BYRON'S NAPOLEONIC POEMS





Of these, the first and best-known poem is post-Leipzig, but pre-Hundred Days, and the rest, less well-known, are post-Waterloo. When Byron wrote his *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte*, Napoleon was apparently defeated, and on his way to the island of Elba, but, though the world did not know it, had plenty left in him. When the rest of the poems were written, Napoleon had returned from Elba, expelled the Bourbons once again from France, but had lost Waterloo, been sent to the much more remote island of St Helena, and was finished. The result is a great difference in tone between the works. In the earlier *Ode* Byron criticises and mocks Napoleon for having promised so much, delivered so little, and ended so ingloriously. In the later poems, events since 1814 having invalidated his previous attitude, Byron has much more sympathy for him, especially in the light of his own intervening domestic misery. *Napoleon's Farewell* will come as a shock to those who know only the *Ode*, and should be read straight after it. It is in a more popular, Moore-ish idiom, is overtly empathetic, and may be intended as an act of atonement for having written the harsh *Ode*. The *Ode* itself is highly artificial, highly literary in inspiration. *Napoleon's Farewell* altogether less pretentious: "Gaul" becomes "France" again.

Most of the poems were at first published anonymously, and, despite the subtitles, none of them are translations.

The source for many of the ideas in the *Ode* are to found in Byron's journal entries for April 8th-10th 1814:

April 8th

Out of town six days. On my return, found my poor little pagod, Napoleon, pushed off his pedestal; – the thieves are in Paris. It is his own fault. Like Milo, he would rend the oak; but it closed again, wedged his hands, and now the beasts – lion, bear, down to the dirtiest jackall – may all tear him. The Muscovite winter *wedged* his arms; – ever since, he has fought with his feet and teeth. The last may still leave their marks; and "I guess now" (as the Yankees say) that he will yet play them a pass. He is in their rear – between them and their homes. Query – will they ever reach them?

Saturday, April 9th, 1814.

I mark this day!

Napoleon Buonaparte has abdicated the throne of the world. "Excellent well". Methinks Sylla³ did better; for he revenged and resigned in the height of his sway, red with the slaughter of his foes – the finest instance of glorious contempt for the rascals upon record. Dioclesian did well too – Amurath not amis, had he become aught except a dervise – Charles V⁴ but so so – but Napoleon, worst of all. What! wait till they were in his capital, and then talk of his readiness, to give up what is already gone!! "What whining nonk art thou – what holy cheat?" 'Sdeath! – Dionysus at Corinth⁵ was yet a king to this. The "Isle of Elba" to retire to! – Well – if it had been Caprea,⁶ I

^{1:} See *Ode*, line 26.

^{2:} See *Ode*, line 46.

^{3:} See *Ode*, line 55.

^{4:} See *Ode*. line 64.

^{5:} See *Ode*, line 125.

^{6:} The island to which the Emperor Tiberius retired, only to return to Rome later.

should have marvelled less. "I see men's minds are but a parcel of their fortunes." I am utterly bewildered – and confounded.

I don't know – but I think, *I*, even *I* (an insect compared with this creature), have set my life on casts not a millionth part of this man's. But, after all, a crown may not be worth dying for. Yet to outlive *Lodi* for this!! Oh that Juvenal⁷ or Johnson⁸ could rise from the dead! "Expende – quot libras in duce summo invenies?" I knew they were light in the balance of mortality; but I thought their living dust outweighed more *carats*. Alas! this imperial diamond hath a flaw in it, and is now hardly fit to stick in a glazier's pencil: – the pen of the historian won't rate it worth a ducat.

Psha! "something too much of this." But I won't give him up even now; though all his admirers have, "Like the Thanes, fallen from him."

April 10th.

