

VIII

POLITICAL,
IDEOLOGICAL AND
TOPICAL POEMS

Political, Ideological and Topical Poems

PREFACE

THE POEMS IN THIS final section really form an appendix, and are included more for their historical interest, than their intrinsic poetic merit. They show a preliminary background of revolutionary ideas, loosely expressed in verse, but not yet fully absorbed into Coleridge's poetry. They form a scrapbook of Coleridge's early thoughts on public affairs, and his later changing sense of the poet's function in society. The high political passions of his youth gradually give way to a more sceptical comedy, which still retains remarkable energy and conviction.

The group is dominated by Coleridge's excited response to events in France, beginning with the fall of the Bastille in 1789, when he was sixteen (No. 93). Wild millennial hopes for some apocalyptic change in society fill his mind in "Religious Musings" (No. 95), though the exaggerated rhetoric of this is already disclaimed elsewhere in the first of the Conversation Poems, which also belongs to 1794 (see No. 22). Over the next five years, French military ambitions, the invasion of Switzerland, and the advent of Napoleon, move Coleridge to a liberal position opposed to Jacobin revolutionary violence, but committed to a concept of political freedom (see "France: An Ode", No. 98). Coleridge's reading in philosophy, science and travel literature meanwhile produces a new line of mythological thought about the "Invisible Powers" in the universe (No. 96). This will lead directly to the ballads, with their interest in primitive forces and psychological archetypes, and the virtual abandonment of political poetry after 1799.

Coleridge develops surprisingly early the use of light and comic verse, which seems to allow him to say what would otherwise be unacceptable or indecorous. Pathos and humour are effectively

combined in "To a Young Ass" (No. 94), which is not only an authentic expression of Pantisocratic brio, but also perhaps the first recorded Animal Rights poem in English. The popular broad-sheet comic ballad, "The Devil's Thoughts" (No. 99) turned out to be the most successful poem Coleridge ever published in a newspaper. Over twenty years later, he again uses a punchy, short comic verse-line (this time a form of Skeltonics) to defend himself in "A Character" (No. 100) from the charge of political apostasy (levelled by Hazlitt and other radicals) and the grossly unfair suggestion that he has been feathering his own nest with state grants.

Perhaps Coleridge's most unexpected late success in this comic mode is "The Delinquent Travellers" (No. 101), which might claim to be a Romantic comic version of the "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", in the new age of the steamship. It records the first great craze for "tourism", after the Napoleonic War had finally ended in Europe. Coleridge envisages himself departing once more to the southern oceans, but this time for Australia, an utopian land where a new generation of Pantisocrats might still flourish.

The emergence of this benign comedic vision of the public world, during the late 1820s, is hardly recognized by modern criticism, though it is foretold in the many humorous cadenzas of Coleridge's private letters, his lifelong love of puns, and his relentless exchange of absurdities with Charles Lamb. While serious thoughts about social issues continued to pour out in his prose – the *Lay Sermons*, *The Friend*, *On the Constitution of Church and State* – to the very end of his life (see Chronology), Coleridge's poetry could still sometimes lift him into a lighter and brighter dimension, where the distant peaks of Xanadu were yet remotely visible from the upper windows of Highgate Hill.

An Ode on the Destruction of the Bastille

I

Heard'st thou yon universal cry,
 And dost thou linger still on Gallia's shore?
 Go, Tyranny! beneath some barbarous sky
 Thy terrors lost and ruin'd power deplore!
 What tho' through many a groaning age 5
 Was felt thy keen suspicious rage,
 Yet Freedom rous'd by fierce Disdain
 Has wildly broke thy triple chain,
 And like the storm which Earth's deep entrails hide,
 At length has burst its way and spread the ruins wide. 10

* * *

IV

In sighs their sickly breath was spent; each gleam
 Of Hope had ceas'd the long long day to cheer;
 Or if delusive, in some flitting dream,
 It gave them to their friends and children dear – 15
 Awaked by lordly Insult's sound
 To all the doubled horrors round,
 Oft shrunk they from Oppression's band
 While Anguish rais'd the desperate hand
 For silent death; or lost the mind's controll,
 Thro' every burning vein would tides of Frenzy roll. 20

V

But cease, ye pitying bosoms, cease to bleed!
 Such scenes no more demand the tear humane;
 I see, I see! glad Liberty succeed
 With every patriot virtue in her train!

And mark yon peasant's raptur'd eyes; 25
Secure he views his harvests rise;
No fetter vile the mind shall know,
And Eloquence shall fearless glow.
Yes! Liberty the soul of Life shall reign,
Shall throb in every pulse, shall flow thro' every vein! 30

VI

Shall France alone a Despot spurn?
Shall she alone, O Freedom, boast thy care?
Lo, round thy standard Belgia's heroes burn,
Tho' Power's blood-stain'd streamers fire the air,
And wider yet thy influence spread, 35
Nor e'er recline thy weary head,
Till every land from pole to pole
Shall boast one independent soul!
And still, as erst, let favour'd Britain be
First ever of the first and freest of the free! 40

And frisk about, as lamb or kitten gay!
Yea! and more musically sweet to me
Thy dissonant harsh bray of joy would be,
Than warbled melodies that soothe to rest
The aching of pale Fashion's vacant breast!

