

THE ISLAND, OR CHRISTIAN AND HIS COMRADES

edited by Peter Cochran

The Island was written for the new, down-market readership at which Byron aimed after his move from the Tory publisher John Murray to the radical John Hunt. He wrote it at Genoa between January 11th and February 10th 1823, and Hunt published it on June 26th of the same year.

If a distinguished South Pacific poet had written a romance set in far-off Europe, had set it in Germany, and had sprinkled his dialogue with Italian phrases for local colour, he'd be mocked. Byron sets *The Island* in Toboonai (modern Tubuai – rhymes with “spray”) but has his characters bandy phrases and ideas from Tonga – a place further from Tubuai than Germany is from Italy. That he acknowledges the error – in his prose note to Canto II line 1 – does not exonerate him. But Byron is of his time in this respect.

He is also of his class. The poem is, in an English political perspective, conservative and vague. Affecting to be an embroidered account of the mutiny on the *Bounty*, it fudges every issue. For Byron, who had shown himself such a stickler for historical and nautical detail in *Don Juan*, the effect is unfocussed. We do not know the causes of the mutiny, the action of which is too lightly sketched to be interesting; we are not told the extent of the involvement in it of Torquil, Byron's fictional Ossianic hero – that he was not put with Bligh in the famous open boat is no proof that he was a mutineer:¹ several non-mutineers were not placed in Bligh's boat because there wasn't room. Byron – who liked and admired the British Navy – is concerned not be thought of as showing naval mutiny in too sympathetic a light. In any case, he seems only to have known about the mutiny itself from Bligh's 1792 account (see his appendix), and not to have known what became of the surviving mutineers on Pitcairn, though the information was in print. Yet he would have known what happened to the *Pandora*, the ship which came to arrest them, for the story of its wreck on the Great Barrier Reef is one of the narratives in Dalrymple's *Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea*, which he used in *Don Juan* II. He tries, perhaps, to cover the defect by printing a long extract from Bligh's account of the Mutiny: but this gives no perspective on the event except that of Bligh, who feigns to have no understanding of why the mutiny took place, except the allure of idleness and “dissipation” which Tahiti offered.

The effect of the long prose appendix is apologetic. Bligh's prose is supposed to compensate for the gaps in Byron's verse.

Byron wrote about the poem to Leigh Hunt, on July 25th 1823, showing a cavalier indifference:

... I have two things to avoid – the first that of running foul of my own “Corsair” and style – so as to produce repetition and monotony – and the other *not* to run counter to the reigning stupidity altogether – otherwise they will say that I am eulogising *Mutiny*. – This must produce tameness in some degree – but recollect I am merely trying to write a poem a little above the usual run of periodical poesy – and I hope that it will at least be that; – You think higher of readers than I do – but I will bet you a flask of Falernum that the most *stilted* parts of the political “Age of Bronze” – and the most *pamby* portions of the <South Sea> Toobonai Islanders – will be the most agreeable to the enlightened Public; – though I shall sprinkle some *uncommon* place here and there nevertheless. – “Nous verrons” – –²

We could say of *The Island*'s first three cantos what Mr Sneer says of Sir Fretful's play in *The Critic*: “I think it wants incident.” When the chance for exciting narrative comes – as with the mutiny, or with the shoot-out which precedes the start of Canto III – Byron seems uninterested. His decision to use an antiquated style of heroic couplet, rather than the immediacy of ottava rima, keeps everything wrapped-up, cushioned.

The Satanic Fletcher Christian is only portrayed as an afterthought, in the fourth canto – where he is killed by the avenging English, as was not the case with the historical one. Byron's portraits of the poem's working-class characters, Ben Bunting and Jack Skyscape, are patronising. Bunting has in any case nothing to do except be amusing, which he's not.

The poem's best passages come when Canto IV recycles Juan's Canto II fall through a timewarp into an *almost* prelapsarian paradise. Neuha is a natatorial, Polynesian Haidee, who, *not having been raised in*

1: In the famous 1935 film directed by Frank Lloyd, the protagonist is a young, patriotic midshipman played by Franchot Tone, whose anxiety is *not* be found guilty of mutiny and treason. Later films by Lewis Milestone and Roger Donaldson are not so timid.

2: BLJ X 90.

a monotheistic tradition, brings no danger of damnation with her, as Haidee does. Only then, when Christian is killed in battle, the lovers escape and we arrive at her cave, does the story take life.

The manuscript of *The Island* is at Texas. I have not seen it, but have consulted John Hunt's third edition, and those of E.H.Coleridge and Jerome McGann. I have systematised some uppercasings, particularly in the cases of "Wave," "Water," "Love," "Ocean," and "Nature".

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The foundation of the following Story will be found partly in the account of the Mutiny on the Bounty in the South Seas (in 1789) and partly in “Mariner’s Account of the Tonga Islands”.

CANTO THE FIRST.

1.

THE Morning watch was come; the Vessel lay
Her course, and gently made her liquid way;
The cloven billow flashed from off her prow
In furrows formed by that majestic plough;
The Waters with their World were all before; 5
Behind, the South Sea’s many an Islet shore.
The quiet night, now dappling, ’gan to wane,
Dividing darkness from the dawning main;
The Dolphins, not unconscious of the day,
Swam high, as eager of the coming ray; 10
The stars from broader beams began to creep,
And lift their shining eyelids from the deep;
The Sail resumed its lately shadowed white,
And the Wind fluttered with a freshening flight;
The purpling Ocean owns the coming Sun, 15
But ere he break – a deed is to be done.

2.

The gallant Chief³ within his Cabin slept,
Secure in those by whom the watch was kept:
His dreams were of Old England’s welcome shore,
Of toils rewarded, and of dangers o’er; 20
His name was added to the glorious roll
Of those who search the Storm-surrounded Pole.
The worst was over, and the rest seemed sure,
And why should not his Slumber be secure?
Alas! his deck was trod by unwilling feet, 25
And wilder hands would hold the Vessel’s sheet;
Young hearts, which languished for some sunny isle,
Where Summer years and Summer women smile;
Men without country,⁴ who, too long estranged,
Had found no native home, or found it changed, 30
And, half uncivilised, preferred the cave
Of some soft savage to the uncertain Wave –
The gushing fruits that Nature gave untilled;⁵
The wood without a path – but where they willed;
The field o’er which promiscuous Plenty poured 35
Her horn; the equal land without a lord;
The wish – which ages have not yet subdued

3: Captain Bligh.

4: Citizens of the world, like B.

5: As before the Fall.

In man – to have no master save his mood.
 The Earth, whose mine was on its face, unsold,
 The glowing Sun and produce all its gold; 40
 The Freedom which can call each grot a home;
 The general garden, where all steps may roam,
 Where Nature owns a nation as her child,
 Exulting in the enjoyment of the wild;
 Their shells, their fruits, the only wealth they know, 45
 Their unexploring navy, the canoe;
 Their sport, the dashing breakers and the chase;
 Their strangest sight, an European face: –
 Such was the country which these strangers yearned
 To see again – a sight they dearly earned. 50

3.

Awake, bold Bligh! the foe is at the gate!
 Awake! awake! — Alas! it is too late!
 Fiercely beside thy cot the mutineer
 Stands, and proclaims the reign of rage and fear.
 Thy limbs are bound, the bayonet at thy breast; 55
 The hands, which trembled at thy voice, arrest;
 Dragged o’er the deck, no more at thy command
 The obedient helm shall veer, the Sail expand;
 That savage Spirit, which would lull by wrath
 Its desperate escape from Duty’s path,⁶ 60
 Glares round thee, in the scarce believing eyes
 Of those who fear the Chief they sacrifice:
 For ne’er can Man his conscience all assuage,
 Unless he drain the wine of Passion – Rage.

4.

In vain, not silenced by the eye of Death, 65
 Thou call’st the loyal with thy menaced breath;
 They come not; they are few, and, overawed,
 Must acquiesce, while sterner hearts applaud.
 In vain thou dost demand the cause: a curse
 Is all the answer, with the threat of worse. 70
 Full in thine eyes is waved the glittering blade,
 Close to thy throat the pointed bayonet laid,
 The levelled muskets circle round thy breast
 In hands as steeled to do the deadly rest.
 Thou dar’st them to their worst, exclaiming – “Fire!” 75
 But they who pitied not could yet admire;
 Some lurking remnant of their former awe
 Restrained them longer than their broken law;
 They would not dip their souls at once in blood,
 But left thee to the mercies of the flood. 80

5.

“Hoist out the boat!” was now the leader’s cry;
 And who dare answer “No!” to Mutiny,

6: A more conservative version of those in Part II who are nostalgic for a prelapsarian life.

In the first dawning of the drunken hour,
 The Saturnalia of unhoped-for power?
 The boat is lowered with all the haste of hate, 85
 With its slight plank between thee and thy fate;
 Her only cargo such a scant supply
 As promises the death their hands deny;
 And just enough of Water and of bread
 To keep, some days, the dying from the dead: 90
 Some cordage, canvass, Sails, and lines, and twine,
 But treasures all to Hermits of the brine,
 Were added after, to the earnest prayer
 Of those who saw no hope, save Sea and air;
 And last, that trembling vassal of the Pole – 95
 The feeling compass – Navigation’s Soul.

6.

And now the self-elected Chief⁷ finds time
 To stun the first sensation of his crime,
 And raise it in his followers – “Ho! the bowl!”
 Lest passion should return to reason’s shoal. 100
 “Brandy for heroes!” Burke could once exclaim –⁸
 No doubt a liquid path to Epic fame;
 And such the new-born heroes found it here,
 And drained the draught with an applauding cheer,
 “Huzza! for Otaheite!” was the cry; 105
 How strange such shouts from sons of Mutiny!
 The gentle island, and the genial soil,
 The friendly hearts, the feasts without a toil,
 The courteous manners but from Nature caught,
 The wealth unhoarded, and the Love unbought; 110
 Could these have charms for rudest sea-boys, driven
 Before the mast by every Wind of Heaven?
 And now, even now prepared with others’ woes
 To earn mild Virtue’s vain desire, repose?
 Alas! such is our nature! all but aim 115
 At the same end by pathways not the same;
 Our means, our birth, our nation, and our name,
 Our fortune, temper, even our outward frame,
 Are far more potent o’er our yielding clay
 Than aught we know beyond our little day. 120
 Yet still there whispers the small voice within,
 Heard through Gain’s silence, and o’er Glory’s din:
 Whatever creed be taught, or land be trod,
 Man’s conscience is the Oracle of God!

7.

The launch is crowded with the faithful few 125
 Who wait their Chief, a melancholy crew:
 But some remained reluctant on the deck

7: Fletcher Christian.

8: It was in fact Johnson who exclaimed this: “He was persuaded to drink one glass of it (claret). He shook his head, and said, ‘Poor stuff! – No, Sir, claret is the liquor for boys; port for men; but he who aspires to be a hero (smiling,) must drink brandy.’” – Boswell’s *Life of Johnson*, 1904, p. 286.

Of that proud Vessel – now a moral wreck –
 And viewed their Captain’s fate with piteous eyes;
 While others scoffed his augured miseries, 130
 Sneered at the prospect of his pigmy Sail,
 And the slight bark so laden and so frail.
 The tender Nautilus, who steers his prow,
 The sea-born sailor of his shell canoe,
 The Ocean Mab, the fairy of the Sea, 135
 Seems far less fragile, and, alas! more free!
 He, when the lightning-winged Tornados sweep
 The surge, is safe – his port is in the deep –
 And triumphs o’er the Armadas of Mankind,
 Which shake the World, yet crumble in the Wind. 140

8.

When all was now prepared, the Vessel clear
 Which hailed her master in the mutineer,
 A seaman, less obdurate than his mates,
 Showed the vain pity which but irritates;
 Watched his late Chieftain with exploring eye, 145
 And told, in signs, repentant sympathy;
 Held the moist shaddock⁹ to his parched mouth,
 Which felt Exhaustion’s deep and bitter drouth.
 But soon observed, this guardian was withdrawn,
 Nor further Mercy clouds Rebellion’s dawn. 150
 Then forward stepped the bold and froward boy
 His Chief had cherished only to destroy,
 And, pointing to the helpless prow beneath,
 Exclaimed, “Depart at once! delay is death!”
 Yet then, even then, his feelings ceased not all: 155
 In that last moment could a word recall
 Remorse for the black deed as yet half done,
 And what he hid from many shewed to one:
 When Bligh in stern reproach demanded where
 Was now his grateful sense of former care? 160
 Where all his hopes to see his name aspire,
 And blazon Britain’s thousand glories higher?
 His feverish lips thus broke their gloomy spell,
 “’Tis that! ’Tis that! I am in Hell! in Hell!”¹⁰
 No more he said; but urging to the bark 165
 His Chief, commits him to his fragile ark;
 These the sole accents from his tongue that fell,
 But volumes lurked below his fierce farewell.

9.

The arctic¹¹ Sun rose broad above the Wave;
 The breeze now sank, now whispered from his cave; 170
 As on the Aeolian harp, his fitful wings

9: A shaddock is a pear-shaped fruit; the word does not occur in *Mariner*, but does occur in Bligh’s account of the mutiny (see Appendix).

10: Christian’s exact words may have been, “It is too late Captain Bligh, I have been forced through hell these past three weeks”. But B. prefers the economy version, which comes from Bligh’s narrative, and prepares the reader for the Heaven over which Neuha presides.

11: Antarctic, surely?