 \dots To-day I have boxed one hour – written an Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte – copied it – eaten six biscuits – drunk four bottles of soda water – redde away the rest of my time \dots^{10}

Those interested in reading a fuller account of Byron's attitude to Napoleon than can be given here are referred to the following essays by John Clubbe:

- 1: "Byron and Napoleon 1814-1816" in Literaria Pragensia 3 (1993) 42-57
- 2: "By the Emperor Possessed: Byron and Napoleon in Italy and Greece (1816-1824)" in Raizis (ed.) *Byron and the Mediterranean World*, 1995, 105-115; see also for an amplification of the above, "Between Emperor and Exile. Byron and Napoleon, 1814-1816" in *Napoleonic Scholarship*; the journal of the International Napoleonic Society, 1 (April 1997) 70-84
- 3: "Dramatic Hits: Napoleon and Shakespeare in Byron's 1813-1814 Journal" in Gassenmeier et al (eds.) *British Romantics as Readers*, Heidelberg 1998, 271-94
- 4: "Napoleon and the Young Byron" in Scotti Douglas (ed.) *L'Europa Scopra Napoleone*, Alessandria: dell'Orso, 1999, 1, 339-53
- 5: "The Fall of Napoleon: The Corsair Revisited" in Tessier (ed.) Lord Byron: A Multi-Disciplinary Open Forum, Versailles 1999 7-15
- 6: "Byron and Goya: Childe Harold I" in Raizis (ed.) *Byron a Poet For All Seasons*, Messalonghi 2000, 53-63
- 7: "Byron and Napoleon: The Obsession, the Daimonic, Transference and Imaginative Freedom" in the 2000 Nottingham Byron Conference book (not yet published).

^{7:} See *Ode*, first epigraph.

^{8:} Johnson's *The Vanity of Human Wishes* is a modernised version of Juvenal's Tenth satire. See line 40n.

^{9:} See *Ode*, first epigraph.

^{10:} BLJ III 256-7.

ODE TO NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE

"Expende Annibalem:—quot libras in duce summo

[Byron wrote the poem in several stages. The earliest manuscript (at Texas) was created on April 10th 1814, and contains stanzas 1, 4, 6-12, and 14-16; Byron then added stanzas 5, 13, 2, and 3 to it. Stanzas 17, 18 and 19 were written – so it used to be said – at the request of John Murray, to increase the size of the book and thus to avoid paying stamp tax on it. But Andrew Nicholson, in Napoleon's 'last act' and Byron's Ode, (Romanticism 9.1, 2003, p.68) writes that there was no such condition attached to stamp tax.

The Ode was published at high speed, first anonymously (with fifteen stanzas) on April 16th 1814. All editions from the third onwards have an additional stanza 5. Not until the twelfth edition does Byron's name appear. Stanzas 17, 18, and 19 were not printed in Byron's lifetime. Byron wanted to dedicate the poem to Hobhouse, but Hobhouse declined.]

Invenies?——

JUVENAL, Sat.X. 11

"The Emperor Nepos 12 was acknowledged by the *Senate*, by the *Italians*, and by the

"The Emperor Nepos¹² was acknowledged by the *Senate*, by the *Italians*, and by the Provincials of *Gaul*; his moral virtues, and military talents, were loudly celebrated; and those who derived any private benefit from his government, announced in prophetic strains the restoration of public felicity.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

"By this shameful abdication, he protracted his life a few years, in a very ambiguous state, between an Emperor and an Exile, till———

Gibbon's Decline and Fall, vol. 6, p.220.

1.

'Tis done – but yesterday a King!
And armed with Kings to strive –
And now thou art a nameless thing:
So abject – yet alive!
Is this the Man of thousand thrones,
Who strewed our earth with hostile bones,
And can he thus survive?
Since he, miscalled the Morning Star, 13
Nor man nor fiend hath fallen so far. –

2.

Ill-minded man! why scourge thy kind
Who bowed so low the knee?

By gazing on thyself grown blind,
Thou taught'st the rest to see;
With might unquestioned – power to save –
Thine only gift hath been the grave
To those that worshipped thee;
Nor till thy fall could mortals guess

11: "Put Hannibal in the scales: how many pounds will that peerless / General mark up today?" - tr. Peter Green. The first of many references to historical and mythical over-reachers with which B. cuts Napoleon down to size.

^{12:} Julius Nepos, Emperor of the Western Roman Empire after it had ceased to exist. Killed by his own men.

