Her step, though light, less fleet among
The pairs, on whom the Morning’s glance
Breaks, yet unsated with the dance.

9.

Sent by the state to guard the land,
(Which, wrested from the Moslem’s hand,
While Sobieski tamed his pride
By Buda’s wall and Danube’s side,\(^\text{11}\)
The chiefs of Venice wrung away
From Patra to Eubœa’s bay,)
Minotti held in Corinth’s towers
The Doge’s delegated powers,\(^\text{12}\)
While yet the pitying eye of Peace
Smiled o’er her long-forgotten Greece;
And ere that faithless truce was broke
Which freed her from the unchristian yoke,
With him his gentle daughter came;
Nor there, since Menelaus’ dame\(^\text{13}\)
Forsook her lord and land, to prove
What woes await on lawless love,
Had fairer form adorned the shore
Than she, the matchless stranger, bore.

10.

The wall is rent, the ruins yawn,
And, with to-morrow’s earliest dawn,
O’er the disjointed mass shall vault
The foremost of the fierce assault.

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\(^{11}\): The Polish king Jan Sobieski raised the Turkish siege of Vienna in 1683.  
\(^{12}\): Venice controlled the Morea (southern Greece, below the Gulf of Corinth) from 1699 to 1715.  
\(^{13}\): Helen of Troy, wife of Menelaus, King of Sparta, brother to Agamemnon.
The bands are ranked; the chosen van
Of Tartar and of Mussulman,
The full of hope, misnamed “forlorn,”
Who hold the thought of death in scorn,
And win their way with falchions’ force,
Or pave the path with many a corse,
O’er which the following brave may rise,
Their stepping-stone – the last who dies!

11.

’Tis midnight: on the mountains brown
The cold, round moon shines deeply down:
Blue roll the waters, blue the sky
Spreads like an ocean hung on high,
Bespangled with those isles of light,
So wildly, spiritually bright;
Who ever gazed upon them shining,
And turned to earth without repining,
Nor wished for wings to flee away,
And mix with their eternal ray?
The waves on either shore lay there,
Calm, clear, and azure as the air;
And scarce their foam the pebbles shook,
But murmured meekly as the brook.
The winds were pillowed on the waves;
The banners drooped along their staves,
And, as they fell around them furling,
Above them shone the crescent curling;
And that deep silence was unbroke,
Save where the watch his signal spoke,
Save where the steed neighed oft and shrill,
And echo answered from the hill,
And the wide hum of that wild host
Rustled like leaves from coast to coast,
As rose the Muezzin’s voice in air
In midnight call to wonted prayer;
It rose, that chaunted mournful strain,
Like some lone spirit’s o’er the plain:
’Twas musical, but sadly sweet,
Such as when winds and harp-strings meet,
And take a long-unmeasured tone,
To mortal minstrelsy unknown.
It seemed to those within the wall
A cry prophetic of their fall;
It struck even the besieger’s ear
With something ominous and drear,
An undefined and sudden thrill,
Which makes the heart a moment still,
Then beat with quicker pulse, ashamed
Of that strange sense its silence framed:

14: Compare CHP II, song, tenth stanza; BoA 236; or Don Juan VII, 62, 2.
15: There is no midnight prayer in Islam. The last prayer of the day is an hour and a half after sunset. B. has forgotten Vathek:
The stated seasons of publick prayer, in the twenty-four hours, were five: day-break; noon; mid-time between noon and sun-set; immediately as the sun leaves the horizon; and an hour and half after it is down (1786, p.228: Lonsdale, p.129 / 30n).
Such as a sudden passing-bell
Wakes though but for a stranger’s knell.

12.

The tent of Alp was on the shore;
The sound was hushed, the prayer was o’er;
The watch was set, the night-round made,
All mandates issued and obeyed:
’Tis but another anxious night,
His pains the morrow may requite
With all revenge and love can pay,
In guerdon for their long delay.
Few hours remain, and he hath need
Of rest, to nerve for many a deed
Of slaughter; but within his soul
The thoughts like troubled waters roll.
He stood alone among the host;
Not his the loud fanatic boast
To plant the Crescent o’er the Cross
Or risk a life with little loss,
Secure in Paradise to be
By Houris\(^{16}\) loved immortally;
Nor his, what burning patriots feel,
The stern exaltedness of zeal,
Profuse of blood, untired in toil,
When battling on the parent soil.
He stood alone – a renegade
Against the country he betrayed.
He stood alone amidst his band,
Without a trusted heart or hand;
They followed him, for he was brave,
And great the spoil he got and gave;
They crouched to him, for he had skill
To warp and wield the vulgar will;
But still his Christian origin
With them was little less than sin.
They envied even the faithless fame
He earned beneath a Moslem name;
Since he, their mightiest chief had been
In youth, a bitter Nazarene.
They did not know how pride can stoop,
When baffled feelings withering droop;
They did not know how hate can burn
In hearts once changed from soft to stern;
Nor all the false and fatal zeal
The convert of revenge can feel.
He ruled them – man may rule the worst
By ever daring to be first –
So lions o’er the jackall sway;
The jackall points, he fells the prey,
Then on the vulgar yelling press,
To gorge the relics of success.