Now swelled, now fluttered o'er his Ocean strings.
 With slow, despairing oar, the abandoned skiff
 Ploughs its drear progress to the scarce-seen cliff,
 Which lifts its peak a cloud above the main: 175
That boat and ship shall never meet again!
 But 'tis not mine to tell their tale of grief,
 Their constant peril, and their scant relief;
 Their days of danger, and their nights of pain;
 Their manly courage even when deemed in vain; 180
 The sapping famine, rendering scarce a son
 Known to his mother in the skeleton;¹²
 The ills that lessened still their little store,
 And starved even Hunger till he wrung no more;
 The varying frowns and favours of the deep, 185
 That now almost ingulphs, then leaves to creep
 With crazy oar and shattered strength along
 The tide that yields reluctant to the strong;
 The incessant fever of that arid thirst
 Which welcomes, as a well, the clouds that burst 190
 Above their naked bones, and feels delight
 In the cold drenching of the stormy night,
 And from the outspread canvass gladly wrings
 A drop to moisten Life's all-gasping springs;
 The savage foe escaped, to seek again 195
 More hospitable shelter from the main;
 The ghastly Spectres which were doomed at last
 To tell as true a tale of dangers past,
 As ever the dark annals of the deep
 Disclosed for man to dread or woman weep. 200

10.

We leave them to their fate, but not unknown
 Nor unredrest! Revenge may have her own:
 Roused Discipline aloud proscribes their cause,
 And injured Navies urge their broken laws. 205
 Pursue we on his track the mutineer,
 Whom distant vengeance had not taught to fear.
 Wide o'er the Wave – away! away! away!
 Once more his eyes shall hail the welcome bay;
 Once more the happy shores without a law
 Receive the outlaws whom they lately saw; 210
 Nature, and Nature's Goddess – Woman – woos
 To lands where, save their conscience, none accuse;
 Where all partake the earth without dispute,
 And bread itself is gathered as a fruit; *
 Where none contest the fields, the woods, the streams: 215
 The Goldless Age, where Gold disturbs no dreams,
 Inhabits or inhabited the shore,
 Till Europe taught them better than before;

12: Compare *Don Juan II*, 102, 1-4:

*Famine, Despair, Cold, Thirst and Heat, had done
 Their work on them by turns, and thinned them to
 Such things a Mother had not known her Son
 Amidst the Skeletons of that gaunt Crew ...*

Bestowed her customs, and amended theirs,
 But left her vices also to their heirs. 220
 Away with this! behold them as they were,
 Do good with Nature, or with Nature err.
 “Huzza! for Otaheite!” was the cry,
 As stately swept the gallant Vessel by.
 The breeze springs up; the lately flapping Sail 225
 Extends its arch before the growing gale;
 In swifter ripples stream aside the Seas,
 Which her bold bow flings off with dashing ease.
 Thus Argo ploughed the Euxine’s¹³ virgin foam,
 But those she wafted still looked back to home – 230
 These spurn their country with their rebel bark,
 And fly her as the raven fled the Ark;
 And yet they seek to nestle with the dove,
 And tame their fiery spirits down to Love.

* The now celebrated bread fruit, to transplant which Captain Bligh’s expedition was undertaken.

END OF CANTO FIRST.

13: The Euxine is the Black Sea, crossed by Jason on his quest for the Golden Fleece. See *Don Juan* V, 5, 7-8.

CANTO THE SECOND.

1.

HOW pleasant were the songs of Toobonai,¹⁴ *
When Summer's Sun went down the coral bay!
Come, let us to the islet's softest shade,
And hear the warbling birds! the damsels said:
The wood-dove from the forest depth shall coo, 5
Like voices of the Gods from Bolotoo;¹⁵
We'll cull the flowers that grow above the dead,
For these most bloom where rests the warrior's head;
And we will sit in Twilight's face, and see
The sweet Moon glancing through the Tooa tree,¹⁶ 10
The lofty accents of whose sighing bough
Shall sadly please us as we lean below;
Or climb the steep, and view the surf in vain
Wrestle with rocky giants o'er the main,
Which spurn in columns back the baffled spray. 15
How beautiful are these! how happy they,
Who, from the toil and tumult of their lives,
Steal to look down where nought but Ocean strives!
Even He too loves at times the blue lagoon,
And smoothes his ruffled mane beneath the Moon. 20

* The first three sections are taken from an actual song at the Tonga Islanders, of which a prose translation is given in Mariner's Account of the Tonga Islands. Toobonai is *not* however one of them; but was one of those where Christian and the mutineers took refuge. I have altered and added, but have retained as much as possible of the original.¹⁷

14: Toobonai. The Tubuai Islands are several hundred miles east of Tonga, to the south of the Society Islands, and of Tahiti. Tubuai is the name of the main island. Missionaries arrived in 1822 (the year before B. wrote this poem) and by the end of the century the population was down to three hundred. It recovered, and is now about three thousand. The island is an HQ for Mormons; credit cards are not accepted.

15: In his account of Tongan religion, Mariner writes, "... mankind, according to a partial tradition, first came from Bolotoo, the residence of the gods, an island to the north-westward, and resided at the Tonga islands, by command of Tangaloo: they consisted of two brothers, with their wives and attendants, whose original they pretend to know nothing about ... all egi or nobles have souls, which exist hereafter in Bolotoo, not according to their moral merit, but their rank in this world." – *An Account of The Natives of the Tonga Islands, in the South Pacific Ocean ... compiled and arranged from the extensive communications of Mr. William Mariner by John Martin, M.D.* (1817), II, 104-5. Tubuai being distinct from Tonga, the Tongan words B. takes from Mariner are inappropriate.

16: Toogas were "a lower order of people" (Mariner II, 136). B. intends toa, a tall, broad tree (Mariner I, 302).

17: B.'s source for the song is as follows:

SONG.

Whilst we were talking of *Vaváoo tooóá Lico*, the women said to us, let us repair to the back of the island to contemplate the setting sun: there let us listen to the warbling of the birds, and the cooing of the wood-pigeon. We will gather flowers from the burying-place at *Matáwto*, and partake of refreshments prepared for us at *Lico O'në*: we will then bathe in the sea, and rinse ourselves in the *Váoo A'ca*; we will anoint our skins in the sun with sweet scented oil, and will plait in wreaths the flowers gathered at *Matáwto*. And now as we stand motionless on the eminence over *Anoo Mánoo*, the whistling of the wind among the branches of the lofty *toa* shall fill us with a pleasing melancholy; or our minds shall be seized with astonishment as we behold the roaring surf below, endeavouring but in vain to tear away the firm rocks. Oh! how much happier shall we be thus employed, than when engaged in the troublesome and insipid cares of life!

Now, as night comes on, we must return to the *Moóá*:—But hark!—hear you not the sound of the mats?—they are practising a *bo-oóla* [*note*: A kind of dance performed by torch-light] to be performed to-night on the marly at *Tanéa*; let us also go there. How will that scene of rejoicing call to our minds the many festivals held there, before *Vaváoo* was torn to pieces by war. Alas! how destructive is war!—Behold! how it has rendered the land productive of weeds, and opened untimely graves for departed heroes! Our chiefs can now no longer enjoy the sweet pleasure of wandering alone by moonlight in search of their mistresses: but let us banish sorrow from our hearts: since we are

2.

Yes – from the sepulchre we'll gather flowers,
 Then feast like spirits in their promised bowers,
 Then plunge and revel in the rolling surf
 Then lay our limbs along the tender turf,
 And, wet and shining from the sportive toil, 25
 Anoint our bodies with the fragrant oil,
 And plait our garlands gathered from the grave,
 And wear the wreaths that sprung from out the brave.
 But lo! night comes, the Mooa woos us back,¹⁸
 The sound of mats are heard along our track; 30
 Anon the torchlight dance shall fling its sheen
 In flashing mazes o'er the Marly's green;¹⁹
 And we too will be there; we too recall
 The memory bright with many a festival,
 Ere Fiji blew the shell of war, when foes 35
 For the first time were wafted in canoes.
 Alas! for them the flower of Manhood bleeds;
 Alas! for them our fields are rank with weeds:
 Forgotten is the rapture, or unknown,
 Of wandering with the Moon and Love alone. 40
 But be it so: – *they* taught us how to wield
 The club, and rain our arrows o'er the field:
 Now let them reap the harvest of their art!
 But feast to-night! to-morrow we depart.
 Strike up the dance! the Cava bowl fill high!²⁰ 45
 Drain every drop! – to-morrow we may die.
 In Summer garments be our limbs arrayed;
 Around our waists the Tappa's white displayed;²¹
 Thick wreaths shall form our Coronals, like Spring's,
 And round our necks shall glance the Hooni strings;²² 50
 So shall their brighter hues contrast the glow
 Of the dusk bosoms that beat high below.

3.

But now the dance is o'er – yet stay awhile;
 Ah, pause! nor yet put out the social smile.
 To-morrow for the Mooa we depart, 55

at war, we must think and act like the natives of *Fiji*, who first taught us this destructive art. Let us therefore enjoy the present time, for to-morrow perhaps or the next day we may die. We will dress ourselves with *chi coola*, and put bands of white *tappa* round our waists; we will plait thick wreaths of *jiále* for our heads, and prepare strings of *hooni* for our necks, that their whiteness may show off the colour of our skins. Mark how the uncultivated spectators are profuse of their applause!—But now the dance is over: let us remain here to-night, and feast and be cheerful, and to-morrow we will depart for the *Mooa*. How troublesome are the young men, begging for our wreaths of flowers, while they say in their flattery, ‘See how charming these young girls look coming from *Licoo*!—how beautiful are their skins, diffusing around a fragrance like the flowering precipice of *Mataloco*:’—Let us also visit *Licoo*. We will depart to-morrow” (Mariner I, 307-8.)

18: A mooa was the capital of an island, or the rank in society below a mataboole (Mariner II, Vocabulary).

19: A marly (malai) was an open grass plat, set aside for public ceremonies; each large island had several (Mariner II, Vocabulary).

20: “The root which they term cáva, and by which name the plant producing it is also called, belongs to a species of the pepper plant ... it is drunk every day by chiefs, matabooles, and others, as a luxury ...” (Mariner II, 183.)

21: Tappa (tapa) was the substance from the mulberry, from which gnatoo was made (Mariner II, Vocabulary).

22: Hooni is something from which necklaces are made (see note to Byron's note to line 1).

But not to-night – to-night is for the heart.
 Again bestow the wreaths we gently woo,
 Ye young Enchantresses of gay Licoo!²³
 How lovely are your forms! how every sense
 Bows to your beauties, softened, but intense, 60
 Like to the flowers on Mataloco's steep,²⁴
 Which fling their fragrance far athwart the deep! –
 We too will see Licoo; but – oh! my heart! –
 What do I say? – to-morrow we depart!

4.

Thus rose a song – the harmony of times 65
 Before the Winds blew Europe o'er these climes.
 True, they had vices – such are Nature's growth –
 But only the Barbarian's – we have both;
 The sordor of civilisation, mixed
 With all the savage which Man's fall hath fixed. 70
 Who hath not seen Dissimulation's reign,
 The prayers of Abel linked to deeds of Cain?²⁵
 Who such would see, may from his lattice view
 The Old World more degraded than the New, –
 Now *new* no more, save where Columbia rears 75
 Twin giants, born by Freedom to her spheres,
 Where Chimborazo, over air – earth – Wave –²⁶
 Glares with his Titan eye, and sees no slave.

5.

Such was this ditty of Tradition's days,
 Which to the dead a lingering fame conveys 80
 In song, where Fame as yet hath left no sign
 Beyond the sound whose charm is half divine;
 Which leaves no record to the sceptic eye,
 But yields young History all to Harmony;
 A boy Achilles, with the Centaur's lyre 85
 In hand, to teach him to surpass his sire.
 For one long-cherished ballad's simple stave,
 Rung from the rock, or mingled with the Wave,
 Or from the bubbling streamlet's grassy side,
 Or gathering mountain echoes as they glide, 90
 Hath greater power o'er each true heart and ear,
 Than all the columns Conquest's minions rear;
 Invites, when Hieroglyphics are a theme
 For sages' labours, or the student's dream;
 Attracts, when History's volumes are a toil, – 95
 The first, the freshest bud of Feeling's soil.
 Such was this rude rhyme – rhyme is of the rude –
 But such inspired the Norseman's solitude,
 Who came and conquered; such, wherever rise
 Lands which no foes destroy or civilize, 100

23: Licoo is a word occurring in the song, above: Mariner does not define it. It seems to be a place-name, as does

24: Mataloco: see previous note. Both words occur in another song transcribed at Mariner II, 335, where their meanings remain unclear.

25: Implies Abel to be a hypocrite, not, as in B.'s play, a pious dullard.

26: Chimborazo is a volcano in Ecuador; B. refers to South American revolutions against the Spanish.

Exist: and what can our accomplished art
Of verse do more than reach the awakened heart?

6.

And sweetly now those untaught melodies
Broke the luxurious silence of the skies,
The sweet siesta of a Summer day, 105
The tropic afternoon of Toobonai,
When every flower was bloom, and air was balm,
And the first breath began to stir the palm,
The first yet voiceless Wind to urge the Wave
All gently to refresh the thirsty cave, 110
Where sat the Songstress with the stranger boy,
Who taught her Passion's desolating joy,
Too powerful over every heart, but most
O'er those who know not how it may be lost;
O'er those who, burning in the new-born fire, 115
Like martyrs revel in their funeral pyre,
With such devotion to their extacy,
That Life knows no such rapture as to die:
And die they do; for earthly life has nought
Matched with that burst of Nature, even in thought; 120
And all our dreams of better life above
But close in one eternal gush of Love.

7.