35

The Present State of Society

EXTRACT FROM "RELIGIOUS MUSINGS"

Ah! far removed from all that glads the sense,
 From all that softens or ennobles Man,
 The wretched Many! Bent beneath their loads
 They gape at pageant Power, nor recognise
 Their cots' transmuted plunder! From the tree 5
 Of Knowledge, ere the vernal sap had risen
 Rudely disbranchéd! Blessed Society!
 Fitiest depicted by some sun-scorched waste,
 Where oft majestic through the tainted noon
 The Simoom sails, before whose purple pomp* 10
 Who falls not prostrate dies! And where by night,
 Fast by each precious fountain on green herbs
 The lion couches: or hyaena dips
 Deep in the lucid stream his bloody jaws;
 Or serpent plants his vast moon-glittering bulk, 15
 Caught in whose monstrous twine Behemoth† yells,
 His bones loud-crashing!

O ye numberless,
 Whom foul Oppression's ruffian gluttony
 Drives from Life's plenteous feast! O thou poor Wretch
 Who nursed in darkness and made wild by want, 20
 Roamest for prey, yea thy unnatural hand

* At eleven o'clock, while we contemplated with great pleasure the rugged top of Chiggre, to which we were fast approaching, and where we were to solace ourselves with plenty of good water, IDRIS cried out with a loud voice, 'Fall upon your faces, for here is the Simoom'. I saw from the S.E. an haze come on, in colour like the purple part of the rainbow, but not so compressed or thick. It did not occupy twenty yards in breadth, and was about twelve feet high from the ground. — We all lay flat on the ground, as if dead, till IDRIS told us it was blown over. The meteor, or purple haze, which I saw, was indeed passed; but the light air that still blew was of heat to threaten suffocation. Bruce's *Travels*, vol. 4, p. 557.

† Behemoth, in Hebrew, signifies wild beasts in general. Some believe it is the Elephant, some the Hippopotamus; some affirm it is the Wild Bull. Poetically, it designates any large Quadruped.

Dost lift to deeds of blood! O pale-eyed form,
 The victim of seduction, doomed to know
 Polluted nights and days of blasphemy;
 Who in loathed orgies with lewd wassailers 25
 Must gaily laugh, while thy remembered Home
 Gnaws like a viper at thy secret heart!
 O aged Women! ye who weekly catch
 The morsel tossed by law-forced charity,
 And die so slowly, that none call it murder! 30
 O loathly suppliants! ye, that unreceived
 Totter heart-broken from the closing gates
 Of the full Lazar-house; or, gazing, stand,
 Sick with despair! O ye to Glory's field
 Forced or ensnared, who, as ye gasp in death, 35
 Bleed with new wounds beneath the vulture's beak!
 O thou poor widow, who in dreams dost view
 Thy husband's mangled corse, and from short doze
 Start'st with a shriek; or in thy half-thatched cot
 Waked by the wintry night-storm; wet and cold 40
 Cow'rst o'er thy screaming baby! Rest awhile
 Children of Wretchedness! More groans must rise,
 More blood must stream, or ere your wrongs be full.
 Yet is the day of Retribution nigh:
 The Lamb of God hath opened the fifth seal:* 45
 And upward rush on swiftest wing of fire
 The innumerable multitude of wrongs
 By man on man inflicted! Rest awhile,
 Children of Wretchedness! The hour is nigh
 And lo! the Great, the Rich, the Mighty Men, 50
 The Kings and the Chief Captains of the World,

* See the sixth chapter of the Revelation of St. John the Divine. — And I looked and beheld a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the FOURTH part of the Earth to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with pestilence, and with the beasts of the Earth. — And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held; and white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were should be fulfilled. And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, the stars of Heaven fell unto the Earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind: And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, &c.

With all that fixed on high like stars of Heaven
 Shot baleful influence, shall be cast to earth,
 Vile and down-trodden, as the untimely fruit
 Shook from the fig-tree by a sudden storm. 55
 Even now the storm begins: * each gentle name.
 Faith and meek Piety, with fearful joy
 Tremble far-off – for lo! the Giant Frenzy
 Uprooting empires with his whirlwind arm
 Mocketh high Heaven; burst hideous from the cell 60
 Where the old Hag, unconquerable, huge,
 Creation's eyeless drudge, black Ruin, sits
 Nursing the impatient earthquake.

O return!