\(^{16}\) See *Vathek* p.125 / 3n1.
13.

His head grows fevered, and his pulse
The quick successive throbs convulse;
In vain from side to side he throws
His form, in courtship of repose;
Or if he dozed, a sound, a start
Awoke him with a sunken heart.
The turban on his hot brow pressed,
The mail weighed lead-like on his breast,
Though oft and long beneath its weight
Upon his eyes had slumber sate,
Without or couch or canopy,
Except a rougher field and sky
Than now might yield a warrior’s bed,
Than now along the heaven was spread.
He could not rest, he could not stay
Within his tent to wait for day,
But walked him forth along the sand,
Where thousand sleepers strewed the strand.
What pillowed them? and why should he
More wakeful than the humblest be?17
Since more their peril, worse their toil,
And yet they fearless dream of spoil;
While he alone, where thousands passed
A night of sleep, perchance their last,
In sickly vigil wandered on,
And envied all he gazed upon.

14.

He felt his soul become more light
Beneath the freshness of the night.
Cool was the silent sky, though calm,
And bathed his brow with airy balm;
Behind, the camp – before him lay,
In many a winding creek and bay,
Lepanto’s gulf; and on the brow
Of Delphi’s hill, unshaken snow,
High and eternal, such as shone
Through thousand summers brightly gone.
Along the gulf, the mount, the cline;
It will not melt, like man, to time;
Tyrant and slave are swept away,
Less formed to wear the before the ray;
But that white veil, the lightest, frailest,
Which on the mighty mount18 thou hailst,
Shines o’er its craggy battlement;
In form a peak, in height a cloud,
In texture like a hovering shroud,
Thus high by parting Freedom spread,
As from her fond abode she fled,

17: Alp’s midnight walk recalls that of Henry V before Agincourt: see *Henry V*, IV, I; except that Alp meets no-one.
18: The mighty mount is Parnassus.
And lingered on the spot, where long
Her prophet spirit spake in song.
Oh! still her step at moments falters
O’er withered fields, and ruined altars,
And fain would wake, in souls too broken,
By pointing to each glorious token.
But vain her voice, till better days
Dawn in those yet remembered rays
Which shone upon the Persian flying,
And saw the Spartan smile in dying.

15.

Not mindless of these mighty times
Was Alp, despite his flight and crimes;
And through this night, as on he wandered,
And o’er the past and present pondered,
And thought upon the glorious dead
Who there in better cause had bled,
He felt how faint and feeble dim
The fame that could accrue to him,
Who cheered the band, and waved the sword
A traitor in a turbaned horde;
And led them to the lawless siege,
Whose best success were sacrilege.
Not so had those his fancy numbered,
The chiefs whose dust around him slumbered;
Their phalanx marshalled on the plain,
Whose bulwarks were not then in vain.
They fell devoted, but undying;
The very gale their names seemed sighing;
The waters murmured of their name;
The woods were peopled with their fame;
The silent pillar, lone and gray,
Claimed kindred with their sacred clay;
Their spirits wrapt the dusky mountain,
Their memory sparkled o’er the fountain,
The meakest rill, the mightiest river,
Rolled mingling with their fame for ever.
Despite of every yoke she bears,
That land is glory’s still, and theirs!
’Tis still a watch-word to the earth.
When man would do a deed of worth
He points to Greece, and turns to tread,
So sanctioned, on the tyrant’s head –
He looks to her, and rushes on
Where life is lost, or freedom won.

19: Leonidas, the Spartan leader at Thermopylae.
16.

Still by the shore Alp mutely mused,
And woo’d the freshness Night diffused.
There shrinks no ebb in that tideless sea,*
Which changeless rolls eternally;
So that wildest of waves, in their angriest mood,
Scarce break on the bounds of the land for a rood;
And the powerless moon beholds them flow,
Heedless if she come or go –
Calm or high, in main or bay,
On their course she hath no sway.
The rock unworn its base doth bare,
And looks o’er the surf, but it comes not there;
And the fringe of the foam may be seen below,
On the line that it left long ages ago:
A smooth short space of yellow sand
Between it and the greener land.