^{13:} BYRON'S NOTE: Lucifer was Satan's name before he rebelled and fell.

3.

Thanks for that lesson – it will teach
To after-warriors more
Than high Philosophy can preach,
And vainly preached before.
That spell upon the minds of men
Breaks, never to unite again,
That led them to adore
Those Pagod things of sabre-sway,
With fronts of brass, and feet of clay.

4.

The triumph, and the vanity,
The rapture of the strife * –
The earthquake-voice of Victory,
To thee the breath of Life;
The sword, the sceptre, and that sway
Which Man seemed made but to obey,
Wherewith Renown was rife –
All quelled! – Dark Spirit! what must be
The Madness of thy Memory!

5.15

The Desolator desolate!

The Victor overthrown!

The Arbiter of others' fate

A Suppliant for his own! 16

Is it some yet imperial hope

That with such change can calmly cope,

Or dread of death alone?

To die a Prince – or live a slave –

Thy choice is most ignobly brave! 17

45

6.

He * who of old would rend the oak,
Dreamed not of the rebound;
Chained by the trunk he vainly broke –
Alone – how looked he round?
Thou, in the sternness of thy strength,
50

^{*} Certaminis *guadia*, the expression of Attila in his harangue to his army, previous to the battle of Chalons, given in Cassiodorus.¹⁴

^{14:} Attila the Hun lost the battle of Challons (451 AD).

^{15:} Received stanza 5 does not appear in the first editions.

^{16:} Echoes Johnson, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, 213-14: *Condemn'd a needy Suppliant to wait*, / *While Ladies interpose*, *and Slaves debate*. A reference to Charles XII of Sweden, Johnson's equivalent to Juvenal's Hannibal.

^{17:} Napoleon attempted suicide while this poem was in proof stage.

An equal deed hast done at length, And darker fate hast found: He fell, the forest prowlers' prey; But thou must eat thy heart away!

* Milo. 18

7.

The Roman, * when his burning heart
Was slaked with blood of Rome,
Threw down the dagger – dared depart,
In savage grandeur, home. –
He dared depart in utter scorn
Of Men that such a yoke had borne,
Yet left him such a doom!
His only glory was that hour
Of self-upheld abandoned power. –

* Sylla.19

8.

The Spaniard, * when the lust of Sway
Had lost its quickening spell,
Cast crowns for rosaries away,
An empire for a cell;
A strict accountant of his beads,
A subtle disputant on creeds,
His Dotage trifled well:
Yet better had he neither known
A Bigot's shrine, nor despot's throne.

* Charles V.20

9.

But thou – from thy reluctant hand
The thunderbolt is wrung –
Too late thou leav'st the high command
To which thy weakness clung;
All Evil Spirit as thou art,
It is enough to grieve the heart
To see thine own unstrung;
To think that God's fair world hath been
The footstool of a thing so mean;

10.

^{18:} BYRON'S NOTE: Milo was in Greek legend a strong man who attempted to rend an oak, which rebounded and trapped him, and he was eaten by wolves.

^{19:} BYRON'S NOTE: Lucius Cornelius Sulla, Roman tyrant who resigned and retired to his estate. **20: BYRON'S NOTE:** Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor who is said to have become a monk on his retirement. B.'s gist is that both Charles V and Sulla knew when their time was up.

And Earth hath spilt her blood for him, Who thus can hoard his own! And Monarchs bowed the trembling limb, And thanked him for a throne! Fair Freedom! we may hold thee dear, When thus thy mightiest foes their fear In humblest guise have shown. Oh! ne'er may tyrant leave behind A brighter name to lure mankind!	85 90
11.	
Thine evil deeds are writ in gore, Nor written thus in vain — Thy triumphs tell of fame no more, Or deepen every stain: If thou hadst died as Honour dies. Some new Napoleon might arise, To shame the world again — But who would soar the solar height, To set in such a starless night?	95
12.	
Weighed in the balance, hero dust Is vile as vulgar clay; Thy scales, Mortality! are just To all that pass away: But yet methought the living great Some higher sparks should animate, To dazzle and dismay: Nor deem'd Contempt could thus make mirth	100
Of these, the Conquerors of the earth.	
And she, proud Austria's mournful flower, Thy still imperial bride; ²¹ How bears her breast the torturing hour? Still clings she to thy side? Must she too bend, must she too share Thy late repentance, long despair, Thou throneless Homicide? If still she loves thee, hoard that gem, —	110 115
'Tis worth thy vanished Diadem!	
14.	
Then haste thee to thy sullen Isle, ²² And gaze upon the Sea; That element may meet thy smile – It ne'er was ruled by thee! ²³	120