There sat the gentle savage of the wild,
In growth a woman, though in years a child,
As childhood dates within our colder clime, 125
Where nought is ripened rapidly save crime;
The infant of an infant World, as pure
From Nature – lovely, warm, and premature;²⁷
Dusky like Night, but Night with all her stars;
Or cavern sparkling with its native spars; 130
With eyes that were a language and a spell,
A form like Aphrodite's in her shell,
With all her loves around her on the deep,
Voluptuous as the first approach of sleep;
Yet full of life – for through her tropic cheek 135
The blush would make its way, and all but speak;
The Sun-born blood suffused her neck, and threw
O'er her clear nut-brown skin a lucid hue,
Like coral reddening through the darkened Wave,
Which draws the diver to the crimson cave. 140
Such was this daughter of the Southern Seas,
Herself a billow in her energies,
To bear the bark of others' happiness,
Nor feel a sorrow till their joy grew less:

27: Compare *Don Juan*, II, 201, 1-4:

*Haidee was Nature's bride, and knew not this;
Haidee was Passion's Child, born where the Sun
Showers triple light and scorches even the kiss
Of his Gazelle-eyed daughters ...*

Her wild and warm yet faithful bosom knew 145
 No joy like what it gave; her hopes ne'er drew
 Aught from Experience, that chill touchstone, whose
 Sad proof reduces all things from their hues:
 She feared no ill, because she knew it not,
 Or what she knew was soon – too soon – forgot:²⁸ 150
 Her smiles and tears had passed, as light Winds pass
 O'er lakes to ruffle, not destroy, their glass,
 Whose depths unsearched, and fountains from the hill,
 Restore their surface, in itself so still,
 Until the Earthquake tear the Naiad's cave, 155
 Root up the spring, and trample on the Wave,
 And crush the living Waters to a mass,
 The amphibious desart of the dank morass!
 And must their fate be hers? The eternal change
 But grasps Humanity with quicker range; 160
 And they who fall but fall as Worlds will fall,
 To rise, if just, a Spirit o'er them all.

8.

And who is he? the blue-eyed northern child
 Of isles more known to man, but scarce less wild;
 The fair-haired offspring of the Hebrides, 165
 Where roars the Pentland with its whirling Seas;
 Rocked in his cradle by the roaring Wind,
 The tempest-born in body and in mind,
 His young eyes opening on the Ocean-foam,
 Had from that moment deemed the deep his home, 170
 The giant comrade of his pensive moods,
 The sharer of his craggy solitudes,
 The only Mentor of his youth, where'er
 His bark was borne; the sport of Wave and air;
 A careless thing, who placed his choice in chance, 175
 Nursed by the legends of his land's romance;
 Eager to hope, but not less firm to bear,
 Acquainted with all feelings save despair.
 Placed in the Arab's clime, he would have been
 As bold a rover as the sands have seen, 180
 And braved their thirst with as enduring lip
 As Ishmael, wafted on his desart-ship; *
 Fixed upon Chili's shore, a proud Cacique;²⁹
 On Hellas' mountains, a rebellious Greek;
 Born in a tent, perhaps a Tamerlane;³⁰ 185
 Bred to a throne, perhaps unfit to reign.

28: Compare *Don Juan*, II, stanza 190:

*Haidee Spoke not of Scruples, asked no vows,
 Nor offered any; She had never heard
 Of plight, and promises to be a Spouse,
 Or perils by a loving Maid incurred;
 She was all which pure Ignorance allows,
 And flew to her young Mate like a young bird;
 And, never having dreamt of falsehood, She
 Had not one word to say of Constancy. - - -*

29: B.'s grandfather had encountered a Chilean Cacique (tribal ruler) during his shipwreck in the early 1740s.

30: Tamerlane (1336-1405) medieval Tatar conqueror.

For the same soul that rends its path to sway,
 If reared to such, can find no further prey
 Beyond itself, and must retrace its way, †
 Plunging for pleasure into pain: the same 190
 Spirit which made a Nero, Rome's worst shame,
 A humbler state and discipline of heart,
 Had formed his glorious namesake's counterpart; ‡
 But grant his vices, grant them all his own,
 How small their theatre without a throne! 195

* The "ship of the desert" is the Oriental figure for the camel or dromedary; and they deserve the metaphor well, the former for his endurance, the latter for his swiftness.

† "Lucullus, when frugality could charm,
 Had roasted turnips in the Sabine farm."
 Pope.³¹

‡ The consul Nero, who made the unequalled march which deceived Hannibal, and defeated Asdrubal;³² thereby accomplishing an achievement almost unrivalled in military annals. The first intelligence of his return, to Hannibal, was the sight of Asdrubal's head thrown into his camp. When Hannibal saw this, he exclaimed with a sigh, that "Rome would now be the mistress of the world." And yet to this victory of Nero's it might be owing that his imperial namesake reigned at all. But the infamy of one has eclipsed the glory of the other. When the name of "Nero" is heard, who thinks of the consul? – But such are human things!

9.

Thou smilest, – these comparisons seem high
 To those who scan all things with dazzled eye;
 Linked with the unknown name of one whose doom
 Has nought to do with glory or with Rome,
 With Chili, Hellas, or with Araby; 200
 Thou smilest? – Smile; 'tis better thus than sigh;
 Yet such he might have been; he was a man,
 A soaring spirit, ever in the van,
 A patriot hero or despotic Chief, 205
 To form a nation's glory or its grief,
 Born under auspices which make us more
 Or less than we delight to ponder o'er.
 But these are visions; say, what was he here?
 A blooming boy, a truant mutineer.
 The fair-haired Torquil, free as Ocean's spray, 210
 The husband of the bride of Toobonai.³³

10.

By Neuha's side he sate, and watched the Waters, –³⁴
 Neuha, the Sun-flower of the Island daughters,
 Highborn, (a birth at which the herald smiles,

31: Pope, *Epistle to Cobham*, 218-9.

32: Nero was consul with his political enemy Livius Salinator, in 207 BC. Reconciled, the consuls defeated Hasdrubal at Metaurus. Nero had the head of Hasdrubal thrown into Hannibal's camp (see Livy XXVII.50 and XXVIII.9).

33: Torquil is a fictional hero. No-one aboard the *Bounty* had such a name.

34: B. gets the word "Neuha" from Mariner, where it occurs several times: Neuha is an island from which certain war-dances and games originate (I, 73, II, 331); Toobó Neuha is a Tongan tribal chief (I, 77); Fucca Neuha, on the other hand, is a style of singing (II, 333-4). However, it is never a female name.

Without a scutcheon for these secret isles,) 215
 Of a long race, the valiant and the free,
 The naked knights of savage chivalry,
 Whose grassy cairns ascend along the shore;
 And thine – I've seen – Achilles! do no more.
 She, when the thunder-bearing strangers came, 220
 In vast canoes, begirt with bolts of flame,
 Topped with tall trees, which, loftier than the palm,
 Seemed rooted in the deep amidst its calm:
 But when the Winds awakened, shot forth wings
 Broad as the cloud along the horizon flings, 225
 And swayed the Waves, like cities of the Sea,
 Making the very billows look less free; –
 She, with her paddling oar and dancing prow,
 Shot through the surf, like reindeer through the snow,
 Swift-gliding o'er the breakers whitening edge, 230
 Light as a Nereid in her Ocean sledge,
 And gazed and wondered at the giant hulk,
 Which heaved from Wave to Wave its trampling bulk.
 The anchor dropped; it lay along the deep,
 Like a huge lion in the Sun asleep, 235
 While round it swarmed the Proas' flitting chain,³⁵
 Like Summer bees that hum around his mane.

11.

The white man landed! – need the rest be told?
 The New World stretched its dusk hand to the Old;
 Each was to each a marvel, and the tie 240
 Of wonder warmed to better sympathy.
 Kind was the welcome of the Sun-born sires,
 And kinder still their daughters' gentler fires.
 Their union grew: the children of the storm
 Found beauty linked with many a dusky form; 245
 While these in turn admired the paler glow,
 Which seemed so white in climes that knew no snow.
 The chace, the race, the liberty to roam,
 The soil where every cottage showed a home;
 The Sea-spread net, the lightly-launched canoe, 250
 Which stemmed the studded Archipelago,
 O'er whose blue bosom rose the starry isles;
 The healthy slumber, earned by sportive toils;
 The palm, the loftiest Dryad of the woods,
 Within whose bosom infant Bacchus broods, 255
 While eagles scarce build higher than the crest
 Which shadows o'er the vineyard in her breast;
 The Cava feast, the Yam, the Cocoa's root,
 Which bears at once the cup, and milk, and fruit;
 The Bread-tree, which, without the ploughshare, yields 260
 The unreaped harvest of unfurrowed fields,
 And bakes its unadulterated loaves
 Without a furnace in unpurchased groves,
 And flings off famine from its fertile breast,
 A priceless market for the gathering guest; – 265

35: The word proa is Malay, not Polynesian. It means rowing or sailing boat.

These, with the luxuries of Seas and woods,
 The airy joys of social solitudes,
 Tamed each rude Wanderer to the sympathies
 Of those who were more happy, if less wise,
 Did more than Europe's discipline had done, 270
 And civilised Civilization's son!

12.

Of these, and there was many a willing pair,
 Neuha and Torquil were not the least fair:
 Both children of the isles, though distant far;
 Both born beneath a Sea-presiding star; 275
 Both nourished amidst Nature's native scenes,
 Loved to the last, whatever intervenes
 Between us and our Childhood's sympathy,
 Which still reverts to what first caught the eye.
 He who first met the Highlands' swelling blue, 280
 Will love each peak that shows a kindred hue,
 Hail in each crag a friend's familiar face,
 And clasp the mountain in his Mind's embrace.
 Long have I roamed through lands which are not mine,
 Adored the Alp, and loved the Apennine, 285
 Revered Parnassus, and beheld the steep
 Jove's Ida and Olympus crown the deep:
 But 'twas not all long ages' lore, nor all
Their nature held me in their thrilling thrall;
 The infant rapture still survived the boy, 290
 And Loch-na-gar³⁶ with Ida looked o'er Troy, *
 Mixed Celtic memories with the Phrygian mount,
 And Highland linns³⁷ with Castalie's clear fount.³⁸
 Forgive me, Homer's universal shade!
 Forgive me, Phoebus! that my fancy strayed; 295
 The North and Nature taught me to adore
 Your scenes sublime, from those beloved before.

* When very young, about eight years of age, after an attack of the scarlet fever at Aberdeen, I was removed by medical advice into the Highlands. Here I passed occasionally some summers, and from this period I date my love of mountainous countries. I can never forget the effect a few years afterwards in England, of the only thing I had long seen, even in miniature, of a mountain, in the Malvern Hills. After I returned to Cheltenham, I used to watch them every afternoon, at sunset, with a sensation which I cannot describe. This was boyish enough; but I was then only thirteen years of age, and it was in the holidays.³⁹

13.

The Love which maketh all things fond and fair,
 The youth which makes one rainbow of the air,
 The dangers past, that make even Man enjoy 300
 The pause in which he ceases to destroy,
 The mutual beauty, which the sternest feel
 Strike to their hearts like lightning to the steel,

36: Loch-na-Gar, mountain in Scotland which B. celebrates in his early poem *Lachin Y Gair*.

37: A linn is a waterfall.

38: The Castalian spring is on Mount Parnassus in Greece. A mouthful gives poetic inspiration.

39: Compare BLJ IX 87.

United the half savage and the whole,
 The maid and boy, in one absorbing soul. 305
 No more the thundering memory of the fight
 Wrapped his weaned bosom in its dark delight;
 No more the irksome restlessness of Rest
 Disturbed him like the eagle in her nest,
 Whose whetted beak and far-pervading eye 310
 Darts for a victim over all the sky:
 His heart was tamed to that voluptuous state,
 At once Elysian and effeminate,
 Which leaves no laurels o'er the Hero's urn;
 These wither when for aught save blood they burn; 315
 Yet when their ashes in their nook are laid,
 Doth not the myrtle leave as sweet a shade?
 Had Cæsar known but Cleopatra's kiss,
 Rome had been free, the World had not been his.
 And what have Cæsar's deeds and Cæsar's fame 320
 Done for the earth? We feel them in our shame.
 The gory sanction of his Glory stains
 The rust which tyrants cherish on our chains.
 Though Glory, Nature, Reason, Freedom, bid
 Roused millions do what single Brutus did, – 325
 Sweep these mere mock-birds of the Despot's song
 From the tall bough where they have perched so long, –
 Still are we hawked at by such mousing owls,⁴⁰
 And take for falcons those ignoble fowls,
 When but a word of freedom would dispel 330
 These bugbears, as their terrors show too well.

14.

Rapt in the fond forgetfulness of life,
 Neuha, the South Sea girl, was all a wife,
 With no distracting World to call her off
 From Love; with no Society to scoff 335
 At the new transient flame;⁴¹ no babbling crowd
 Of coxcomby in admiration loud,
 Or with adulterous whisper to alloy
 Her duty, and her glory, and her joy:
 With faith and feelings naked as her form, 340
 She stood as stands a rainbow in a storm,
 Changing its hues with bright variety,
 But still expanding lovelier o'er the sky,
 Howe'er its arch may swell, its colours move,
 The cloud-compelling harbinger of Love. 345

15.

40: *Macbeth*, II iv 13.

41: Mariner reports: "As to those women who are not actually married, they may bestow their favours upon whomsoever they please, without any opprobrium: it must not, however, be supposed, that these women are always easily won; the greatest attentions and most fervent solicitations are sometimes requisite, even though there be no other lover in the way. This happens sometimes from a spirit of coquetry, at other times from a dislike to the party, &c. It is thought shameful for a woman *frequently* to change her lover. Great presents are by no means certain methods of gaining her favours, and consequently they are more frequently made afterwards than before. Gross prostitution is not known among them" (*Mariner II*, 174-5).

Here, in this grotto of the Wave-worn shore,
 They passed the Tropic's red meridian o'er;
 Nor long the hours – they never paused o'er time,
 Unbroken by the clock's funereal chime,
 Which deals the daily pittance of our span, 350
 And points and mocks with iron laugh at man.
 What deemed they of the future or the past?
 The present, like a tyrant, held them fast:
 Their hour-glass was the Sea-sand, and the tide,
 Like her smooth billow, saw their moments glide; 355
 Their clock the Sun, in his unbounded tower;
 They reckoned not, whose day was but an hour;
 The nightingale, their only vesper-bell,
 Sung sweetly to the rose the day's farewell; *
 The broad Sun set, but not with lingering sweep, 360
 As in the North he mellows o'er the deep;
 But fiery, full, and fierce, as if he left
 The World for ever, earth of light bereft,
 Plunged with red forehead down along the Wave,
 As dives a hero headlong to his grave. 365
 Then rose they, looking first along the skies,
 And then for light into each other's eyes,
 Wondering that Summer showed so brief a Sun,
 And asking if indeed the day were done?⁴²

* The now well-known story of the loves of the nightingale and rose need not be more than alluded to, being sufficiently familiar to the Western as to the Eastern reader.⁴³

16.