He wandered on, along the beach,
Till within the range of a carbine’s reach
Of the leaguered wall; but they saw him not,
Or how could he ’scape from the hostile shot?
Did traitors lurk in the Christians’ hold?
Were their hands grown stiff, or their hearts waxed cold? 400
I know not, in sooth; but from yonder wall
There flashed no fire, and there hissed no ball,
Though he stood beneath the bastion’s frown,
That flanked the sea-ward gate of the town;
Though he heard the sound, and could almost tell
The sullen words of the sentinel,
As his measured step on the stone below
Clanked, as he paced it to and fro;
And he saw the lean dogs beneath the wall
Hold o’er the dead their carnival, 20
Gorging and growling o’er carcass and limb;
They were too busy to bark at him!
From a Tartar’s skull they had stripped the flesh,
As ye peel the fig when its fruit is fresh;
And their white tusks crunched o’er the whiter skull, †
As it slipped through their jaws, when their edge grew dull,
As they lazily mumbled the bones of the dead,
When they scarce could rise from the spot where they fed;
So well had they broken a lingering fast
With those who had fall’n for that night’s repast.
And Alp knew, by the turbans that rolled on the sand,
The foremost of these were the best of his band:
Crimson and green were the shawls of their wear,
And each scalp had a single long tuft of hair, ‡
All the rest was shaven and bare.

The scalps were in the wild-dog’s maw,
The hair was tangled round his jaw.
But close by the shore, on the edge of the gulf,

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20: Hobhouse’s diary records, as they pass the Seraglio on Monday May 14th, 1810: Saw two dogs gnawing a body.
There sat a vulture flapping a wolf,
Who had stol’n from the hills, but kept away,
Scared by the dogs, from the human prey;
But he seized on his share of a steed that lay
Picked by the birds, on the sands of the bay.

* The reader need hardly be reminded that there are no perceptible tides in the Mediterranean.

† This spectacle I have seen, such as described, beneath the wall of the Seraglio at Constantinople, in the little cavities worn by the Bosphorous in the rock, a narrow terrace of which projects between the wall and the water. I think the fact is also mentioned in Hobhouse’s Travels. The bodies were probably those of some refractory Janizaries.

‡ This tuft, or long lock, is left from a superstition that Mahomet will draw them into paradise by it.

17.

Alp turned him from the sickening sight;
Never had shaken his nerves in fight;
But he better could brook to behold the dying,
Deep in the tide of their warm blood lying,
Scorched with death-thirst, and writing in vain,
Than the perishing dead who are past all pain.
There is something of pride in the perilous hour,
Whate’er be the shape in which death may lower;
For Fame is there to say who bleeds,
And Honour’s eye on daring deeds!
But when all is past, it is humbling to tread
O’er the weltering field of the tombless dead,
And see worms of the earth, and fowls of the air,
Beasts of the forest, all gathering there;
All regarding man as their prey,
All rejoicing in his decay.

18.

There is a temple in ruin stands,
Fashioned by long-forgotten hands;
Two or three columns, and many a stone,
Marble and granite, with grass o’ergrown!
Out upon Time! it will leave no more
Of the things to come than the things before!
Out upon Time! who for ever will leave
But enough of the past for the future to grieve
O’er that which hath been, and o’er that which must be!
What we have seen, our sons shall see;
Remnants of things that have passed away,
Fragments of stone, reared by creatures of clay!

19.

He sate him down at a pillar’s base,
And passed his hand athwart his face;
Like one in dreary musing mood,
Declining was his attitude;
His head was drooping on his breast,
Fevered, throbbing, and opprest;
And o’er his brow, so downward bent,
Oft his beating fingers went,
Hurriedly, as you may see
Your own run over the ivory key,
Ere the measured tone is taken,
By the chords you would awaken.
There he sate all heavily,
As he heard the night-wind sigh.
Was it the wind, through some hollow stone,*
Sent that soft and tender moan?
He lifted his head, and he looked on the sea,
But it was unrippled as glass may be;
He looked on the long grass – it waved not a blade;
How was that gentle sound conveyed?
He looked to the banners – each flag lay still,
So did the leaves on Cithæron’s hill,
And he felt not a breath come over his cheek;
What did that sudden sound bespeak?
He turned to the left – is he sure of sight?
There sate a lady, youthful and bright!

* I must here acknowledge a close, though unintentional, resemblance in these twelve lines to a passage in an unpublished poem of Mr Coleridge, called “Christabel.” It was not till after these lines were written that I heard that wild and singularly original and beautiful poem recited: and the MS. of that production I never saw till very recently, by the kindness of Mr Coleridge himself, who, I hope, is convinced that I have not been a wilful plagiarist. The original idea undoubtedly pertains to Mr Coleridge, whose poem has been composed above fourteen years. Let me conclude by a hope that he will not longer delay the publication of a production, of which I can only add my mite of approbation to the applause of far more competent judges.²²

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²¹: The apparition of Astarte to Manfred in II iv is an extremely economical version of the apparition of Francesca to Alp; but see also the confrontation of Laura and the protagonist at the climax of Beppo.

²²: The lines to which B.refers are Christabel, 43-60:

The night is chill; the forest bare;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady’s cheek –
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.
Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak.
What sees she there?
There she sees a damsel bright,
Dressed in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone …

Coleridge’s damsel bright does not, however, have anyone’s salvation in view.
20.