^{21:} Napoleon's second wife, Maria Louisa, daughter of the Austrian Emperor. 22: Elba.

Or trace with thine all idle hand
In loitering mood upon the sand
That Earth is now as free!
That Corinth's pedagogue²⁴ hath now
Transferred his by-word to thy brow. –

15.

Thou Timour! in his Captive's cage *
What thoughts will there be thine,
While brooding in thy prisoned rage?
But one – "The World was mine!"
Unless, like he of Babylon,²⁵
All Sense is with thy Sceptre gone,
Life will not long confine
That Spirit poured so widely forth –
So long obeyed – so little worth!

135

* The cage of Bajazet, by order of Tamerlane.²⁶

16.

Or, like the thief of fire * from heaven,
Wilt thou withstand the shock?

And share with him, the unforgiven,
His vulture and his rock!

Foredoomed by God – by man accurst,
And that last act, though not thy worst,
The very Fiend's arch mock; †

He in his fall preserved his pride,
And, if a mortal, had as proudly died!

* Prometheus.²⁷

† "The fiend's arch mock—

"To lip a wanton, and suppose her chaste."— Shakespeare.²⁸

[*17*.

There was a day – there was an hour, 145

- 23: English naval victories, particularly those of Nelson, had destroyed French naval power.
- **24:** Dionysus the Younger of Syracuse, the tyrant whom Plato tried to tutor, was expelled from the city and set himself up as a schoolteacher in Corinth.
- **25:** Nebuchadnezzar.
- **26:** BYRON'S NOTE: Legend has it that, upon defeating him, Tamburlaine the Great imprisoned Bajazet, the Turkish Emperor, in a travelling cage. Byron parallels Bajazet with Napoleon and Tamburlaine with Wellington.
- 27: BYRON'S NOTE: Prometheus, who was punished by Zeus for stealing fire from Heaven and giving it to Man. Fastened to a rock, he was visited daily by a vulture which ate his liver. B. wrote the following at some time in 1814, addressed to Napoleon, and referring to Prometheus:

Unlike the offence, though like would be the fate, *His* to give life, but *thine* to desolate; *He* stole from Heaven the flame, for which he fell, Whilst thine was stolen from the native Hell. (CPW III 269)

28: BYRON'S NOTE: Iago's words at Othello, IV i 70-1.

While earth was Gaul's – Gaul thine –

When that immeasurable power

Unsated to resign

Had been an act of purer fame

Than gathers round Marengo's name²⁹

And gilded thy decline,

Through the long twilight of all time,

Despite some passing clouds of crime.

18.

But thou forsooth must be a King
And don the purple vest,
As if that foolish robe could wring
Remembrance from thy breast.
Where is that faded garment? where
The gewgaws thou wert fond to wear,
The star, 30 the string, the crest?
Vain froward child of Empire! say,
Are all thy playthings snatched away?

19.

Where may the wearied eye repose
When gazing on the Great;
Where neither guilty glory glows,
Nor despicable state?

Yes - One - the first - the last - the best The Cincinnatus of the West,
Whom Envy dared not hate,
Bequeathed the name of Washington,
To make man blush there was but one!]

165

170

29: Napoleon won the battle of Marengo in 1800.

30: For second thoughts here, see *On the Star of the Legion of Honour* (printed below).

20.

Yes! better to have stood the storm,
A Monarch to the last!
Although that heartless fireless form
Had crumbled in the blast:
Than stoop to drag out Life's last years,
The nights of terror, days of tears
For all the splendour past;
Then, – after ages would have read
Thy awful death with more than dread.