And let not this seem strange: the devotee 370
 Lives not in earth, but in his ecstasy;
 Around him days and Worlds are heedless driven,
 His Soul is gone before his dust to Heaven.
 Is Love less potent? No – his path is trod,
 Alike uplifted gloriously to God; 375
 Or linked to all we know of Heaven below,
 The other better self, whose joy or woe
 Is more than ours; the all-absorbing flame
 Which, kindled by another, grows the same,
 Wrapt in one blaze; the pure, yet funeral pile, 380
 Where gentle hearts, like Bramins, sit and smile.⁴⁴
 How often we forget all time, when lone,
 Admiring Nature's universal throne,
 Her woods – her wilds – her Waters – the intense
 Reply of *hers* to our intelligence! 385
 Live not the Stars and Mountains? Are the Waves
 Without a spirit? Are the dropping caves
 Without a feeling in their silent tears?
 No, no; – they woo and clasp us to their spheres,
 Dissolve this clog and clod of clay before 390
 Its hour, and merge our soul in the great shore.

⁴²: B. in recycling previous Mediterranean material in this section. Compare *Don Juan II*, stanzas 183-204

⁴³: B. refers to the love of the nightingale and the rose at his note to *The Giaour*, line 22.

⁴⁴: Brahmins are high-cast Hindus.

Strip off this fond and false identity! –
 Who thinks of self when gazing on the sky?
 And who, though gazing lower, ever thought,
 In the young moments ere the heart is taught 395
 Time's lesson, of Man's baseness or his own?
 All Nature is his realm, and Love his throne.

17.

Neuha arose, and Torquil: twilight's hour
 Came sad and softly to their rocky bower,
 Which, kindling by degrees its dewy spars, 400
 Echoed their dim light to the mustering stars.
 Slowly the pair, partaking Nature's calm,
 Sought out their cottage, built beneath the palm;
 Now smiling and now silent, as the scene;
 Lovely as Love – the Spirit! – when serene. 405
 The Ocean scarce spoke louder with his swell,
 Than breathes his mimic murmurer in the shell, *
 As, far divided from his parent deep,
 The Sea-born infant cries, and will not sleep,
 Raising his little plaint in vain, to rave 410
 For the broad bosom of his nursing Wave:
 The woods drooped darkly, as inclined to rest,
 The Tropic bird wheeled rock-ward to his nest,
 And the blue sky spread round them like a lake
 Of peace, where Piety her thirst might slake. 415

* If the reader will apply to his ear the sea-shell on his chimney-piece, he will be aware of what is alluded to. If the text should appear obscure, he will find in "Gebir" the same idea better expressed in two lines. – The poem I never read, but have heard the lines quoted by a more recondite reader – who seems to be of a different opinion from the Editor of the Quarterly Review, who qualified it in his answer to the Critical Reviewer of his Juvenal, as trash of the worst and most insane description. It is to Mr. Landor, the author of Gebir, so qualified, and of some Latin poems, which vie with Martial or Catullus in obscenity, that the immaculate Mr. Southey addresses his declamation against impurity except his own!⁴⁵

18.

But through the palm and plantain, hark, a Voice!
 Not such as would have been a lover's choice,
 In such an hour, to break the air so still;
 No dying night-breeze, harping o'er the hill,
 Striking the strings of Nature, rock and tree, 420
 Those best and earliest lyres of Harmony,
 With Echo for their chorus; nor the alarm
 Of the loud war-whoop to dispel the charm;
 Nor the soliloquy of the hermit owl,
 Exhaling all his solitary soul, 425
 The dim though large-eyed winged anchorite,
 Who peals his dreary Pæan o'er the night;
 But a loud, long, and naval whistle, shrill
 As ever started through a Sea-bird's bill;
 And then a pause, and then a hoarse "Hillo! 430

45: *Gebir* is a 1798 poem by Walter Savage Landor. For Landor's obscene poems, see this website, *The Vision of Judgement*, prose preface, notes 17, 18 and 19.

Torquil, my boy I what cheer? Ho! brother, ho!"⁴⁶
"Who hails?" cried Torquil, following with his eye
The sound. "Here's one," was all the brief reply.

19.

But here the herald of the self-same mouth
Came breathing o'er the aromatic South, 435
Not like a "bed of violets" on the gale,⁴⁷
But such as wafts its cloud o'er grog or ale,
Borne from a short frail pipe, which yet had blown
Its gentle odours over either zone,
And, puffed where'er Winds rise or Waters roll, 440
Had wafted smoke from Portsmouth to the Pole,
Opposed its vapour as the lightning dashed,
And reeked, 'midst mountain-billows, unabashed,
To Æolus a constant sacrifice,
Through every change of all the varying skies. 445
And what was he who bore it? – I may err,
But deem him sailor or philosopher. *
Sublime Tobacco! which from East to West
Cheers the Tar's labour or the Turkman's rest;
Which on the Moslem's ottoman divides 450
His hours, and rivals opium and his brides;
Magnificent in Stamboul, but less grand,
Though not less loved, in Wapping or the Strand;
Divine in hookas, glorious in a pipe,
When tipped with amber, mellow, rich, and ripe; 455
Like other charmers, wooing the caress,
More dazzlingly when daring in full dress;
Yet thy true lovers more admire by far
Thy naked beauties – Give me a cigar!

* Hobbes, the father of Locke's and other philosophy, was an inveterate smoker, – even to pipes beyond computation.

20.

Through the approaching darkness of the wood 460
A human figure broke the solitude,
Fantastically, it may be, arrayed,
A seaman in a savage masquerade;
Such as appears to rise out from the deep,
When o'er the line the merry Vessels sweep, 465
And the rough Saturnalia of the Tar
Flock o'er the deck, in Neptune's borrowed car; *
And, pleased, the God of Ocean sees his name
Revive once more, though but in mimic game
Of his true sons, who riot in a breeze 470
Undreamt of in his native Cyclades.
Still the old God delights, from out the main,
To snatch some glimpses of his ancient reign.
Our sailor's jacket, though in ragged trim,

46: The hawking cry at *Hamlet*, I v 115-16.

47: In fact, "bank of violets:" *Twelfth Night*, I i 6.

His constant pipe, which never yet burned dim, 475
 His foremast air, and somewhat rolling gait,
 Like his dear Vessel, spoke his former state;
 But then a sort of kerchief round his head,
 Not over tightly bound, nor nicely spread;
 And, 'stead of trowsers (ah! too early torn! 480
 For even the mildest woods will have their thorn)
 A curious sort of somewhat scanty mat
 Now served for inexpressibles and hat;
 His naked feet and neck, and sunburnt face,
 Perchance might suit alike with either race. 485
 His arms were all his own, our Europe's growth,
 Which two Worlds bless for civilising both;
 The musket swung behind his shoulders broad,
 And somewhat stooped by his marine abode,
 But brawny as the boar's; and hung beneath, 490
 His cutlass drooped, unconscious of a sheath,
 Or lost or worn away; his pistols were
 Linked to his belt, a matrimonial pair –
 (Let not this metaphor appear a scoff,
 Though one missed fire, the other would go off); 495
 These, with a bayonet, not so free from rust
 As when the arm-chest held its brighter trust,
 Completed his accoutrements, as Night
 Surveyed him in his garb heteroclite.

* This rough but jovial ceremony, used in crossing the Line, has been so often and so well described, that it need not be more than alluded to.

21.

"What cheer, Ben Bunting?" cried (when in full view 500
 Our new acquaintance) Torquil, "Aught of new?"
 "Ey, ey!" quoth Ben, "not new, but news enow;
 A strange Sail in the offing." – "Sail! and how?
 What! could you make her out? It cannot be;
 I've seen no rag of canvass on the Sea." 505
 "Belike," said Ben, "you might not from the bay,
 But from the bluff-head, where I watched to-day,
 I saw her in the doldrums; for the Wind
 Was light and baffling." – "When the Sun declined
 Where lay she? had she anchored?" – "No, but still 510
 She bore down on us, till the Wind grew still."
 "Her flag?" – "I had no glass, but fore and aft,
 Egad! she seemed a wicked-looking craft."
 "Armed?" – "I expect so; – sent on the look-out; –
 'Tis time, belike, to put our helm about." 515
 "About? – Whate'er may have us now in chase,
 We'll make no running fight, for that were base;
 We will die at our quarters, like true men."
 "Ey, ey! for that 'tis all the same to Ben."
 "Does Christian know this?" – "Aye; he's piped all hands 520
 To quarters. They are furbishing the stands
 Of arms; and we have got some guns to bear,
 And scaled them. You are wanted." – "That's but fair;
 And if it were not, mine is not the soul

To leave my comrades helpless on the shoal. 525
My Neuha! ah! and must my fate pursue
Not me alone, but one so sweet and true?
But whatsoe'er betide, ah, Neuha! now
Unman me not: the hour will not allow
A tear; I am thine whatever intervenes!" 530
"Right," quoth Ben; "that will do for the marines." *48

* "That will do for the marines, but the sailors won't believe it," is an old saying; and one of the few fragments of former jealousies which still survive (in jest only) between these gallant services.

END OF CANTO SECOND.

48: E.H.Coleridge writes of sections 19-21: "In his Preface to Cantos I., II. of *Childe Harold*, Byron relies on the authority of 'Ariosto, Thomson and Beattie' for the inclusion of droll or satirical 'variations' in a serious poem. Nevertheless, Dallas prevailed on him to omit certain 'ludicrous stanzas.' It is to be regretted that no one suggested the excision of sections xix.-xxi. from the second canto of *The Island*."

CANTO THE THIRD

1.

THE fight was o'er;⁴⁹ the flashing through the gloom,
Which robes the cannon as he wings a tomb,
Had ceased; and sulphury vapours upward driven
Had left the Earth, and but polluted Heaven:
The rattling roar which rung in every volley 5
Had left the echoes to their melancholy;
No more they shrieked their horror, boom for boom;
The strife was done, the vanquished had their doom;
The mutineers were crushed, dispersed, or ta'en,
Or lived to deem the happiest were the slain. 10
Few, few escaped, and these were hunted o'er
The isle they loved beyond their native shore.
No further home was theirs, it seemed, on earth,
Once renegades to that which gave them birth;
Tracked like wild beasts, like them they sought the wild, 15
As to a Mother's bosom flies the child;
But vainly wolves and lions seek their den,
And still more vainly, men escape from men,

2.

Beneath a rock whose jutting base protrudes
Far over Ocean in its fiercest moods, 20
When scaling his enormous crag, the Wave
Is hurled down headlong, like the foremost brave,
And falls back on the foaming crowd behind,
Which fight beneath the banners of the Wind,
But now at rest, a little remnant drew 25
Together, bleeding, thirsty, faint, and few;
But still their weapons in their hands, and still
With something of the pride of former will,
As men not all unused to meditate,
And strive much more than wonder at their fate. 30
Their present lot was what they had foreseen,
And dared as what was likely to have been;
Yet still the lingering hope, which deemed their lot
Not pardoned, but unsought for or forgot,
Or trusted that, if sought, their distant caves 35
Might still be missed amidst the World of Waves,
Had weaned their thoughts in part from what they saw
And felt, the vengeance of their country's law.
Their Sea-green isle, their guilt-won Paradise,
No more could shield their Virtue or their Vice: 40
Their better feelings, if such were, were thrown
Back on themselves, – their sins remained alone.
Proscribed even in their second country, they
Were lost; in vain the World before them lay;⁵⁰
All outlets seemed secured. Their new allies 45

49: B.'s failure to describe the chase or battle is disappointing. In fact many of the men captured by the *Pandora* had not been mutineers, gave themselves up willingly, and were exonerated by the court-martial.

50: B. plays with *Paradise Lost*, XII 646: *The world was all before them ...*

Had fought and bled in mutual sacrifice;
 But what availed the club and spear, and arm
 Of Hercules, against the sulphury charm,
 The magic of the thunder, which destroyed
 The warrior ere his strength could be employed? 50
 Dug, like a spreading pestilence, the grave
 No less of human bravery than the brave! *
 Their own scant numbers acted all the few
 Against the many oft will dare and do;
 But though the choice seems native to die free, 55
 Even Greece can boast but one Thermopylæ,⁵¹
 Till *now*, when she has forged her broken chain
 Back to a sword, and dies and lives again!

* Archidamus, King of Sparta, and son of Agesilaus. when he saw a machine invented for the casting of stones and darts, exclaimed that it was the “Grave of Valour.” The same story has been told of some knights on the first application of Gunpowder; but the original anecdote is in Plutarch.⁵²

3.

Beside the jutting rock the few appeared,
 Like the last remnant of the red-deer’s herd; 60
 Their eyes were feverish, and their aspect worn,
 But still the hunter’s blood was on their horn.
 A little stream came tumbling from the height,
 And straggling into Ocean as it might,
 Its bounding chrystal frolicked in the ray, 65
 And gushed from cliff to crag with saltless spray;
 Close on the wild, wide Ocean, yet as pure
 And fresh as Innocence, and more secure,
 Its silver torrent glittered o’er the deep,
 As the shy chamois’ eye o’erlooks the steep, 70
 While far below the vast and sullen swell
 Of Ocean’s Alpine azure rose and fell.
 To this young spring they rushed, – all feelings first
 Absorbed in Passion’s and in Nature’s thirst, –
 Drank as they do who drink their last, and threw 75
 Their arms aside to revel in its dew;
 Cooled their scorched throats, and washed the gory stains
 From wounds whose only bandage might be chains;
 Then, when their drought was quenched, looked sadly round,
 As wondering how so many still were found 80
 Alive and fetterless: – but silent all,
 Each sought his fellow’s eyes, as if to call
 On him for language which his lips denied,
 As though their voices with their cause had died.⁵³

4.