He started up with more of fear
Than if an armed foe were near.
“God of my fathers! what is here?
Who art thou, and wherefore sent
So near a hostile armament?”
His trembling hands refused to sign
The cross he deemed no more divine –
He had resumed it in that hour,
But conscience wrung away the power.
He gazed – he saw: he knew the face
Of beauty, and the form of grace;
It was Francesca by his side,
The maid who might have been his bride!

The rose was yet upon her cheek, 23
But mellowed with a tenderer streak:
Where was the play of her soft lips fled?
Gone was the smile that enlivened their red.
The ocean’s calm within their view,
Beside her eye had less of blue;
But like that cold wave it stood still,
And its glance, though clear, was chill.
Around her form a thin robe twining,
Nought concealed her bosom shining;
Through the parting of her hair,
Floating darkly downward there,
Her rounded arm shewed white and bare –
And ere yet she made reply,
Once she raised her hand on high;
It was so wan and transparent of hue,
You might have seen the moon shine through.

21.

“I come from my rest to him I love best,
That I may be happy, and he may be blest.
I have passed the guards, the gate, the wall;
Sought thee in safety through foes and all.
’Tis said the lion will turn and flee
From a maid in the pride of her purity;
And the Power on high, that can shield the good
Thus from the tyrant of the wood,
Hath extended its mercy to guard me as well
From the hands of the leaguering infidel.
I come – and if I come in vain,
Never, oh never, we meet again!
Thou hast done a fearful deed
In falling away from thy fathers’ creed –
But dash that turban to earth, and sign
The sign of the cross, and for ever be mine;
Wring the black drop from thy heart,

23: Compare Romeo and Juliet, V, iii, 95; or Manfred, II, iv, 98-191.
And to-morrow unites us no more to part.”

“And where should our bridal-couch be spread?
In the midst of the dying and the dead?
For to-morrow we give to the slaughter and flame
The sons and shrines of the Christian name.
None, save thou and thine, I’ve sworn,
Shall be left upon the morn:
But thee will I bear to a lovely spot,
Where our hands shall be joined, and our sorrow forgot.
There thou yet shall be my bride,
When once again I’ve quelled the pride
Of Venice; and her hated race
Have felt the arm they would debase
Scourge, with a whip of scorpions, those
Whom vice and envy made my foes.”

Upon his hand she laid her own –
Light was the touch, but it thrilled to the bone,
And shot a chillness to his heart,
Which fixed him beyond the power to start.
Though slight was that grasp so mortal cold,
He could not lose him from its hold;
But never did clasp of one so dear
Strike on the pulse with such feeling of fear,
As those thin fingers, long and white,
Froze through his blood by their touch that night.
The feverish glow of his brow was gone,
And his heart sank so still that it felt like stone,
As he looked on the face, and beheld its hue,
So deeply changed from what he knew –
Fair but faint – without the ray
Of mind, that made each feature play
Like sparkling waves on a sunny day;
And her motionless lips lay still as death,
And her words came forth without her breath,
And there rose not a heave o’er her bosom’s swell,
And there seemed not a pulse in her veins to dwell.
Though her eye shone out, yet the lids were fixed,²⁴
And the glance that it gave was wild and unmixed
With aught of change, as the eyes may seem
Of the restless who walk in a troubled dream:
Like the figures on arras, that gloomily glare,
Stirred by the breath of the wintry air,
So seen by the dying lamp’s fitful light,
Lifeless, but life-like, and awful to sight;
As they seem, through the dimness, about to come down
From the shadowy wall where their images frown;
Fearfully flitting to and fro,
As the gusts on the tapestry come and go.²⁵

“If not for the love of me be given

²⁴: Compare Macbeth, V i, 23–4: You see her eyes are open. – Aye, but their sense is shut.
²⁵: Compare Lara, 136–8; or the Norman Abbey portraits at Don Juan, XIII, stanzas 67–70.
Thus much, then, for the love of Heaven –
   Again I say – that turban tear,
   From off thy faithless brow,
   Thine injured country’s sons to spare,
   Or thou art lost; and never shalt see –
   Not earth – that’s past – but Heaven or me.
   If this thou dost accord, albeit
   A heavy doom ’tis thine to me,
   That doom shall half absolve thy sin,
   And mercy’s gate may receive thee within;
   But pause one moment more, and take
   The curse of Him thou didst forsake;
   And look once more to Heaven, and see
   Its love for ever shut from thee.
   There is a light cloud by the moon – *
   ’Tis passing, and will pass full soon –
   If, by the time its vapoury sail
   Hath ceased her shaded orb to veil,
   Thy heart within thee is not changed,
   Then God and man are both avenged;
   Dark will thy doom be, darker still
   Thine immortality of ill.”

Alp looked to Heaven, and saw on high
   The sign she spake of in the sky;
   But his heart was swoll’n, and turned aside,
   By deep interminable pride.
   This first false passion of his breast
   Rolled like a torrent o’er the rest.
   He sue for mercy! He dismayed
   By wild words of a timid maid!
   He, wronged by Venice, vow to save
   Her sons, devoted to the grave!
   No – though that cloud were thunder’s worst,
   And charged to crush him – let it burst!