Pure Faith! meek Piety! The abhorred Form †
 Whose scarlet robe was stiff with earthly pomp, 65

Who drank iniquity in cups of gold,
 Whose names were many and all blasphemous,
 Hath met the horrible judgment! Whence that cry?
 The mighty army of foul Spirits shrieked
 Disherited of earth! For she hath fallen 70

On whose black front was written Mystery;
 She that reeled heavily, whose wine was blood;
 She that worked whoredom with the Daemon Power,
 And from the dark embrace all evil things
 Brought forth and nurtured: mitred Atheism! 75

And patient Folly who on bended knee
 Gives back the steel that stabbed him; and pale Fear
 Haunted by ghostlier shapings than surround
 Moon-blasted Madness when he yells at midnight!
 Return pure Faith! return meek Piety! 80

The kingdoms of the world are your's: each heart
 Self-governed, the vast family of Love
 Raised from the common earth by common toil
 Enjoy the equal produce. Such delights

* Alluding to the French Revolution.

† And there came one of the seven Angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, come hither! I will show unto thee the judgment of the great Whore, that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, &c. Revelation of St. John the Divine, chapter the seventeenth.

As float to earth, permitted visitants! 85
 When in some hour of solemn jubilee
 The massy gates of Paradise are thrown
 Wide open, and forth come in fragments wild
 Sweet echoes of unearthly melodies,
 And odours snatched from beds of Amaranth, 90
 And they, that from the crystal river of life
 Spring up on freshened wing, ambrosial gales!
 The favoured good man in his lonely walk
 Perceives them, and his silent spirit drinks
 Strange bliss which he shall recognise in heaven. 95
 And such delights, such strange beatitudes
 Seize on my young anticipating heart
 When that blest future rushes on my view!
 For in his own and in his Father's might
 The Saviour comes! While as the Thousand Years* 100
 Lead up their mystic dance, the Desert shouts!
 Old Ocean claps his hands! The mighty Dead
 Rise to new life, who'er from earliest time
 With conscious zeal had urged Love's wondrous plan,
 Coadjutors of God. To Milton's trump 105
 The high groves of the renovated Earth
 Unbosom their glad echoes: inly hushed,
 Adoring Newton his serener eye
 Raises to heaven: and he of mortal kind
 Wisest, he[†] first who marked the ideal tribes 110
 Up the fine fibres through the sentient brain.
 Lo! Priestley there, patriot, and saint, and sage,
 Him, full of years, from his loved native land
 Statesmen blood-stained and priests idolatrous
 By dark lies maddening the blind multitude 115
 Drove with vain hate. Calm, pitying he retired,
 And mused expectant on these promised years.

* The Millenium: — in which I suppose, that Man will continue to enjoy the highest glory, of which his human nature is capable. — That all who in past ages have endeavoured to ameliorate the state of man will rise and enjoy the fruits and flowers, the imperceptible seeds of which they had sown in their former Life: and that the wicked will during the same period, be suffering the remedies adapted to their several bad habits. I suppose that this period will be followed by the passing away of this Earth and by our entering the state of pure intellect; when all Creation shall rest from its labours.

† David Hartley.

Invisible Powers

EXTRACT FROM "THE DESTINY OF NATIONS"

For what is Freedom, but the unfettered use
 Of all the powers which God for use had given?
 But chiefly this, him First, him Last to view
 Through meaner powers and secondary things
 Effulgent, as through clouds that veil his blaze. 5
 For all that meets the bodily sense I deem
 Symbolical, one mighty alphabet
 For infant minds; and we in this low world
 Placed with our backs to bright Reality,
 That we may learn with young unwounded ken 10
 The substance from its shadow. Infinite Love,
 Whose latence is the plenitude of All,
 Thou with retracted beams, and self-eclipse
 Veiling, revealest thine eternal Sun.

But some there are who deem themselves most free 15
 When they within this gross and visible sphere
 Chain down the winged thought, scoffing ascent,
 Proud in their meanness: and themselves they cheat
 With noisy emptiness of learned phrase,
 Their subtle fluids, impacts, essences, 20
 Self-working tools, uncaused effects, and all
 Those blind Omniscients, those Almighty Slaves,
 Untenanting creation of its God.

But Properties are God: the naked mass
 (If mass there be, fantastic guess or ghost) 25
 Acts only by its inactivity.
 Here we pause humbly. Others boldlier think
 That as one body seems the aggregate
 Of atoms numberless, each organized;
 So by a strange and dim similitude 30
 Infinite myriads of self-conscious minds
 Are one all-conscious Spirit, which informs

With absolute ubiquity of thought
 (His one eternal self-affirming act!)
 All his involved Monads, that yet seem 35
 With various province and apt agency
 Each to pursue its own self-centering end.
 Some nurse the infant diamond in the mine;
 Some roll the genial juices through the oak;
 Some drive the mutinous clouds to clash in air, 40
 And rushing on the storm with whirlwind speed,
 Yoke the red lightnings to their volleying car.
 Thus these pursue their never-varying course,
 No eddy in their stream. Others, more wild,
 With complex interests weaving human fates, 45
 Duteous or proud, alike obedient all,
 Evolve the process of eternal good.