Stern, and aloof a little from the rest, 85

51: For the holding-action by the Spartans before the army of Xerxes, see *CHP* II 73, 7; or *Don Juan* III, *The Isles of Greece*, 7, 6. B. refers to the action again below, at IV 260.

52: Plutarch, *Moralia*, tr. F.C.Babbitt (Heinemann 1968) vol. III pp.210-1: “When he [Archidamas, King of Sparta, 361-381 B.C.] saw the missile shot by a catapult, which had been brought then for the first time from Sicily, he exclaimed, ‘Great Heavens! man’s valour is no more.’”

53: The defeated mutineers resemble the defeated angels in Hell in *Paradise Lost*, Book I, with Christian as Satan.

Stood Christian, with his arms across his chest.
 The ruddy, reckless, dauntless hue once spread
 Along his cheek was livid now as lead;
 His light-brown locks, so graceful in their flow,
 Now rose like startled vipers o'er his brow. 90
 Still as a statue, with his lips compressed
 To stifle even the breath within his breast,
 Fast by the rock, all menacing, but mute,
 He stood; and, save a slight beat of his foot,
 Which deepened now and then the sandy dint 95
 Beneath his heel, his form seemed turned to flint.
 Some paces further Torquil leaned his head
 Against a bank, and spoke not, but he bled, –
 Not mortally: – his worst wound was within;
 His brow was pale, his blue eyes sunken in, 100
 And blood-drops, sprinkled o'er his yellow hair,
 Showed that his faintness came not from despair,
 But Nature's ebb. Beside him was another,
 Rough as a bear, but willing as a brother, –
 Ben Bunting, who essayed to wash, and wipe, 105
 And bind his wound – then calmly lit his pipe,
 A trophy which survived a hundred fights,
 A beacon which had cheered ten thousand nights.⁵⁴
 The fourth and last of this deserted group
 Walked up and down – at times would stand, then stoop 110
 To pick a pebble up – then let it drop –
 Then hurry as in haste – then quickly stop –
 Then cast his eyes on his companions – then
 Half whistle half a tune, and pause again –
 And then his former movements would redouble, 115
 With something between carelessness and trouble.
 This is a long description, but applies
 To scarce five minutes passed before the eyes;
 But yet *what* minutes! Moments like to these
 Rend men's lives into immortalities. 120

5.

At length Jack Skyscrape, a mercurial man,
 Who fluttered over all things like a fan,
 More brave than firm, and more disposed to dare
 And die at once than wrestle with despair,
 Exclaimed, "G-d damn!" – those syllables intense, – 125
 Nucleus of England's native eloquence,⁵⁵
 As the Turk's "Allah!" or the Roman's more
 Pagan "Proh Jupiter!" was wont of yore
 To give their first impressions such a vent,
 By way of echo to embarrassment. 130
 Jack was embarrassed, – never hero more,
 And as he knew not what to say, he swore:
 Nor swore in vain; the long congenial sound
 Revived Ben Bunting from his pipe profound;

⁵⁴: Resembles the Old Pasha at *Don Juan* VIII, 98, 3-4.

⁵⁵: Compare *Don Juan*, I, 14, 7-8: "'Tis strange – the Hebrew name which means 'I am' / The English always use to govern 'damn.'"

He drew it from his mouth, and looked full wise, 135
 But merely added to the oath, his *eyes*;
 Thus rendering the imperfect phrase complete,
 A peroration I need not repeat.

6.

But Christian, of an higher order,⁵⁶ stood
 Like an extinct volcano in his mood; 140
 Silent, and sad, and savage, – with the trace
 Of passion reeking from his clouded face;
 Till lifting up again his sombre eye,
 It glanced on Torquil who leaned faintly by.
 “And is it thus?” he cried, “unhappy boy! 145
 “And thee too, *thee* – my madness must destroy.”⁵⁷
 He said, and strode to where young Torquil stood,
 Yet dabbled with his lately flowing blood;
 Seized his hand wistfully, but did not press,
 And shrunk as fearful of his own caress; 150
 Enquired into his state; and when he heard,
 The wound was slighter than he deemed or feared,
 A moment’s brightness passed along his brow,
 As much as such a moment would allow.
 “Yes,” he exclaimed, “we’re taken in the toil, 155
 But not a coward or a common spoil;
 Dearly they’ve bought us – dearly still may buy –
 And I must fall; but have *you* strength to fly?
 ’Twould be some comfort still, could you survive;
 Our dwindled band is now too few to strive. 160
 Oh! for a sole canoe! though but a shell,
 To bear you hence to where a hope may dwell!
 For, my lot is what I sought; to be,
 In life or death, the fearless and the free.”

7.

Even as he spoke, around the promontory, 165
 Which nodded o’er the billows high and hoary,
 A dark speck dotted Ocean:⁵⁸ on it flew
 Like to the shadow of a roused Sea-mew;
 Onward it came – and, lo! a second followed –
 Now seen – now hid – where Ocean’s vale was hollowed; 170
 And near, and nearer, till their dusky crew
 Presented well-known aspects to the view,
 Till on the surf their skimming paddles play,
 Buoyant as wings, and flitting through the spray; –
 Now perching on the Wave’s high curl, and now 175
 Dashed downward in the thundering foam below,
 Which flings it broad and boiling sheet on sheet,
 And slings its high flakes, shivered into sleet:
 But floating still through surf and swell, drew nigh

56: Christian is like Manfred (*Manfred*, II i 38) or Dante (*The Prophecy of Dante*, I 150) in not being of the same order as his fellows.

57: Christian is, in his failure to lead effectively, a lightly-sketched Byronic Hero. Whether his mutiny was or was not an act of madness we cannot tell, for B. does not analyse its causes.

58: Recalls *A little speck* at *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* III 2 1, and *The Vision of Judgement* 57 2.

The barks, like small birds through a lowering sky. 180
Their Art seemed Nature – such the skill to sweep
The Wave of these born playmates of the deep.

8.

And who the first that, springing on the strand,
Leaped like a Nereid from her shell to land,
With dark but brilliant skin, and dewy eye 185
Shining with Love, and, Hope, and Constancy?
Neuha – the fond, the faithful, the adored –
Her heart on Torquil's like a torrent poured;
And smiled, and wept, and near, and nearer clasped,
As if to be assured 'twas *him* she grasped; 190
Shuddered to see his yet warm wound, and then,
To find it trivial, smiled and wept again.
She was a warrior's daughter, and could bear
Such sights, and feel, and mourn, but not despair.
Her lover lived, – nor foes nor fears could blight 195
That full-blown moment in its all delight:
Joy trickled in her tears, joy filled the sob
That rocked her heart till almost HEARD to throb;
And Paradise was breathing in the sigh
Of Nature's child in Nature's ecstasy. 200

9.

The sterner spirits who beheld that meeting
Were not unmoved; who *are*, when hearts are greeting?
Even Christian gazed upon the maid and boy
With tearless eye, but yet a gloomy joy
Mixed with those bitter thoughts the soul arrays 205
In hopeless visions of our better days,
When all's gone – to the rainbow's latest ray.
“And but for me!” he said, and turned away;
Then gazed upon the pair, as in his den
A lion looks upon his cubs again; 210
And then relapsed into his sullen guise,
As heedless of his further destinies.

10.

But brief their time for good or evil thought;
The billows round the promontory brought
The splash of hostile oars. – Alas! who made 215
That sound a dread? All round them seemed arrayed
Against them, save the bride of Toobonai:
She, as she caught the first glimpse o'er the bay
Of the armed boats, which hurried to complete
The remnant's ruin with their flying feet, 220
Beckoned the natives round her to their prows,
Embarked their guests and launched their light canoes;
In one placed Christian and his comrades twain –
But she and Torquil must not part again.
She fixed him in her own. – Away! away! 225
They cleared the breakers, dart along the bay,

And towards a group of islets, such as bear
The Sea-bird's nest and seal's surf-hollowed lair,
They skim the blue tops of the billows; fast
They flew, and fast their fierce pursuers chased. 230
They gain upon them – now they lose again, –
Again make way and menace o'er the main;
And now the two canoes in chase divide,
And follow different courses o'er the tide,
To baffle the pursuit. – Away! away! 235
As Life is on each paddle's flight to-day,
And more than Life or lives to Neuha: Love
Freights the frail bark and urges to the cove –
And now the refuge and the foe are nigh –
Yet, yet a moment! Fly, thou light Ark, fly! 240

END OF CANTO THIRD.

CANTO THE FOURTH.

1.

WHITE as a white Sail on a dusky Sea,
When half the horizon's clouded and half free,
Fluttering between the dun Wave and the sky,
Is Hope's last gleam in Man's extremity.
Her anchor parts; but still her snowy Sail 5
Attracts our eye amidst the rudest gale:
Though every Wave she climbs divides us more,
The heart still follows from the loneliest shore.

2.

Not distant from the isle of Toobonai,
A black rock rears its bosom o'er the spray, 10
The haunt of birds, a desert to mankind,
Where the rough seal reposes from the Wind,
And sleeps unwieldy in his cavern dun,
Or gambols with huge frolic in the Sun:
There shrilly to the passing oar is heard 15
The startled echo of the Ocean bird,
Who rears on its bare breast her callow brood,
The feathered fishers of the solitude.
A narrow segment of the yellow sand
On one side forms the outline of a strand; 20
Here the young turtle, crawling from his shell,
Steals to the deep wherein his parents dwell;
Chipped by the beam, a nursling of the day,
But hatched for Ocean by the fostering ray;
The rest was one bleak precipice, as e'er 25
Gave mariners a shelter and despair,
A spot to make the saved regret the deck
Which late went down, and envy the lost wreck.⁵⁹
Such was the stern asylum Neuha chose
To shield her lover from his following foes; 30
But all its secret was not told; she knew
In this a treasure hidden from the view.

3.

Ere the canoes divided, near the spot,
The men that manned what held her Torquil's lot,
By her command removed, to strengthen more 35
The skiff which wafted Christian from the shore.
This he would have opposed; but with a smile
She pointed calmly to the craggy isle,
And bade him "speed and prosper." *She* would take
The rest upon herself for Torquil's sake. 40
They parted with this added aid; afar,
The Proa darted like a shooting star,
And gained on the pursuers, who now steered

59: It is not clear to which ship B. is referring here. He seems to imply that the *Bounty* has been destroyed, which was not done until the mutineers reached Pitcairn.

Right on the rock which she and Torquil neared.
 They pulled; her arm, though delicate, was free 45
 And firm as ever grappled with the Sea,
 And yielded scarce to Torquil's manlier strength.
 The prow now almost lay within its length
 Of the crag's steep inexorable face,
 With nought but soundless Waters for its base; 50
 Within a hundred boats' length was the foe,
 And now what refuge but their frail canoe?
 This Torquil asked with half upbraiding eye,
 Which said – "Has Neuha brought me here to die?
 Is this a place of safety, or a grave, 55
 And yon huge rock the tombstone of the Wave?"

4.

They rested on their paddles, and uprose
 Neuha, and pointing to the approaching foes,
 Cried, "Torquil, follow me, and fearless follow!"
 Then plunged at once into the Ocean's hollow. 60
 There was no time to pause – the foes were near –
 Chains in his eye, and menace in his ear;
 With vigour they pulled on, and as they came,
 Hailed him to yield, and by his forfeit name.
 Headlong he leapt – to him the swimmer's skill 65
 Was native,⁶⁰ and now all his hope from ill:
 But how, or where? He dived, and rose no more;
 The boat's crew looked amazed o'er Sea and shore.
 There was no landing on that precipice,
 Steep, harsh, and slippery as a berg of ice. 70
 They watched awhile to see him float again,
 But not a trace rebubbled from the main:
 The Wave rolled on, no ripple on its face,
 Since their first plunge recalled a single trace;
 The little whirl which eddied, and slight foam, 75
 That whitened o'er what seemed their latest home,
 White as a sepulchre above the pair
 Who left no marble (mournful as an heir)
 The quiet Proa wavering o'er the tide
 Was all that told of Torquil and his bride; 80
 And but for this alone the whole might seem
 The vanished phantom of a seaman's dream.
 They paused and searched in vain, then pulled away;
 Even Superstition now forbade their stay.
 Some said he had not plunged into the Wave, 85
 But vanished like a corpse-light from a grave;
 Others, that something supernatural
 Glared in his figure, more than mortal tall;
 While all agreed that in his cheek and eye
 There was the dead hue of Eternity. 90
 Still as their oars receded from the crag,
 Round every weed a moment would they lag,
 Expectant of some token of their prey;
 But no – he'd melted from them like the spray.

60: Like that of Don Juan (and of B.); see *Don Juan* II, stanza 105.

5.

And where was he, the Pilgrim of the Deep, 95
 Following the Nereid? Had they ceased to weep
 For ever? or, received in coral caves,
 Wrung life and pity from the softening Waves?
 Did they with Ocean's hidden sovereigns dwell,
 And sound with Mermen the fantastic shell? 100
 Did Neuha with the Mermaids comb her hair
 Flowing o'er Ocean as it streamed in air?
 Or had they perished, and in silence slept
 Beneath the gulph wherein they boldly leapt?

6.