He looked upon it earnestly,
   Without an accent of reply;
   He watched it passing – it is flown:
   Full on his eye the clear moon shone.
   And thus he spake – “Whate’er my fate,
   I am no changeling – ’tis too late:
   The reed in storms may bow and quiver,
   Then rise again; the tree must shiver.
   What Venice made me, I must be,
   Her foe in all, save love to thee:
   But thou art safe – oh, fly with me!”
   He turned, but she is gone!
   Nothing is there but the column stone.
   Hath she sunk in the earth, or melted in air?
   He saw not – he knew not – but nothing is there.

26: Compare the words of Laura at Beppo, 93, 1-3: “Beppo! that beard of yours becomes you not – / “It shall be shaved before you’re a day older – / “Why do you wear it? … and so on.
22.

The night is past, and shines the sun
As if that morn were a jocund one.
   Lightly and brightly breaks away       635
   The Morning from her mantle gray,
   And the Noon will look on a sultry day.
   Hark to the trump, and the drum,
And the mournful sound of the barbarous horn,
And the flap of the banners, that flit as they’re borne, 640
   And the neigh of the steed, and the multitude’s hum,
And the clash and the shout, “They come, they come!”
   The horsetails are plucked from the ground, and the sword
From its sheath; and they form, and but wait for the word.
   Tartar, and Spahi, and Turcoman,
Strike your tents, and throng to the van;
   Mount ye, spur ye, skirr the plain,
That the fugitive may flee in vain,
   When he breaks from the town; and none escape,
   Aged or young, in the Christian shape;
   While your fellows on foot, in a fiery mass,
Bloodstain the breach through which they pass.
The steeds are all bridled, and snort to the rein;
   Curved is each neck, and flowing each main;
   White is the foam of their champ on the bit:       655
   The spears are uplifted; the matches are lit;
   The cannon are pointed, and ready to roar,
And crush the wall they have crumbled before:
   Forms in his phalanx each Janizar;

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27: The *Vathek* passage in question goes (in English):

   The music paused; and the Genius, addressing the Caliph, said: ‘Deluded Prince! to whom Providence hath confided the care of innumerable subjects; is it thus that thou fulfilllest thy mission? Thy crimes are already completed; and, art thou now hastening towards thy punishment? Thou knowest that, beyond these mountains, Eblis and his accursed dives hold their infernal empire; and seduced by a malignant phantom, thou art proceeding to surrender thyself to them! This moment is the last of grace allowed thee: abandon thy atrocious purpose: return: give back Nouronihar to her father, who still retains a few sparks of life: destroy thy tower, with all its abominations: drive Carathis from thy councils: be just to thy subjects: respect the ministers of the Prophet; compensate for thy impieties, by an exemplary life; and, instead of squandering thy days in voluptuous indulgence, lament thy crimes on the sepulchres of thy ancestors. Thou beholdest the clouds that obscure the sun: at the instant he recovers his splendour, if thy heart be not changed, the time of mercy assigned thee will be past for ever.’

   Vathek, depressed with fear, was on the point of prostrating himself at the feet of the shepherd; whom he perceived to be of a nature superior to man: but, his pride prevailing, he audaciously lifted his head, and, glancing at him one of his terrible looks, said: ‘Whoever thou art, withhold thy useless admonitions; thou wouldst either delude me, or art thyself deceived. If what I have done be so criminal, as thou pretendest, there remains not for me a moment of grace. I have traversed a sea of blood, to acquire a power which will make thy equals tremble: deem not that I shall retire, when in view of the port; or that I will relinquish her, who is dearer to me than either my life, or thy mercy. Let the sun appear! let him illumine my career! it matters not where it may end.’

   On uttering these words, which made even the Genius shudder, Vathek threw himself into the arms of Nouronihar; and commanded that his horse should be forced back to the road.

   There was no difficulty in obeying these orders, for the attraction had ceased; the sun shone forth in all his glory, and the shepherd vanished with a lamentable scream (*Vathek*, ed. Lonsdale, Oxford 1983, pp. 104-5). Note that the Genius wishes Vathek to reconcile himself with Islam, not Christianity.

28: Compare *CHP* III, 25, 9: *The foe! they come! they come!*

29: Compare *Macbeth*, V, iii, 35: *Skirr the country round!*
Alp at their head; his right arm is bare,
So is the blade of his scimitar;
The Khan and the Pachas are all at their post:
The Vizier himself at the head of the host.
When the culverin’s signal is fired, then on;
Leave not in Corinth a living one –
A priest at her altars, a chief in her halls,
A hearth in her mansions, a stone in her walls.
God and the Prophet – Allah Hu!
Up to the skies with that wild halloo!
“There the breach lies for passage, the ladder to scale
And your hands on your sabres, and how should ye fail?
He who first downs with the red cross may crave
His heart’s dearest wish; let him ask it, and have!”
Thus uttered Coumourgi, the dauntless Vizier;
The reply was the brandish of sabre and spear,
And the shout of fierce thousands in joyous ire –
Silence – hark to the signal – fire!