And what if some rebellious, o'er dark realms
 Arrogate power? yet these train up to God,
 And on the rude eye, unconfirmed for day, 50
 Flash meteor-lights better than total gloom.
 As ere from Lieule-Oaive's vapoury head
 The Laplander beholds the far-off Sun
 Dart his slant beam on unobeying snows,
 While yet the stern and solitary Night 55
 Brooks no alternate sway, the Boreal Morn
 With mimic lustre substitutes its gleam,
 Guiding his course or by Niemi lake
 Or Balda Zhiok,* or the mossy stone
 Of Solfar-kapper, while the snowy blast 60
 Drifts arrowy by, or eddies round his sledge,
 Making the poor babe at its mother's back†
 Scream in its scanty cradle: he the while
 Wins gentle solace as with upward eye
 He marks the streamy banners of the North, 65
 Thinking himself those happy spirits shall join
 Who there in floating robes of rosy light

* Balda-Zhiok, i.e. mons altitudinis, the highest mountain in Lapland.

† The Lapland women carry their infants at their backs in a piece of excavated wood which serves them for a cradle: opposite to the infant's mouth there is a hole for it to breathe through.

Dance sportively. For Fancy is the power
 That first unsensualises the dark mind,
 Giving it new delights; and bids it swell 70
 With wild activity; and peopling air,
 By obscure fears of Beings invisible,
 Emancipates it from the grosser thrall
 Of the present impulse, teaching Self-control,
 Till Superstition with unconscious hand 75
 Seat Reason on her throne. Wherefore not vain,
 Nor yet without permitted power impressed,
 I deem those legends terrible, with which
 The polar ancient thrills his uncouth throng:
 Whether of pitying Spirits that make their moan 80
 O'er slaughter'd infants, or that Giant Bird
 Vuokho, of whose rushing wings the noise
 Is Tempest, when the unutterable Shape
 Speeds from the mother of Death, and utters once
 That shriek, which never murderer heard, and lived. 85

Or if the Greenland Wizard in strange trance
 Pierces the untravelled realms of Ocean's bed
 Over the abysm, even to that uttermost cave
 By mis-shaped prodigies beleaguered, such
 As Earth ne'er bred, nor Air, nor the upper Sea: 90
 Where dwells the Fury Form, whose unheard name
 With eager eye, pale cheek, suspended breath,
 And lips half-opening with the dread of sound,
 Unsleping Silence guards, worn out with fear
 Lest haply 'scaping on some treacherous blast 95
 The fateful word let slip the Elements
 And frenzy Nature. Yet the wizard her,
 Arm'd with Torngarsuck's power, the Spirit of Good,*
 Forces to unchain the foodful progeny
 Of the Ocean stream; — thence thro' the realm of Souls, 100

* They call the Good Spirit, Torngarsuck. The other great but malignant spirit a nameless female; she dwells under the sea in a great house where she can detain in captivity all the animals of the ocean by her magic power. When a death befalls the Greenlanders, an Angekok or magician must undertake a journey thither: he passes through the kingdom of souls, over an horrible abyss into the palace of this phantom, and by his enchantments causes the captive creatures to ascend directly to the surface of the ocean. See Crantz, *History of Greenland*, vol. i. 206.

Where live the Innocent, as far from cares
As from the storms and overwhelming waves
That tumble on the surface of the Deep,
Returns with far-heard pant, hotly pursued
By the fierce Warders of the Sea, once more, 105
Ere by the frost foreclosed, to repossess
His fleshly mansion, that had staid the while
In the dark tent within a cow'ring group
Untenanted. — Wild phantasies! yet wise,
On the victorious goodness of high God 110
Teaching reliance, and medicinal hope,
Till from Bethabra northward, heavenly Truth
With gradual steps, winning her difficult way,
Transfer their rude Faith perfected and pure.

Fire, Famine, and Slaughter

A WAR ECLOGUE

The Scene a desolated Tract in La Vendée. FAMINE is discovered lying on the ground; to her enter FIRE and SLAUGHTER.

Fam. Sisters! sisters! who sent you here?

Slau. [*to Fire*]. I will whisper it in her ear.

Fire. No! no! no!

Spirits hear what spirits tell:

'Twill make a holiday in Hell.

5

No! no! no!

Myself, I named him once below,

And all the souls, that damnéd be,

Leaped up at once in anarchy,

Clapped their hands and danced for glee.

10

They no longer heeded me;

But laughed to hear Hell's burning rafters

Unwillingly re-echo laughters!

No! no! no!

Spirits hear what spirits tell:

15

'Twill make a holiday in Hell!

Fam. Whisper it, sister! so and so!

In a dark hint, soft and slow.

Slau. Letters four do form his name –

And who sent you?

Both. The same! the same!

20

Slau. He came by stealth, and unlocked my den,

And I have drunk the blood since then

Of thrice three hundred thousand men.