Young Neuha plunged into the deep, and he 105
 Followed: her track beneath her native Sea
 Was as a native's of the element,⁶¹
 So smoothly, bravely, brilliantly she went,
 Leaving a streak of light behind her heel,
 Which struck and flashed like an amphibious steel. 110
 Closely, and scarcely less expert to trace
 The depths where divers hold the pearl in chase,
 Torquil, the nursling of the northern Seas,
 Pursued her liquid steps with art and ease.
 Deep – deeper for an instant Neuha led 115
 The way – then upward soared – and as she spread
 Her arms, and flung the foam from off her locks,
 Laughed, and the sound was answered by the rocks.
 They had gained a central realm of earth again,
 But looked for tree, and field, and sky, in vain. 120
 Around she pointed to a spacious cave,⁶²
 Whose only portal was the keyless Wave, *
 (A hollow archway by the Sun unseen,
 Save through the billows' glassy veil of green,
 In some transparent Ocean holiday, 125
 When all the finny people are at play,
 Wiped with her hair the brine from Torquil's eyes,⁶³
 And clapped her hands with joy at his surprise;
 Led him to where the rock appeared to jut,

61: A sudden and inappropriate echo of Ophelia at *Hamlet* IV vii: ... *like a creature native and endued / Unto that element ...*

62: Neuha's cave has its origin in *Mariner*, where it is on an island called Hoonga (*Mariner* I, 271): "On this island there is a peculiar cavern, situated on the western coast, the entrance to which is at least a fathom below the surface of the sea at low water, and was first discovered by a young chief, whilst diving after a turtle. The nature of this cavern will be better understood if we imagine a hollow rock rising sixty feet or more above the surface of the water; into the cavity of which there is no known entrance but one, and that is on the side of the rock, as low down as six feet under the water, into which it flows; and consequently the base of the cavern may be said to be the sea itself ... The place was now illuminated tolerably well, for the first time, perhaps, since its existence. It appeared (by guess) to be about 40 feet wide in the main part, but which branched off, on one side, in two narrower portions. The medium height seemed also about 40 feet. The roof was hung with stalactites in a very curious way, resembling, upon a cursory view, the Gothic arches and ornaments of an old church" (*Mariner* I, 268, 270). In *Mariner* it is a young chief who hides his love in the undersea cavern, not vice versa (see *Mariner* I, 271-7, and Neuha's story below, Part 9).

63: But her hair would have been wet too!

And form a something like a Triton's hut; 130
 For all was darkness for a space, till day,
 Through clefts above let in a sobered ray;
 As in some old cathedral's glimmering aisle
 The dusty monuments from light recoil,
 Thus sadly in their refuge submarine 135
 The vault drew half her shadow from the scene.

* Of this cave (which is no fiction) the original will be found in the ninth chapter of "Mariner's Account of the Tonga Islands." I have taken the poetical liberty to transplant it to Toobonai, the last island where any distinct account is left of Christian and his comrades.

7.

Forth from her bosom the young savage drew
 A pine torch, strongly girded with gnatoo;⁶⁴
 A plantain-leaf o'er all, the more to keep
 Its latent sparkle from the sapping deep. 140
 This mantle kept it dry; then from a nook
 Of the same plantain-leaf a flint she took,
 A few shrunk withered twigs, and from the blade
 Of Torquil's knife struck fire, and thus arrayed
 The grot with torchlight. Wide it was and high, 145
 And showed a self-born Gothic canopy;
 The arch upreared by Nature's architect,
 The architrave some Earthquake might erect;
 The buttress from some mountain's bosom hurled,
 When the Poles crashed, and Water was the World; 150
 Or hardened from some earth-absorbing fire,
 While yet the globe reeked from its funeral pyre; *
 The fretted pinnacle, the aisle, the nave, †
 Were there, all scooped by Darkness from her Cave.
 There, with a little tinge of Phantasy, 155
 Fantastic faces moped and mowed on high,
 And then a mitre or a shrine would fix
 The eye upon its seeming crucifix,
 Thus Nature played with the Stalactites,⁶⁵
 And built herself a Chapel of the Seas. 160

* This may seem too minute for the general outline (in Mariner's Account) from which it is taken. But few men have travelled without seeing something of the kind – on *land*, that is. Without adverting to Ellora, in Mungo Park's last journal, (if my memory do not err, for there are eight years since I read the book) he mentions having met with a rock or mountain so exactly resembling a Gothic cathedral, that only minute inspection could convince him that it was a work of Nature.⁶⁶

64: Gnatoo is "somewhat similar to cotton, but not woven, being rather the texture of paper: it is prepared from the inner bark of the Chinese paper mulberry tree, and is used for dress and other purposes" (Mariner II, 288). It is also the name of any garment made from gnatoo (Mariner I, 210).

65: Scansion and the rhyme dictate that "Stalactites" should have four syllables.

66: B. remembers this: "June 24th [1805]. – Left Sullo, and travelled through a country beautiful beyond imagination, with all the possible diversities of rock, sometimes towering up like ruined castles, spires, pyramids, etc. We passed one place so like a ruined Gothic abbey, that we halted a little, before we could satisfy ourselves that the niches, windows, etc., were all natural rock." – Mungo Park, *Journal of a Mission to the Interior of Africa* (1815) p.75. See also Paananen, Victor N. *Byron and the Caves of Ellora, N & Q*, November 1969, pp. 414-6.

† It is for Philosophers to decide the undecidable question if the appearance indicates more convulsions by fire or by water – vide the Neptunians – Vulcanians &c. &c. &.⁶⁷

8.

And Neuha took her Torquil by the hand,
And Waved along the vault her kindled brand,
And led him into each recess, and showed
The secret places of their new abode,
Nor these alone, for all had been prepared 165
Before, to soothe the lover's lot she shared:
The mat for rest; for dress the fresh gnatoo,
And sandal oil to fence against the dew;
For food the cocoa-nut, the yam, the bread
Born of the fruit; for board the plantain spread 170
With its broad leaf, or turtle-shell which bore
A banquet in the flesh it covered o'er;
The gourd with water recent from the rill,
The ripe banana from the mellow hill;
A pine-torch pile to keep undying light, 175
And she herself, as beautiful as Night,
To fling her shadowy spirit o'er the scene,
And make their subterranean World serene.
She had foreseen, since first the stranger's Sail
Drew to their isle, that force or flight might fail, 180
And formed a refuge of the rocky den
For Torquil's safety from his countrymen.
Each Dawn had wafted there her light canoe,
Laden with all the golden fruits that grew;
Each Eve had seen her gliding through the hour 185
With all could cheer or deck their sparry bower;
And now she spread her little store with smiles,
The happiest daughter of the loving Isles.

9.

She, as he gazed with grateful wonder, pressed
Her sheltered love to her impassioned breast; 190
And suited to her soft caresses,⁶⁸ told
An elden tale of Love, – for Love is old,
Old as Eternity, but not outworn
With each new being born or to be born: *
How a young Chief, a thousand moons ago, 195
Diving for turtle in the depths below,
Had risen, in tracking fast his Ocean prey,
Into the cave which round and o'er them lay;
How, in some desperate feud of after-time,

67: The Neptunians claimed life began with oceanic eruptions; the Vulcanians, with eruptions on land.

68: Lest our European fantasies should run away with us, here is a note from Mariner: "When a person salutes a superior person, he kisses the hand of the party; if a very superior relation, he kisses the foot; the superior in return kisses the forehead. There may be some doubt as to the propriety of the term *kiss* in this ceremony, for it is not performed with the lips after our usual mode, but rather by the application of the upper lip and the nostrils, and has more the appearance of smelling. When two equals are about to salute, each applies his upper lip and nostrils to the forehead of the other, or they apply their lips to the lips of the other, but without any movement of them, or smack, as in our mode. Our kiss they never adopt, not even between the sexes, but, on the contrary, always ridicule it, and term it *the white man's kiss*" (Mariner I, 239n).

He sheltered there a daughter of the clime, 200
 A foe beloved, and offspring of a foe,
 Saved by his tribe but for a captive's woe;
 How, when the storm of war was stilled, he led
 His island clan to where the Waters spread
 Their deep-green shadow o'er the rocky door, 205
 Then dived – it seemed as if to rise no more:
 His wondering mates, amazed within their bark,
 Or deemed him mad, or prey to the blue shark;
 Rowed round in sorrow the Sea-girded rock,
 Then paused upon their paddles from the shock; 210
 When, fresh and springing from the deep, they saw
 A Goddess rise – so deemed they in their awe;
 And their companion, glorious by her side,
 Proud and exulting in his Mermaid bride;
 And how, when undeceived, the pair they bore 215
 With sounding conchs and joyous shouts to shore;
 How they had gladly lived and calmly died, –
 And why not also Torquil and his bride?
 Not mine to tell the rapturous caress
 Which followed wildly in that wild recess 220
 This tale; enough that all within that cave
 Was Love, though buried strong as in the grave,
 Where Abelard, through twenty years of death,
 When Eloisa's form was lowered beneath
 Their nuptial vault, his arms outstretched, and prest 225
 The kindling ashes to his kindled breast. †
 The Waves without sang round their couch, their roar
 As much unheeded as if life were o'er;
 Within, their hearts made all their harmony,
 Love's broken murmur and more broken sigh. 230

* The reader will recollect the epigram of the Greek anthology, or its translation into most of the modern languages:–

“Whoe'er thou art, thy master see
 He was, or is, or is to be.”⁶⁹

† The tradition is attached to the story of Eloisa, that when her body was lowered into the grave of Abelard (who had been buried twenty years), he opened his arms to receive her.⁷⁰

10.

And they, the cause and sharers of the shock
 Which left them exiles of the hollow rock,
 Where were they? O'er the Sea for life they plied,

69: E.H.Coleridge's note is as follows: “Byron is quoting from memory an ‘Illustration’ in the notes to *Collections from the Greek Anthology* by the Rev. Robert Bland, 1813. p. 402 – ‘Whoe'er thou art, thy Lord and master see. / Thou wast my Slave, thou art, or thou shalt be.’ The couplet was written by George Granville, Lord Lansdowne 1667-1735) as an *Inscription for a Figure representing the God of Love*. (See *The Genuine Works, etc.*, 1732, I. 129.)”

70: Héloïse and Pierre Abelard were famous twelfth-century monastic lovers. The anecdote here is from Pierre Bayle's Dictionary: “They tell a most surprizing miracle that happened, so it is said, when the sepulchre was opened in order to lay Heloise's body there, viz. That Abelard stretched out his arms, to receive her, and closely embraced her; and yet he had been above twenty years dead: but that's no great matter; they pretend that they have instances of things of this kind” (*Mr Bayle's Historical and Critical Dictionary*, London 1736, III pp.385-6, entry on Heloisa). Bayle, humorist as ever, relates in a note the tale of a loving couple, continent sexually while alive, who, being buried separately, were found in the same grave the day after the funeral.

To seek from Heaven the shelter men denied.
 Another course had been their choice – but where? 235
 The Wave which bore them still their foes would bear,
 Who, disappointed of their former chase,
 In search of Christian now renewed their race.
 Eager with anger, their strong arms made way,
 Like vultures baffled of their previous prey. 240
 They gained upon them, all whose safety lay
 In some bleak crag or deeply-hidden bay:
 No further chance or choice remained; and right
 For the first further rock which met their sight
 They steered, to take their latest view of land, 245
 And yield as victims, or die sword in hand;
 Dismissed the natives and their shallop, who
 Would still have battled for that scanty crew;
 But Christian bade them seek their shore again,
 Nor add a sacrifice which were in vain; 250
 For what were simple bow and savage spear
 Against the arms which must be wielded here?

11.

They landed on a wild but narrow scene,
 Where few but Nature's footsteps yet had been;
 Prepared their arms, and with that gloomy eye, 255
 Stern and sustained, of man's extremity,
 When Hope is gone, nor Glory's self remains
 To cheer resistance against death or chains, –
 They stood, the three, as the three hundred stood
 Who dyed Thermopylæ with holy blood. 260
 But, ah! how different! 'tis the *cause* makes all,
 Degrades or hallows courage in its fall.
 O'er them no fame, eternal and intense,
 Blazed through the clouds of Death and beckoned hence;
 No grateful country, smiling through her tears, 265
 Begun the praises of a thousand years;
 No nation's eyes would on their tomb be bent,
 No heroes envy them their monument;
 However boldly their warm blood was spilt,
 Their Life was shame, their Epitaph was guilt. 270
 And this they knew and felt, at least the one,
 The leader of the band he had undone;
 Who, born perchance for better things, had set
 His life upon a cast which lingered yet:
 But now the die was to be thrown, and all 275
 The chances were in favour of his fall:
 And such a fall!⁷¹ But still he faced the shock,
 Obdurate as a portion of the rock
 Whereon he stood, and fixed his levelled gun,
 Dark as a sullen cloud before the Sun. 280

12.

71: As we are not told how high Christian had stood (in fact he was only the Master's Mate), we cannot gauge how terrible his fall has been.

The boat drew nigh, well armed, and firm the crew
 To act whatever Duty bade them do;
 Careless of danger, as the onward Wind
 Is of the leaves it strews, nor looks behind.
 And, yet, perhaps, they rather wished to go 285
 Against a nation's than a native foe,
 And felt that this poor victim of self-will,
 Briton no more, had once been Britain's still.
 They hailed him to surrender – no reply;
 Their arms were poised, and glittered in the sky. 290
 They hailed again – no answer; yet once more
 They offered quarter louder than before.
 The echoes only, from the rock's rebound,
 Took their last farewell of the dying sound.
 Then flashed the flint, and blazed the volleying flame, 295
 And the smoke rose between them and their aim,
 While the rock rattled with the bullets' knell,
 Which pealed in vain, and flattened as they fell;
 Then flew the only answer to be given
 By those who had lost all hope in earth or heaven. 300
 After the first fierce peal as they pulled nigher,
 They heard the voice of Christian shout, "Now, fire!"
 And ere the word upon the echo died,
 Two fell; the rest assailed the rock's rough side,
 And, furious at the madness of their foes, 305
 Disdained all further efforts, save to close.
 But steep the crag, and all without a path,
 Each step opposed a bastion to their wrath,
 While, placed 'midst clefts the least accessible,
 Which Christian's eye was trained to mark full well, 310
 The three maintained a strife which must not yield,
 In spots where eagles might have chosen to build.
 Their every shot told; while the assailants fell,
 Dashed on the shingles like the limpet shell;
 But still enough survived, and mounted still, 315
 Scattering their numbers here and there, until
 Surrounded and commanded, though not nigh
 Enough for seizure, near enough to die,
 The desperate trio held aloof their fate
 But by a thread, like sharks who have gorged the bait; 320
 Yet to the very last they battled well,
 And not a groan informed their foes *who* fell.
 Christian died last – twice wounded;⁷² and once more
 Mercy was offered when they saw his gore;
 Too late for life, but not too late to die, 325
 With, though a hostile band, to close his eye.
 A limb was broken, and he drooped along
 The crag, as doth a falcon reft of young.
 The sound revived him, or appeared to wake
 Some passion which a weakly gesture spake: 330
 He beckoned to the foremost, who drew nigh,
 But, as they neared, he reared his weapon high –
 His last ball had been aimed, but from his breast
 He tore the topmost button from his vest, *

72: B. does not seem to have known that the historical Christian escaped to Pitcairn Island.