23.

As the wolves, that headlong go
On the stately buffalo,
Though with fiery eyes, and angry roar,
And hoofs that stamp, and horns that gore,
He tramples on earth, or tosses on high
The foremost, who rush on his strength but to die;
Thus against the wall they went,
Thus the first were backward bent;
Many a bosom, sheathed in brass,
Strewed the earth like broken glass,
Shivered by the shot, that tore
The ground whereon they moved no more –
Even as they fell, in files they lay,
Like the mower’s grass at the close of day,
When work is done on the levelled plain;
Such was the fall of the foremost slain.

24.

As the spring-tides, with heavy splash,
From the cliffs invading dash
Huge fragments, sapped by the ceaseless flow,
Till white and thundering down they go,
Like the avalanche’s snow
On the Alpine vales below;
Thus at length, outbreathed and worn,
Corinth’s sons were downward borne
By the long and oft-renewed
Charge of the Moslem multitude.
In firmness they stood, and in masses they fell,
Heaped, by the host of the infidel,
Hand to hand, and foot to foot:
Nothing there, save death, was mute;
Stroke, and thrust, and flash, and cry
For quarter, or for victory,
Mingle there with the volleying thunder,
Which makes the distant cities wonder
How the sounding battle goes,
If with them, or for their foes;
If they must mourn, or may rejoice
In that annihilating voice,
Which pierces the deep hills through and through
With an echo dread and new –
You might have heard it, on that day,
O’er Salamis and Megara;
(We have heard the hearers say,) 720
Even unto Piræus’ bay.

25.

From the point of encountering blades to the hilt,
Sabres and swords with blood were gilt —
But the rampart is won, and the spoil begun
And all but the after carnage done.
Shriller shrieks now mingling come
From within the plundered dome –
Hark to the haste of flying feet,
That splash in the blood of the slippery street;
But here and there, where ’vantage ground
Against the foe may still be found,
Desperate groups, of twelve or ten,
Make a pause, and turn again –
Fiercely stand, or fighting fall. 31

There stood an old man — his hairs were white,
But his veteran arm was full of might:
So gallantly bore he the brunt of the fray,
The dead before him on that day,
In a semicircle lay;
Still he combated unwounded,
Though retreating, unsurrounded.
Many a scar of former fight
Lurked beneath his corslet bright;
But of every wound his body bore,
Each and all had been ta’en before; 33
Though aged, he was so iron of limb,
Few of our youth could cope with him;
And the foes, whom he singly kept at bay,
Outnumbered his thin hairs of silver gray.
From right to left his sabre swept:
Many an Othman mother wept
Sons that were unborn, when dipped
His weapon first in Moslem gore,
Ere his years could count a score. Of all he might have been the sire
Who fell that day beneath his ire –
For, sonless left long years ago,
His wrath made many a childless foe;
And since the day, when in the strait *
His only boy had met his fate
His parent’s iron hand did doom
More than a human hecatomb.
If shades by carnage be appeased,
Patroclus’ spirit less was pleased
Than his, Minotti’s son, who died
Where Asia’s bounds and ours divide.
Buried he lay, where thousands before
For thousands of years were inhumed on the shore;
What of them is left, to tell
Where they lie, and how they fell?
Not a stone on their turf, nor a bone in their graves;
But they live in the verse that immortally saves.34

* In the naval battle at the mouth of the Dardanelles, between the Venetians and the Turks.

26.

Hark to the Allah shout! a band
Of the Mussulman bravest and best is at hand:
Their leader’s nervous arm is bare,
Swifter to smite, and never to spare –
Unclothed to the shoulder it waves them on;
Thus in the fight is he ever known:
Others a gaudier garb may show,
To them the spoil of the greedy foe;
Many a hand’s on a richer hilt,
But none on a steel more ruddily gilt;
Many a loftier turban may wear, –
Alp is but known by the white arm bare;
Look through the thick of the fight, ’tis there!
There is not a standard on the shore
So well advanced the ranks before;
There is not a banner in Moslem war
Will lure the Delhis half so far;
It glances like a falling star!
Where’er that mighty arm is seen,
The bravest be, or late have been;
There the craven cries for quarter
Vainly to the vengeful Tartar;
Or the hero, silent lying,
Scorns to yield a groan in dying;
Musterings his last feeble blow
’Gainst the nearest levelled foe,
Though faint beneath the mutual wound,
Grappling on the gory ground.

34: B. refers to Homer.
Still the old man stood erect,
And Alp’s career a moment checked.
“Yield thee, Minotti; quarter take,
For thine own, thy daughter’s sake.”

“Never, renegado, never!
Though the life of thy gift would last for ever.”

“Francesca! – Oh, my promised bride:
Must she too perish by thy pride?”