Both. Who bade you do 't?

Slau. The same! the same!

Letters four do form his name.

25

He let me loose, and cried Halloo!

To him alone the praise is due.

Fam. Thanks, sister, thanks! the men have bled,

Their wives and their children faint for bread.

I stood in a swampy field of battle; 30
 With bones and skulls I made a rattle,
 To frighten the wolf and carrion-crow
 And the homeless dog – but they would not go.
 So off I flew: for how could I bear
 To see them gorge their dainty fare? 35
 I heard a groan and a peevish squall,
 And through the chink of a cottage-wall –
 Can you guess what I saw there?
Both. Whisper it, sister! in our ear.
Fam. A baby beat its dying mother: 40
 I had starved the one and was starving the other!
Both. Who bade you do 't?
Fam. The same! the same!
 Letters four do form his name.
 He let me loose, and cried, Halloo!
 To him alone the praise is due. 45
Fire. Sisters! I from Ireland came!
 Hedge and corn-fields all on flame,
 I triumph'd o'er the setting sun!
 And all the while the work was done,
 On as I strode with my huge strides, 50
 I flung back my head and I held my sides,
 It was so rare a piece of fun
 To see the sweltered cattle run
 With uncouth gallop through the night,
 Scared by the red and noisy light! 55
 By the light of his own blazing cot
 Was many a naked Rebel shot:
 The house-stream met the flame and hissed,
 While crash! fell in the roof, I wist,
 On some of those old bed-rid nurses, 60
 That deal in discontent and curses.
Both. Who bade you do 't?
Fire. The same! the same!
 Letters four do form his name.
 He let me loose, and cried Halloo!
 To him alone the praise is due. 65
All. He let us loose, and cried Halloo!
 How shall we yield him honour due?
Fam. Wisdom comes with lack of food.

I'll gnaw, I'll gnaw the multitude,
Till the cup of rage o'erbrim: 70
They shall seize him and his brood —
 Slau. They shall tear him limb from limb!
 Fire. O thankless beldames and untrue!
And is this all that you can do
For him, who did so much for you? 75
Ninety months he, by my troth!
Hath richly catered for you both;
And in an hour would you repay
An eight years' work? — Away! away!
I alone am faithful! I 80
Cling to him everlastingly.

France: An Ode

ARGUMENT

“*First Stanza.* An invocation to those objects in Nature the contemplation of which had inspired the Poet with a devotional love of Liberty. *Second Stanza.* The exultation of the Poet at the commencement of the French Revolution, and his unqualified abhorrence of the Alliance against the Republic. *Third Stanza.* The blasphemies and horrors during the domination of the Terrorists regarded by the Poet as a transient storm, and as the natural consequence of the former despotism and of the foul superstition of Popery. Reason, indeed, began to suggest many apprehensions; yet still the Poet struggled to retain the hope that France would make conquests by no other means than by presenting to the observation of Europe a people more happy and better instructed than under other forms of Government. *Fourth Stanza.* Switzerland, and the Poet’s recantation. *Fifth Stanza.* An address to Liberty, in which the Poet expresses his conviction that those feelings and that grand *ideal* of Freedom which the mind attains by its contemplation of its individual nature, and of the sublime surrounding objects (see Stanza the First) do not belong to men, as a society, nor can possibly be either gratified or realised, under any form of human government; but belong to the individual man, so far as he is pure, and inflamed with the love and adoration of God in Nature.”

I

Ye Clouds! that far above me float and pause,
 Whose pathless march no mortal may controul!
 Ye Ocean-Waves! that, wheresoe’er ye roll,
 Yield homage only to eternal laws!
 Ye Woods! that listen to the night-birds singing, 5
 Midway the smooth and perilous slope reclined,
 Save when your own imperjous branches swinging,
 Have made a solemn music of the wind!

Where, like a man beloved of God,
 Through glooms, which never woodman trod, 10
 How oft, pursuing fancies holy,
 My moonlight way o'er flowering weeds I wound,
 Inspired, beyond the guess of folly,
 By each rude shape and wild unconquerable sound!
 O ye loud Waves! and O ye Forests high! 15
 And O ye Clouds that far above me soared!
 Thou rising Sun! thou blue rejoicing Sky!
 Yea, every thing that is and will be free!
 Bear witness for me, wheresoe'er ye be,
 With what deep worship I have still adored 20
 The spirit of divinest Liberty.

II

When France in wrath her giant-limbs upreared,
 And with that oath, which smote air, earth, and sea,
 Stamped her strong foot and said she would be free,
 Bear witness for me, how I hoped and feared! 25
 With what a joy my lofty gratulation
 Unawed I sang, amid a slavish band:
 And when to overwhelm the disenchanting nation,
 Like fiends embattled by a wizard's wand,
 The Monarchs marched in evil day, 30
 And Britain joined the dire array;
 Though dear her shores and circling ocean,
 Though many friendships, many youthful loves
 Had sworn the patriot emotion
 And flung a magic light o'er all her hills and groves; 35
 Yet still my voice, unaltered, sang defeat
 To all that braved the tyrant-quelling lance,
 And shame too long delayed and vain retreat!
 For ne'er, O Liberty! with partial aim
 I dimmed thy light or damped thy holy flame; 40
 But blessed the paeans of delivered France,
 And hung my head and wept at Britain's name.