Down the tube dashed it – levelled – fired, and smiled 335
 As his foe fell; then, like a serpent, coiled
 His wounded, weary form, to where the steep
 Looked desperate as himself along the deep;
 Cast one glance back, and clenched his hand, and shook
 His last rage 'gainst the earth which he forsook; 340
 Then plunged: the rocks below received like glass
 His body crushed into one gory mass,
 With scarce a shred to tell of human form,
 Or fragment for the Sea-bird or the worm;
 A fair-haired scalp, besmeared with blood and weeds, 345
 Yet reeked, the remnant of himself and deeds;
 Some splinters of his weapons (to the last,
 As long as hand could hold, he held them fast)
 Yet glittered, but at distance – hurled away
 To rust beneath the dew and dashing spray. 350
 The rest was nothing – save a life mis-spent,
 And soul – but who shall answer where it went?
 'Tis ours to bear, not judge the dead; and they
 Who doom to Hell, themselves are on the way,
 Unless these bullies of eternal pains 355
 Are pardoned their bad hearts for their worse brains.

* In Thibault's account of Frederick 2d. of Prussia, there is a singular relation of a young Frenchman, who with his mistress appeared to be of some rank. He enlisted and deserted at Schweidnitz; and after a desperate resistance was retaken, having killed an officer, who attempted to seize him after he was wounded, by the discharge of his musket loaded with a button of his uniform. Some circumstances on his Court-Martial raised a great interest amongst his Judges, who wished to discover his real situation in life, which he offered to disclose, but to the *King* only, to whom he requested permission to write. This was refused, and Frederic was filled with the greatest indignation, from baffled curiosity or some other motive, when he understood that his request had been denied. – See Thibault's Work, vol. 2d. – (I quote from memory).⁷³

13.

The deed was over! All were gone or ta'en,
 The fugitive, the captive, or the slain.
 Chained on the deck, where once, a gallant crew,
 They stood with honour, were the wretched few 360
 Survivors of the skirmish on the isle;
 But the last rock left no surviving spoil.
 Cold lay they where they fell, and weltering,
 While o'er them flapped the Sea-birds' dewy wing,
 Now wheeling nearer from the neighbouring surge, 365
 And screaming high their harsh and hungry dirge:
 But calm and careless heaved the Wave below,
 Eternal with unsympathetic flow;
 Far o'er its face the Dolphins sported on,
 And sprung the flying fish against the Sun, 370
 Till its dried wing relapsed from its brief height,
 To gather moisture for another flight.

14.

73: E.H.Coleridge locates this out-of-the-way anecdote at Thibault, *Mes Souvenirs de vingt ans de sejour a Berlin, ou Frederic Le Grand*, Paris, 1804, iv. 145-50. The book is not in the B.L. catalogue.

'Twas morn; and Neuha, who by dawn of day
 Swam smoothly forth to catch the rising ray,
 And watch if aught approached the amphibious lair 375
 Where lay her lover, saw a Sail in air:
 It flapped, it filled, and to the growing gale
 Bent its broad arch: her breath began to fail
 With fluttering fear, her heart beat thick and high,
 While yet a doubt sprung where its course might lie. 380
 But no! it came not; fast and far away
 The shadow lessened as it cleared the bay.
 She gazed, and flung the Sea-foam from her eyes,
 To watch as for a rainbow in the skies.
 On the horizon verged the distant deck, 385
 Diminished, dwindled to a very speck –
 Then vanished. All was Ocean, all was Joy!
 Down plunged she through the cave to rouse her boy;
 Told all she had seen, and all she hoped, and all
 That happy Love could augur or recall; 390
 Sprung forth again, with Torquil following free
 His bounding Nereid over the broad Sea;
 Swam round the rock, to where a shallow cleft
 Hid the canoe that Neuha there had left
 Drifting along the tide, without an oar, 395
 That eve the strangers chased them from the shore;
 But when these vanished, she pursued her prow,
 Regained, and urged to where they found it now:
 Nor ever did more Love and Joy embark,
 Than now were wafted in that slender ark. 400

15.

Again their own shore rises on the view,
 No more polluted with a hostile hue;
 No sullen ship lay bristling o'er the foam,
 A floating dungeon: – all was Hope and Home!
 A thousand Proas darted o'er the bay, 405
 With sounding shells, and heralded their way;
 The Chiefs came down, around the People poured,
 And welcomed Torquil as a son restored;
 The women thronged, embracing and embraced
 By Neuha, asking where they had been chased, 410
 And how escaped? The tale was told; and then
 One acclamation rent the sky again;
 And from that hour a new tradition gave
 Their sanctuary the name of "Neuha's Cave."
 A hundred fires, far flickering from the height, 415
 Blazed o'er the general revel of the night,
 The feast in honour of the guest, returned
 To Peace and Pleasure, perilously earned;
 A night succeeded by such happy days
 As only the yet infant World displays. 420

END OF CANTO FOURTH

APPENDIX

EXTRACT FROM THE VOYAGE BY CAPTAIN BLIGH.⁷⁴

On the 27th of December it blew a severe storm of wind from the eastward, in the course of which we suffered greatly. One sea broke away the spare yards and spars out of the starboard mainchains; another broke into the ship and stove all the boats. Several casks of beer that had been lashed on deck broke loose, and were washed overboard; and it was not without great risk and difficulty that we were able to secure the boats from being washed away entirely. A great quantity of our bread was also damaged and rendered useless, for the sea had stove in our stern, and filled the cabin with water.

On the 5th of January, 1788, we saw the island of Teneriffe about twelve leagues distant, and next day, being Sunday, came to an anchor in the road of Santa Cruz. There we took in the necessary supplies, and, having finished our business, sailed on the 10th.

I now divided the people into three watches, and gave the charge of the third watch to Mr. Fletcher Christian, one of the mates. I have always considered this a desirable regulation when circumstances will admit to it, and I am persuaded that unbroken rest not only contributes much towards the health of the ship's company, but enables them more readily to exert themselves in cases of sudden emergency.⁷⁵

As I wished to proceed to Otaheite without stopping, I reduced the allowance of bread to two-thirds, and caused the water for drinking to be filtered through drip-stones, bought at Teneriffe for that purpose. I now acquainted the ship's company to the object of the voyage, and gave assurances of certain promotion to every one whose endeavours should merit it.⁷⁶

On Tuesday the 26th of February, being in South latitude 29° 38', and 44° 44' West longitude, we bent new sails, and made other necessary preparations for encountering the weather that was to be expected in a high latitude. Our distance from the coast of Brazil was about 100 leagues.

On the forenoon of Sunday the 2nd March, after seeing that every person was clean, divine service was performed, according to my usual custom on this day. I gave to Mr. Fletcher Christian, whom I had before directed to take charge of the third watch, a written order to act as lieutenant.

The change of temperature soon began to be sensibly felt, and, that that people might not suffer from their own negligence, I supplied them with thicker clothing, as better suited to the climate. A great number of whales of immense size, with two spout-holes on the back of the head, were seen on the 11th.

On a complaint made to me by the Master, I found it necessary to punish Matthew Quintal, one of the seamen, with two dozen of lashes, for insolence and mutinous behaviour, which was the first time that there was any occasion for punishment on board.

We were off Cape St. Diego, the Eastern part of the Terra de Fuego, and the wind being unfavourable, I thought it more advisable to go round to the eastward of Staten-land than to attempt passing through Straits le Maire. We passed New Year's Harbour and Cape St. John, and on Monday the 31st were in latitude 60° 1' south. But the wind became variable, and we had bad weather.

Storms, attended with a great sea, prevailed until the 12th of April. The ship began to leak, and required pumping every hour, which was no more than we had reason to expect from such a continuance of gales of wind and high seas. The decks also became so leaky that it was necessary to allot the great cabin, of which I made little use except in fine weather, to those people who had not births to hang their hammocks in and by this means the space between decks was less crowded.

With all this bad weather, we had the additional mortification to find, at the end of every day, that we were losing ground; for, notwithstanding our utmost exertions, and keeping on the most advantageous

74: There are several editions and versions of Bligh's book, all slightly different. I have not located the one from which B. – or Murray's printer – copies this appendix. It is *not* the first edition of his *A Voyage to the South Sea, undertaken by command of His Majesty, for the purpose of conveying the bread-fruit there to the West Indies ...* (London, 1792) from which it differs in small details throughout. I have given spot-check examples.

75: "I now divided the people into three watches, and gave the charge of the third watch to Mr. Fletcher Christian, one of the mates.—I have always considered this as a desirable regulation, when circumstances will admit of it, on many accounts; and am persuaded that unbroken rest not only contributes much towards the health of a ship's company, but enables them more readily to exert themselves in cases of sudden emergency" (Bligh, *A Voyage*, 1792, p.21).

76: "As it was my wish to proceed to Otaheite without stopping, I ordered every body to be at two thirds allowance of bread: I also directed the water for drinking to be filtered through dripstones that I had bought at Teneriffe for that purpose" (Bligh, *A Voyage*, 1792, p.21).

tacks, we did little better than drift before the wind. On Tuesday the 22nd April, we had eight down on the sick list, and the rest of the people though in good health, were greatly fatigued; but I saw, with much concern, that it was impossible to make a passage this way to the Society Islands, for we had now been thirty days in a tempestuous ocean. Thus the season was too far advanced for us to expect better weather to enable us to double Cape Horn; and, from these and other considerations, I ordered the helm to be put a-weather, and bore away for the Cape of Good Hope, to the great joy of every one on board.

We came to an anchor on Friday the 23rd May, in Simon's Bay, at the Cape after a tolerable run. The ship required complete caulking, for she had become so leaky, that we were obliged to pump hourly in our passage from Cape Horn. The sails and rigging also required repair, and, on examining the provisions, a considerable quantity was found damaged.

Having remained thirty-eight days at this place, and my people having received all the advantage that could be derived from refreshments of every kind that could be met with, we sailed on the 1st of July.

A gale of wind blew on the 20th, with a high sea; it increased after noon with such violence, that the ship was driven almost fore-castle under before we could get the sails clewed up. The lower yards were lowered, and the top-gallant-mast got down upon deck, which relieved her much. We lay to all night, and in the morning bore away under a reefed foresail. The sea still running high, in the afternoon it became very unsafe to stand on; we therefore lay to all night, without any accident, excepting that a man at the steering was thrown over the wheel and much bruised. Towards noon the violence of the storm abated, and we again bore away under the reefed foresail.

In a few days we passed the Island of St. Paul, where there is good fresh water, as I was informed by a Dutch captain, and also a hot spring, which boils fish as completely as if done by a fire. Approaching to Van Dieman's land, we had much bad weather, with snow and hail, but nothing was seen to indicate our vicinity, on the 13th of August, except a seal, which appeared at the distance of twenty leagues from it. We anchored in Adventure Bay on Wednesday the 20th.

In our passage hither from the Cape of Good Hope, the winds were chiefly from the westward, with very boisterous weather. The approach of strong southerly winds is announced by many birds of the albatross or peterel tribe; and the abatement of the gale, or a shift of wind to the northward, by their keeping way. The thermometer also varies five or six degrees in its height, when a change of these winds may be expected.

In the land surrounding Adventure Bay are many forest trees one hundred and fifty feet high; we saw one which measured above thirty-three feet in girth. We observed several eagles, some beautiful blue-plumaged herons, and parroquets in great variety.

The natives not appearing, we went in search of them towards Cape Frederic Henry. Soon after, coming to a grapnel close to the shore, for it was impossible to land, we heard their voices, like the cackling of geese, and twenty persons came out of the woods. We threw trinkets ashore tied up in parcels, which they would not open until I made an appearance of leaving them; they then did so, and, taking the articles out, put them on their heads. On first coming in sight, they made a prodigious clattering in their speech and held their arms over their heads. They spoke so quick, that it was impossible to catch one single word they uttered. Their colour is of a dull black; their skin scarified about the breast and shoulders. One was distinguished by his body being coloured with red ochre, but all the others were painted black, with a kind of soot, so thickly laid over their faces and shoulders, that it was difficult to ascertain what they were like.

On Thursday, the 4th of September, we sailed out of Adventure Bay steering first towards the east-south-east, and then to the northward of east, when, on the 19th, we came in sight of a cluster of small rocky islands, which I named Bounty Isles. Soon afterwards we frequently observed the sea, in the night-time, to be covered by luminous spots, caused by amazing quantities of small blubbers, or medusæ, which emit a light, like the blaze of a candle, from the strings or filaments extending from them, while the rest of the body continues perfectly dark.

We discovered the island of Otaheite on the 25th, and, before casting anchor next morning in Matavai Bay, such numbers of canoes had come off, that, after the natives ascertained we were friends, they came on board, and crowded the deck so much, that in ten minutes I could scarce find my own people. The whole distance which the ship had run, in direct and contrary courses, from the time of leaving England until reaching Otaheite, was twenty-seven thousand and eighty-six miles, which on an average, was one hundred and eight miles each twenty-four hours.