“She is safe.” – “Where? where?” – “In Heaven;
From whence thy traitor soul is driven –
Far from thee, and undefiled.”
Grimly then Minotti smiled
As he saw Alp staggering bow
Before his words, as with a blow.

“Oh God! when died she?” – “Yesternight –
Nor weep I for her spirit’s flight;
None of my pure race shall be
Slaves to Mahomet and thee –
Come on!” That challenge is in vain –
Alp’s already with the slain!
While Minotti’s words were wreaking
More revenge in bitter speaking
Than his falchion’s point had found,
Had the time allowed to wound,
From within the neighbouring porch
Of a long-defended church,
Where the last and desperate few
Would the failing fight renew,
The sharp shot dashed Alp to the ground;
Ere an eye could view the wound
That crashed through the brain of the infidel,
Round he spun, and down he fell;
A flash like fire within his eyes
Blazed, as he bent no more to rise,
And then eternal darkness sunk
Through all the palpitating trunk;
Nought of life left, save a quivering
Where his limbs were slightly shivering
They turned him on his back; his breast
And brow were stained with gore and dust,
And through his lips the life-blood oozed,
From its deep veins lately loosed;
But in his pulse there was no throb,
Nor on his lips one dying sob;
Sigh, nor word, nor struggling breath
Heralded his way to death –
Ere his very thought could pray,

35: Echoed at Don Juan II, 90 7-8: Then he himself sunk down all dumb and Shivering, / And gave no sign of life, save his limbs quivering. – –
Unaneled he passed away,  
Without a hope from mercy’s aid –  
To the last – a Renegade.  

28.

Fearfully the yell arose  
Of his followers, and his foes;  
These in joy, in fury those –  
Then again in conflict mixing,  
Clashing swords, and spears transfixing,  
Interchanged the blow and thrust,  
Hurling warriors in the dust.  
Street by street, and foot by foot,  
Still Minotti dares dispute  
The latest portion of the land  
Left beneath his high command;  
With him, aiding heart and hand,  
The remnant of his gallant band.  
Still the church is tenable,  
Whence issued the fated ball  
That half avenged the city’s fall,  
When Alp, her fierce assailant, fell –  
Thither bending sternly back,  
They leave before a bloody track;  
And, with their faces to the foe,  
Dealing wounds with every blow,  
The chief, and his retreating train,  
Join to those within the fane;  
There they yet may breathe awhile,  
Sheltered by the massy pile.

29.

Brief breathing-time! the turbaned host,  
With added ranks and raging boast,  
Press onwards with such strength and heat,  
Their numbers balk their own retreat;  
For narrow the way that led to the spot  
Where still the Christians yielded not;  
And the foremost, if fearful, may vainly try  
Through the massy column to turn and fly;  
They perforce must do or die.  
They die – but ere their eyes could close,  
Avengers o’er their bodies rose;  
Fresh and furious, fast they fill  
The ranks unthinned, though slaughtered still:  
And faint the weary Christians wax  
Before the still renewed attacks;  
And now the Othmans gain the gate;  
Still resists its iron weight,  
And still, all deadly aimed and hot,  
From every crevice comes the shot.

36: Unreconciled to God. See Hamlet, I, v, 77: Unhous’led, disappointed, uaneled …
From every shattered window pour
The volleys of the sulphurous shower –
But the portal wavering grows and weak –
The iron yields, the hinges creak –
It bends – it falls – and all is o’er;
Lost Corinth may resist no more!

30.

Dark, sternly, and all alone,
Minotti stood o’er the altar stone;
Madonna’s face upon him shone, 37
Painted in heavenly hues above,
With eyes of light and looks of love;
And placed upon that holy shrine
To fix our thoughts on things divine,
When pictured there we kneeling see
Her, and the boy-God on her knee,
Smiling sweetly on each prayer
To Heaven, as if to waft it there.
Still she smiled; even now she smiles,
Though slaughter streams along her aisles:
Minotti lifted his aged eye,
And made the sign of a cross with a sigh,
Then seized a torch which blazed thereby;
And still he stood, while, with steel and flame,
Inward and onward the Mussulman came.

31.

The vaults beneath the mosaic stone
Contained the dead of ages gone –
Their names were on the graven floor,
But now illegible with gore;
The carved crests, and curious hues
The varied marble’s veins diffuse,
Were smeared, and slippery – stained, and strown
With broken swords, and helms o’erthrown;
There were dead above, and the dead below
Lay cold in many a coffined row;
You might see them piled in sable state,
By a pale light through a gloomy grate;
But War had entered their dark caves,
And stored along the vaulted graves
Her sulphurous treasures, thickly spread
In masses by the fleshless dead;
Here, throughout the siege, had been
The Christians’ chiefest magazine;
To these a late-formed train now led,
Minotti’s last and stern resource,
Against the foe’s o’erwhelming force.