"And what," I said, "though Blasphemy's loud scream
 With that sweet music of deliverance strove!
 Though all the fierce and drunken passions wove 45
 A dance more wild than e'er was maniac's dream!
 Ye storms, that round the dawning East assembled,
 The Sun was rising, though ye hid his light!"
 And when, to soothe my soul, that hoped and trembled,
 The dissonance ceased, and all seemed calm and bright; 50
 When France her front deep-scarr'd and gory
 Concealed with clustering wreaths of glory;
 When, insupportably advancing,
 Her arm made mockery of the warrior's ramp;
 While timid looks of fury glancing, 55
 Domestic treason, crushed beneath her fatal stamp,
 Writhe like a wounded dragon in his gore;
 Then I reproached my fears that would not flee;
 "And soon," I said, "shall Wisdom teach her lore.
 In the low huts of them that toil and groan! 60
 And, conquering by her happiness alone,
 Shall France compel the nations to be free,
 Till Love and Joy look round, and call the Earth their own."

IV

Forgive me, Freedom! O forgive those dreams!
 I hear thy voice, I hear thy loud lament, 65
 From bleak Helvetia's icy caverns sent —
 I hear thy groans upon her blood-stained streams!
 Heroes, that for your peaceful country perished,
 And ye that, fleeing, spot your mountain-snows
 With bleeding wounds; forgive me, that I cherished 70
 One thought that ever blessed your cruel foes!
 To scatter rage, and traitorous guilt,
 Where Peace her jealous home had built;
 A patriot-race to disinherit
 Of all that made their stormy wilds so dear; 75
 And with inexpiable spirit
 To taint the bloodless freedom of the mountaineer —
 O France, that mockest Heaven, adulterous, blind,

And patriot only in pernicious toils!
Are these thy boasts, Champion of human kind? 80
To mix with Kings in the low lust of sway,
Yell in the hunt, and share the murderous prey;
To insult the shrine of Liberty with spoils
From freemen torn; to tempt and to betray?

v

The Sensual and the Dark rebel in vain, 85
Slaves by their own compulsion! In mad game
They burst their manacles and wear the name
Of Freedom, graven on a heavier chain!
O Liberty! with profitless endeavour
Have I pursued thee, many a weary hour; 90
But thou nor swell'st the victor's strain, nor ever
Didst breathe thy soul in forms of human power.
Alike from all, howe'er they praise thee,
(Nor prayer, nor boastful name delays thee)
Alike from Priestcraft's harpy minions, 95
And factious Blasphemy's obscener slaves,
Thou speedest on thy subtle pinions,
The guide of homeless winds, and playmate of the waves!
And there I felt thee! – on that sea-cliff's verge,
Whose pines, scarce travelled by the breeze above, 100
Had made one murmur with the distant surge!
Yes, while I stood and gazed, my temples bare,
And shot my being through earth, sea, and air,
Possessing all things with intensest love,
O Liberty! my spirit felt thee there. 105

The Devil's Thoughts

I

From his brimstone bed at break of day
 A walking the Devil is gone,
 To visit his snug little farm the earth,
 And see how his stock goes on.

II

Over the hill and over the dale, 5
 And he went over the plain,
 And backward and forward he switched his long tail
 As a gentleman switches his cane.

III

And how then was the Devil drest?
 Oh! he was in his Sunday's best: 10
 His jacket was red and his breeches were blue,
 And there was a hole where the tail came through.

IV

He saw a Lawyer killing a Viper
 On a dunghill hard by his own stable;
 And the Devil smiled, for it put him in mind 15
 Of Cain and his brother, Abel.

V

He saw an Apothecary on a white horse
 Ride by on his vocations,
 And the Devil thought of his old Friend 20
 Death in the Revelations.

VI

He saw a cottage with a double coach-house,
 A cottage of gentility;
 And the Devil did grin, for his darling sin
 Is pride that apes humility.

VII

He peep'd into a rich bookseller's shop, 25
 Quoth he! we are both of one college!
 For I sate myself, like a cormorant, once
 Hard by the tree of knowledge.

VIII

Down the river did glide, with wind and tide,
 A pig with vast celerity; 30
 And the Devil look'd wise as he saw how the while,
 It cut its own throat. "There!" quoth he with a smile,
 "Goes 'England's commercial prosperity.'"

IX

As he went through Cold-Bath Fields he saw
 A solitary cell; 35
 And the Devil was pleased, for it gave him a hint
 For improving his prisons in Hell.