Here we lost our surgeon on the 9th of December. Of late he had scarcely ever stirred out of the cabin, though not apprehended to be in a dangerous state. Nevertheless, appearing worse than usual in the

evening, he was removed where he could obtain more air, but without any benefit, for he died in an hour afterwards. This unfortunate man drank very hard, and was so averse to exercise, that he would never be prevailed on to take half a dozen turns on deck at a time, during all the course of the voyage. He was buried on shore.

On Monday the 5th of January, the small cutter was missed, of which I was immediately apprised. The ship's company being mustered, we found three men absent, who had carried it off. They had taken with them eight stand of arms and ammunition; but with regard to their plan, every one on board seemed to be quite ignorant. I therefore went on shore, and engaged all the chiefs to assist in recovering both the boat and the deserters. Accordingly, the former was brought back in the course of the day, by five of the natives; but the man were not taken until nearly three weeks afterwards. Learning the place where they were, in a different quarter of the island of Otaheite, I went thither in the cutter, thinking there would be no great difficulty in securing them with the assistance of the natives. However, they heard of my arrival; and when I was near a house in which they were, they came out wanting their fire-arms, and delivered themselves up. Some of the chiefs had formerly seized and bound these deserters; but had been prevailed on, by fair promises of returning peaceably to the ship, to release them. But finding an opportunity to get possession of their arms, they set the natives at defiance.

The object of the voyage being now completed, all the bread-fruit plants, to the number of one thousand and fifteen, were got on board on Tuesday the 31st of March. Besides these, we had collected many other plants, some of them bearing the finest fruits in the world; and valuable, from affording brilliant dyes, and for various properties besides. At sunset of the 4th of April, we made sail from Otaheite, bidding farewell to an island where from twenty-three weeks we had been treated with the utmost affection and regard, and which seemed to increase in proportion to our stay. That we were not insensible to their kindness, the succeeding circumstances sufficiently proved; for to the friendly and endearing behaviour of these people may be ascribed the motives inciting an event that effected the ruin of our expedition, which there was every reason to believe would have been attended with the most favourable issue.

Next morning we got sight of the island Huaheine, and a double canoe soon coming alongside, containing ten natives, I saw among them a young man who recollected me, and called me by my name. I had been here in the year 1790, with Captain Cook, in the Resolution. A few days after sailing from this island, the weather became squally, and a thick body of black clouds collected in the east. A water-spout was in a short time seen at no great distance from us, which appeared to great advantage from the darkness of the clouds behind it. As nearly as I could judge, the upper part was about two feet in diameter, and the lower about eight inches. Scarcely had I made these remarks, when I observed that it was rapidly advancing towards the ship. We immediately altered our course, and took in all the sails except the foresail; soon after which it passed within ten yards of the stern, with a rustling noise, but without our feeling the least effect from it being so near. It seemed to be travelling at the rate of about ten miles an hour, in the direction of the wind, and it dispersed in a quarter of an hour after passing us. It is impossible to say what injury we should have received, had it passed directly over us, Masts, I imagine, might have been carried away, but I do not apprehend that it would have endangered the loss of the ship.

Passing several islands on the way, we anchored at Annamooka, on the 23d of April; and an old lame man called Tapa, whom I had known here in 1777, and immediately recollected, came on board, along with others from different islands in the vicinity. They were desirous to see the ship, and on being taken below, where the bread-fruit plants were arranged, they testified great surprise. A few of these being decayed, we went on shore to procure some in their place.

The natives exhibited numerous marks of the peculiar mourning which they express on losing their relatives; such as bloody temples, their heads being deprived of most of the hair, and what was worse, almost the whole of them had lost some of their fingers. Several fine boys, not above six years old, had lost both their little fingers; and several of the men, besides these, had parted with the middle finger of the right hand.

The chiefs went off with me to dinner, and we carried on a brisk trade for yams; we also got plantains and bread fruit. But the yams were in great abundance and very fine and large. One of them weighed above forty-five pounds. Sailing canoes came, some of which contained not less than ninety passengers. Such a number of them gradually arrived from different islands, that it was impossible to get any thing done, the multitude became so great, and there was no chief of sufficient authority to command the whole. I therefore ordered a watering party, then employed, to come on board, and sailed on Sunday the 26th of April.

We kept near the island of Kotoo all the afternoon of Monday, in hopes that some canoes would come off to the ship, but in this we were disappointed. The wind being northerly, we steered to the westward in the evening, to pass south of Tofoa; and I gave directions for this course to be continued during the night. The master had the first watch. This was the turn of duty for the night.

Hitherto the voyage had advanced in a course of uninterrupted prosperity, and had been attended with circumstances equally pleasing and satisfactory. But a very different scene was now to be disclosed; a conspiracy had been formed, which was to render all our past labour productive only of misery and distress; and it had been concerted with so much secrecy and circumspection, that no one circumstance escaped to betray the impending calamity.

On the night of Monday, the watch was set as I have described. Just before sunrise, on Tuesday morning, while I was yet asleep, Mr. Christian, with the master at arms, gunner's mate, and Thomas Burkitt, seaman, came into my cabin, and seizing me, tied by hands with a cord behind my back; threatening me with instant death if I spoke or made the least noise. I nevertheless called out as loud as I could, in hopes of assistance; but the officers not of their party were already secured by sentinels at their doors.⁷⁷ At my own cabin door were three men, besides the four within; all except Christian had muskets and bayonets; he had only a cutlass. I was dragged out of bed, and forced on deck in my shirt, suffering great pain in the mean time from the tightness with which my hands were tied. On demanding the reason of such violence, the only answer was abuse for not holding my tongue. The master, the gunner, surgeon, master's mate, and Nelson the gardener, were kept confined below, and the fore hatchway was guarded by sentinels. The boatswain and carpenter, and also the clerk, were allowed to come on deck, where they saw me standing abaft the mizen-mast, with my hands tied behind my back, under a guard, with Christian at their head. The boatswain was then ordered to hoist out the launch, accompanied by a threat, if he did not do it instantly, TO TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF.

The boat being hoisted out, Mr. Hayward and Mr. Hallet, two of the midshipmen, and Mr. Samuel, the clerk, were ordered into it. I demanded the intention of giving this order, and endeavoured to persuade the people near me not to persist in such acts of violence; but it was to no effect; for the constant answer was, "Hold your tongue, Sir, or you are dead this moment."

The master had by this time sent, requesting that he might come on deck, which was permitted; but he was soon ordered back again to his cabin. My exertions to turn the tide of affairs were continued; when Christian, changing the cutlass he held for a bayonet, and holding me by the cord about my hands with a strong gripe, threatened me with immediate death if I would not be quiet; and the villains around me had their pieces cocked and bayonets fixed.

Certain individuals were called on to get into the boat, and were hurried over the ship's side; whence I concluded, that along with them I was to be set adrift. Another effort to bring about a change produced nothing but menaces of having my brains blown out.

The boatswain and those seamen who were to be put into the boat, were allowed to collect twine, canvas, lines, sails, cordage, an eight-and-twenty gallon cask of water; and Mr. Samuel got 150 pounds of bread, with a small quantity of rum and wine; also a quadrant and compass; but he was prohibited, on pain of death, to touch any map or astronomical book, and any instrument, or any of my surveys and drawings.

The mutineers having thus forced those of the seamen whom they wished to get rid of into the boat, Christian directed a dram to be served to each of his crew. I then unhappily saw that nothing could be done to recover the ship. The officers were next called on deck, and forced over the ship's side into the boat, while I was kept apart from every one abaft the mizenmast. Christian, armed with a bayonet, held the cord fastening my hands, and the guard around me stood with their pieces cocked; but on my daring the ungrateful wretches to fire, they uncocked them. Isaac Martin, one of them, I saw had an inclination to assist me; and as he fed me with a shaddock,⁷⁸ my lips being quite parched, we explained each other's sentiments by looks. But this was observed, and he was removed. He then got into the boat, attempting to leave the ship; however, he was compelled to return. Some others were also kept contrary to their inclination.

77: "Tuesday the 28th. Just before sun-rising, while was yet asleep, Mr. Christian, with the master-at-arms, gunner's mate, and Thomas Burkitt, seaman, came into my cabin, and, seizing me, tied my hands with a cord behind my back, threatening me with instant death if I spoke or made the least noise: I, however, called as loud as I could, in hopes of assistance; but they had already secured the officers who were not of their party, by placing centinals at their doors" (Bligh, *A Voyage*, 1792, p. 154).

78: See above, I 147n.

It appeared to me, that Christian was some time in doubt whether he should keep the carpenter or his mates. At length he determined on the latter, and the carpenter was ordered into the boat. He was permitted, though not without opposition, to take his tool chest.

Mr. Samuel secured my journals and commission, with some important ship papers; this he did with great resolution, though strictly watched. He attempted to save the time-keeper, and a box with my surveys, drawings, and remarks, for fifteen years past, which were very numerous, when he was hurried away with – “Damn your eyes, you are well off to get what you have.”

Much altercation took place among the mutinous crew during the transaction of this whole affair. Some swore, “I’ll be damned if he does not find his way home, if he gets any thing with him,” meaning me; and when the carpenter’s chest was carrying away, “Damn my eyes, he will have a vessel built in a month;” while others ridiculed the helpless situation of the boat, which was very deep in the water, and had so little room for those who were in her. As for Christian, he seemed as if meditating destruction on himself and every one else.

I asked for arms, but the mutineers laughed at me, and said I was well acquainted with the people among whom I was going; four cutlasses, however, were thrown into the boat, after we were veered astern.

The officers and men being in the boat, they only waited for me, of which the master-at-arms informed Christian, who then said, “Come, Captain Bligh, your officers and men are now in the boat, and you must go with them; if you attempt to make the least resistance, you will instantly be put to death;” and without further ceremony, I was forced over the side by a tribe of armed ruffians, where they untied my hands. Being in the boat, we were veered astern by a rope. A few pieces of pork were thrown to us, also the four cutlasses. The armourer and carpenter then called out to me to remember they had no hand in the transaction. After having been kept some time to make sport for these unfeeling wretches, and having undergone much ridicule, we were at length cast adrift in the open ocean.

Eighteen persons were with me in the boat,— the master, acting surgeon, botanist, gunner, boatswain, carpenter, master, and quarter-master’s mate, two quarter-masters, and sail maker, two cooks, my clerk, the butcher, and a boy. There remained on board, Fletcher Christian, the master’s mate, Peter Haywood, Edward Young, George Stewart, midshipmen; the master-at-arms, gunner’s mate, boatswain’s mate, gardener, armourer, carpenter’s mate, carpenter’s crew, and fourteen seamen, being altogether the most able men of the ship’s company.

Having little or no wind, we rowed pretty fast towards the island of Tofoa, which bore north-east about ten leagues distant. The ship while in sight steered west-north-west, but this I considered only as a feint, for when we were sent away, “Huzza for Otaheite!” was frequently heard among the mutineers.

Christian, the chief of them was of a respectable family in the north of England. This was the third voyage he had made with me. Notwithstanding the roughness with which I was treated, the remembrance of past kindnesses produced some remorse in him. While they were forcing me out of the ship, I asked him whether this was a proper return for the many instances he had experienced of my friendship? He appeared disturbed at the question, and answered with much emotion. “That – Captain Bligh – that is the thing – I am in hell – I am in hell.” His abilities to take charge of the third watch, as I had so divided the ship’s company, were fully equal to the task.

Haywood was also of a respectable family in the north of England, and a young man of abilities, as well as Christian. These two had been objects of my particular regard and attention, and I had taken great pains to instruct them, having entertained hopes that, as professional men, they would have become a credit to their country. Young was well recommended; and Stewart of credible parents in the Orkneys, at which place, on the return of the Resolution from the South Seas in 1780, we received so many civilities, that in consideration of these alone I should gladly have taken him with me. But he had always borne a good character.

When I had time to reflect, an inward satisfaction prevented the depression of my spirits. Yet, a few hours before, my situation had been peculiarly flattering; I had a ship in the most perfect order, stored with every necessary, both of health and service; the object of the voyage was attained, and two-thirds of it now completed. The remaining part had every prospect of success.

It will naturally be asked, what could be the cause of such a revolt? In answer, I can only conjecture that the mutineers had flattered themselves with the hope of a happier life among the Otaheitan than they could possibly enjoy in England; which, joined to some female connections, most probably occasioned the whole transaction.

The women of Otaheite are handsome, mild, and cheerful in manners and conversation; possessed of great sensibility, and have sufficient delicacy to make them be admired and beloved. The chiefs were so much attached to our people, that they rather encouraged their stay among them than otherwise, and even made them promises of large possessions. Under these, and many other concomitant circumstances, it ought hardly to be the subject of surprise that a set of sailors, most of them void of connections, should be led away, where they had the power of fixing themselves in the midst of plenty, in one of the finest islands in the world, where there was no necessity to labour, and where the allurements of dissipation are beyond any conception that can be formed of it. The utmost, however, that a Commander could have expected was desertions, such as have already happened more or less in the South Seas, and not an act of open mutiny.

But the secrecy of this mutiny surpasses belief. Thirteen of the party who were now with me had always lived forward among the seamen; yet neither they, nor the messmates of Christian, Stewart, Haywood, and Young, had ever observed any circumstance to excite suspicion of what was plotting; and it is not wonderful if I fell a sacrifice to it, my mind being entirely free from suspicion. Perhaps, had marines been on board, a sentinel at my cabin-door might have prevented it; for I constantly slept with the door open, that the officer of the watch might have access to me on all occasions. If the mutiny had been occasioned by any grievances, either real or imaginary, I must have discovered symptoms of discontent, which would have put me on my guard; but it was for otherwise. With Christian, in particular, I was on the most friendly terms; that very day he was engaged to have dined with me; and the preceding night he excused himself from supping with me on pretence of indisposition, for which I felt concerned, having no suspicion of his honour or integrity.⁷⁹

THE END

79: "integrity and honour" (Bligh, *A Voyage*, 1792, p.164).

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