37: One of the rare depictions of the Blessed Virgin in B.’s work. Compare Don Juan XIII, stanza 61.
The foe came on, and few remain
To strive, and those must strive in vain –
For lack of further lives, to slake
The thirst of vengeance now awake,
With barbarous blows they gash the dead,
And lop the already lifeless head,
And fell the statues from their niche,
And spoil the shrine of offerings rich,
And from each other’s rude hands wrest
The silver vessels saints had blessed.
To the high altar on they go;
Oh, but it made a glorious show!
On its table still behold
The cup of consecrated gold;
Massy and deep, a glittering prize,
Brightly it sparkles to plunderers’ eyes –
That morn it held the holy wine,
 Converted by Christ to His blood so divine,
To shrive their souls ere they joined in the fray,
Still a few drops within it lay;
And round the sacred table glow
Twelve lofty lamps, in splendid row,
From the purest metal cast;
A spoil – the richest, and the last.

So near they came, the nearest stretched
To grasp the spoil he almost reached,
When old Minotti’s hand
Touched with a torch the train –
’Tis fired!
Spire, vaults, and shrine, the spoil, the slain,
The turbaned victors, the Christian band,
All that of living or dead remain,
Hurled on high with the shivered fane,
In one wild roar expired!
The shattered town – the walls thrown down –
The waves a moment backward bent –
The hills that shake, although unrent,
As if an earthquake passed –
The thousand shapeless things all driven
In cloud and flame athwart the heaven,
By that tremendous blast –
Proclaimed the desperate conflict o’er
On that too long afflicted shore!
Up to the sky like rockets go
All that mingled there below –

38: There are other historical precedents for such an explosion. In 1566 the Hungarian commander of the besieged town of Zsigetvar fired the powder magazine, killing himself and his enemies. On September 26th 1687 the Parthenon suffered the most severe damage in its history when a Venetian ball hit the powder the Turks kept stored there, blowing the roof off. In July 1718, lightning struck the powder magazine in the Venetian fortress on Corfu, destroying it.
Many a tall and goodly man,  
Scorched and shrivelled to a span,  
When he fell to earth again  
Like a cinder strewed the plain;  990
Down the ashes shower like rain;  
Some fell in the gulf, which received the sprinkles  
With a thousand circling wrinkles;  
Some fell on the shore, but, far away,  
Scattered o’er the isthmus lay;  995
Christian or Moslem, which be they?  
Let their mothers see and say!  
When in cradled rest they lay,  
And each nursing mother smiled  
On the sweet sleep of her child,  
Little deemed she such a day  
Would rend those tender limbs away.  
Not the matrons that them bore  
Could discern their offspring more; 39
That one moment left no trace  1000
More of human form or face  
Save a scattered scalp or bone –  
And down came blazing rafters, strown  
Around, and many a falling stone,  
Deeply dinted in the clay,  
All blackened there and reeking lay.  
All the living things that heard  
That deadly earth-shock disappeared.  
The wild birds flew; the wild dogs fled, 40
And howling left the unburied dead;  
The camels from their keepers broke;  
The distant steer forsook the yoke –  
The nearer steed plunged o’er the plain,  
And burst his girth, and tore his rein;  
The bull-frog’s note, from out the marsh,  
Deep-mouthed arose, and doubly harsh;  
The wolves yelled on the caverned hill,  
Where echo rolled in thunder still;  
The jackall’s troop, in gathered cry,*  
Bayed from afar complainingly,  
With mixed and mournful sound,  
Like crying babe, and beaten hound –  

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39: This becomes a favourite Byronic topos: compare Don Juan II, stanza 102; TVOJ, 78. 5-6; or Island, 181-4.
40: A passage from Book XXI of Southey’s Roderick, Last of the Goths runs:
   Far and wide the thundering shout,
   Rolling among reduplicating rocks,
   Peal’d o’er the hills, and up the mountain vales.
   The wild ass starting in the forest glade
   Ran to the covert; the affrighted wolf
   Skulked through the thicket, to a closer brake;
   The sluggish bear, awakened in his den,
   Roused up, and answered with a sullen growl,
   Long-breathed and long; and at the uproar scared
   The brooding eagle from her nest took wing.

However, as with the Christabel borrowing, B. inverts the meaning of his model. Southey’s beasts cannot understand the explosion of human noise (made when a King of Spain is elevated); B.’s wheel in shock at the explosion, but are superior to it, and will survive it.
With sudden wing, and ruffled breast,
The eagle left his rocky nest,
    And mounted nearer to the sun,
    The clouds beneath him seemed so dun;
Their smoke assailed his startled beak,
And made him higher soar and shriek –
    Thus was Corinth lost and won!

* I believe I have taken a poetical license to transplant the jackall from Asia. In Greece I never saw nor heard these animals; but among the ruins of Ephesus I have heard them by hundreds. They haunt ruins, and follow armies.

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41: B. was determined to let the world know that he had seen eagles over Parnassus, and heard jackals howling in the ruins of Ephesus. Hobhouse records neither, and his diary for Tuesday March 13th 1810, as they set off for Ephesus, reads, _Loud croaking of the frogs._
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