X

He saw a Turnkey in a trice
 Fetter a troublesome blade;
 "Nimbly," quoth he, "do the fingers move 40
 If a man be but used to his trade."

XI

He saw the same Turnkey unfetter a man,
 With but little expedition,
 Which put him in mind of the long debate
 On the Slave-trade abolition. 45

XII

He saw an old acquaintance
 As he passed by a Methodist meeting; —
 She holds a consecrated key,
 And the devil nods her a greeting.

XIII

She turned up her nose, and said, 50
 "Avaunt! my name's Religion,"
 And she looked to Mr——
 And leered like a love-sick pigeon.

XIV

He saw a certain minister 55
 (A minister to his mind)
 Go up into a certain House,
 With a majority behind.

XV

The Devil quoted Genesis 60
 Like a very learned clerk,
 How "Noah and his creeping things
 Went up into the Ark."

XVI

He took from the poor,
 And he gave to the rich,
 And he shook hands with a Scotchman,
 For he was not afraid of the — 65

XVII

General ——'s burning face
 He saw with consternation,
 And back to hell his way did he take,
 For the Devil thought by a slight mistake
 It was general conflagration. 70

A Character

A bird, who for his other sins –
 Had liv'd amongst the Jacobins;
 Though like a kitten amid rats,
 Or callow tit in nest of bats,
 He much abhorr'd all democrats; 5
 Yet nathless stood in ill report
 Of wishing ill to Church and Court,
 Tho' he'd nor claw, nor tooth, nor sting,
 And learnt to pipe God save the King;
 Tho' each day did new feathers bring, 10
 All swore he had a leathern wing;
 Nor polish'd wing, nor feather'd tail,
 Nor down-clad thigh would aught avail;
 And tho' – his tongue devoid of gall –
 He civilly assur'd them all: – 15
 "A bird am I of Phoebus' breed,
 And on the sunflower cling and feed;
 My name, good Sirs, is Thomas Tit!"
 The bats would hail him Brother Cit,
 Or, at the furthest, cousin-german. 20
 At length the matter to determine;
 He publicly denounced the vermin;
 He spared the mouse, he praised the owl;
 But bats were neither flesh nor fowl.
 Blood-sucker, vampire, harpy, goul, 25
 Came in full clatter from his throat,
 Till his old nest-mates chang'd their note
 To hireling, traitor, and turncoat, –
 A base apostate who had sold
 His very teeth and claws for gold; – 30
 And then his feathers! – sharp the jest –
 No doubt he feather'd well his nest!
 "A Tit indeed! aye, tit for tat –
 With place and title, brother Bat,

We soon shall see how well he'll play
 Count Goldfinch, or Sir Joseph Jay!" 35
 Alas, poor Bird! and ill-bestarr'd –
 Or rather let us say, poor Bard!
 And henceforth quit the allegoric,
 With metaphor and simile, 40
 For simple facts and style historic: –
 Alas, poor Bard! no gold had he;
 Behind another's team he stept,
 And plough'd and sow'd, while others reapt;
 The work was his, but theirs the glory, 45
Sic vos non vobis, his whole story.
 Besides, whate'er he wrote or said
 Came from his heart as well as head;
 And though he never left in lurch
 His king, his country, or his church, 50
 'Twas but to humour his own cynical
 Contempt of doctrines Jacobinical;
 To his own conscience only hearty,
 'Twas but by chance he serv'd the party; –
 The self-same things had said and writ, 55
 Had Pitt been Fox, and Fox been Pitt;
 Content his own applause to win,
 Would never dash thro' thick and thin,
 And he can make, so say the wise,
 No claim who makes no sacrifice; – 60
 And bard still less: – what claim had he,
 Who swore it vex'd his soul to see
 So grand a cause, so proud a realm,
 With Goose and Goody at the helm;
 Who long ago had fall'n asunder 65
 But for their rivals' baser blunder,
 The coward whine and Frenchified
 Slaver and slang of the other side? –

Thus, his own whim his only bribe,
 Our Bard pursued his old A. B. C. 70
 Contented if he could subscribe
 In fullest sense his name "ἔστησε;
 ('Tis Punic Greek for "he hath stood!")
 Whate'er the men, the cause was good;

And therefore with a right good will, 75
Poor fool, he fights their battles still.
Tush! squeak'd the Bats; – a mere bravado
To whitewash that base renegado;
'Tis plain unless you're blind or mad,
His conscience for the bays he barter; – 80
And true it is – as true as sad –
These circlets of green baize he had –
But then, alas! they were his garters!
Ah! silly Bard, unfed, untended,
His lamp but glimmer'd in its socket; 85
He lived unhonour'd and unfriended
With scarce a penny in his pocket; –
Nay – tho' he hid it from the many –
With scarce a pocket for his penny!

The Delinquent Travellers

Some are home-sick – some two or three,
 Their third year on the Arctic Sea –
 Brave Captain Lyon tells us so –
 Spite of those charming Esquimaux.
 But O, what scores are sick of Home, 5
 Agog for Paris or for Rome!
 Nay! tho' contented to abide,
 You should prefer your own fireside;
 Yet since grim War has ceas'd its madding,
 And Peace has set John Bull agadding, 10
 'Twould such a vulgar taste betray,
 For very shame you must away!
 "What? not yet seen the coast of France!
 The folks will swear, for lack of bail,
 You've spent your last five years in jail!" 15

Keep moving! Steam, or Gas, or Stage,
 Hold, cabin, steerage, hencoop's cage –
 Tour, Journey, Voyage, Lounge, Ride, Walk,
 Skim, Sketch, Excursion, Travel-talk –
 For move you must! 'Tis now the rage, 20
 The law and fashion of the Age.
 If you but perch, where Dover tallies,
 So strangely with the coast of Calais,
 With a good glass and knowing look.
 You'll soon get matter for a book! 25
 Or else, in Gas-car, take your chance
 Like that adventurous king of France,
 Who, once, with twenty thousand men
 Went up – and then came down again;
 At least, he moved if nothing more: 30
 And if there's nought left to explore,
 Yet while your well-greased wheels keep spinning,
 The traveller's honoured name you're winning,

And, snug as Jonas in the Whale,
 You may loll back and dream a tale. 35
 Move, or be moved – there's no protection,
 Our Mother Earth has ta'en the infection –
 (That rogue Copernicus, 'tis said
 First put the whirring in her head,)
 A planet She, and can't endure 40
 T'exist without her annual Tour:
 The *name* were else a mere misnomer,
 Since Planet is but Greek for *Roamer*.
 The atmosphere, too, can do no less
 Than ventilate her emptiness, 45
 Bilks turn-pike gates, for no one cares,
 And gives herself a thousand airs –
 While streams and shopkeepers, we see,
 Will have their run toward the sea –
 And if, meantime, like old King Log, 50
 Or ass with tether and a clog,
 Must graze at home! to yawn and bray
 "I guess we shall have rain to-day!"
 Nor clog nor tether can be worse
 Than the dead palsy of the purse. 55
 Money, I've heard a wise man say,
 Makes herself wings and flies away:
 Ah! would She take it in her head
 To make a pair for me instead!
 At all events, the Fancy's free, 60
 No traveller so bold as she.
 From Fear and Poverty released
 I'll saddle Pegasus, at least,
 And when she's seated to her mind,
 I within I can mount behind: 65
 And since this outward I, you know,
 Must stay because he cannot go,
 My fellow-travellers shall be they
 Who go because they cannot stay –
 Rogues, rascals, sharpers, blanks and prizes, 70
 Delinquents of all sorts and sizes,
 Fraudulent bankrupts, Knights burglarious,
 And demireps of means precarious –
 All whom Law thwarted, Arms or Arts,

Compel to visit foreign parts,	75
All hail! No compliments, I pray,	
I'll follow where you lead the way!	
But ere we cross the main once more,	
Methinks, along my native shore,	
Dismounting from my steed I'll stray	80
Beneath the cliffs of Dumpton Bay,	
Where, Ramsgate and Broadstairs between,	
Rude caves and grated doors are seen:	
And here I'll watch till break of day,	
(For Fancy in her magic might	85
Can turn broad noon to starless night!)	
When lo! methinks a sudden band	
Of smock-clad smugglers round me stand.	
Denials, oaths, in vain I try,	
At once they gag me for a spy,	90
And stow me in the boat hard by.	
Suppose us fairly now afloat,	
Till Boulogne mouth receives our Boat.	
But, bless us! what a numerous band	
Of cockneys anglicise the strand!	95
Delinquent bankrupts, leg-bail'd debtors,	
Some for the news, and some for letters —	
With hungry look and tarnished dress,	
French shrugs and British surliness.	
Sick of the country for their sake	100
Of them and France <i>French leave</i> I take —	
And lo! a transport comes in view	
I hear the merry motley crew,	
Well skill'd in pocket to make entry,	
Of Dieman's Land the elected Gentry,	105
And founders of Australian Races. —	
The Rogues! I see it in their faces!	
Receive me, Lads! I'll go with you,	
Hunt the black swan and kangaroo,	
And that New Holland we'll presume	110
Old England with some elbow-room.	
Across the mountains we will roam,	
And each man make himself a home:	
Or, if old habits ne'er forsaking,	
Like clock-work of the Devil's making,	115

Ourselves inveterate rogues should be,
We'll have a virtuous progeny;
And on the dunghill of our vices
Raise human pine-apples and spices.
Of all the children of John Bull
With empty heads and bellies full,
Who ramble East, West, North and South,
With leaky purse and open mouth,
In search of varieties exotic
The usefulest and most patriotic,
And merriest, too, believe me, Sirs!
Are your Delinquent Travellers!

120

125