21

A lion in the conquering hour!
In wild defeat a hare!
Thy mind hath vanished with thy power,
For Danger brought despair.
The dreams of sceptres now depart,
And leave thy desolated heart
The Capitol of care!
Dark Corsican, 'tis strange to trace

^{31:} Lucius Quinctius Cincinattus was always being called from his farm to rule Rome, and always returning. B. would have us see Washington as a similarly austere Republican hero, unlike Napoleon.

^{32:} The following two spurious stanzas were printed in *The Morning Chronicle* of April 27th 1814:

NAPOLEON'S FAREWELL From the French

[First published anonymously in The Examiner, July 30th 1815. Reprinted in Poems (1816), pp. 37-8.]

1.

Farewell to the Land, where the gloom of my Glory
Arose and o'ershadowded the earth with her name –
She abandons me now – but the page of her story,
The brightest and blackest, are due to my fame.
I have warred with a World which vanquished me only
When the meteor of Conquest allured me too far –
I have coped with the Nations – which dread me thus lonely,
The last single Captive to Millions in war. –

2.

Farewell to thee, France! when thy diadem crowned me,
I made thee the gem and the wonder of earth;
But thy weakness decrees I should leave as I found thee,
Decayed in thy glory – and sunk in thy worth.
Oh for the veteran hearts that were wasted
In strife with the storm – when their battles were won –
Then the Eagles whose gaze in that moment were blasted
Had still soared with eyes fixed on Victory's Sun. –

3.

Farewell to thee, France! but when Liberty rallies

Once more in thy regions, remember me then —

The Violet still grows in the depth of thy valleys —

Though withered, thy tears will unfold it again —

Yet — yet — I may baffle the hosts that surround us

And yet may thy heart leap awake to my voice —

There are links which must break in the chain that has bound us,

Then turn thee and call on the Chief of thy choice!

ODE (FROM THE FRENCH)

[First published anonymously in The Morning Chronicle, March 15th 1816; reprinted in Poems (1816), pp. 25-30.]

The French have their *Poems* and *Odes* on the famous Battle of Waterloo as well as ourselves.³³ – Nay, they seem to glory in the battle as the source of great events to come. We have received the following poetical version of a poem, the original of which is circulating in Paris - and which is ascribed (we know not with what justice) to the muse of M. de Chateaubriand.³⁴ If so, it may be inferred that, in the Poet's eye, a new change is at hand – and he wished to prove his secret indulgence of old principles, by reference to this effusion.

1.

We do not curse thee, Waterloo! Though Freedom's blood thy plain bedew, There 'twas shed – but is not sunk – Rising from each gory trunk Like the Water Spout from Ocean 5 With a strong and growing motion, It soars – and mingles in the air With that of lost LABEDOYERE³⁵ – With that of him whose honoured grave Contains the "bravest of the brave." 36 10 A Crimson Cloud, it spreads and glows But shall return to whence it rose -When 'tis full 'twill burst asunder – Never yet was heard such Thunder As then shall shake the world with wonder – 15 Never yet was seen such Lightning As o'er Heaven shall then be bright'ning. Like the Wormwood Star foretold * By the sainted Seer of old, Showering down a fiery flood, 20 Turning rivers into blood.

* See Revelations, chap. viii. verse 7, &c. "The first angel sounded, and there followed fire and hail mingled with blood," &c. Verse 8. "And the second Angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood," &c. Verse 10. "And the third Angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp; and it fell upon a third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters." Verse 11. "And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter."

2.

The Chief has fall'n – but not by you, Vanguishers of Waterloo; When the Soldier-Citizen Swayed not o'er his fellow men 25

^{33:} In fact there were few, if any, French poems about Waterloo.

^{34:} One of B.'s few references to Chateaubriand. It is of course a joke and a fib.

^{35:} The Comte de la Bédoyère; went over to Napoleon when he left Elba and was later shot for treason.

^{36:} Marshal Ney, Napoleon's finest general, also deserted the Bourbons in 1815 and was also shot.

Save in deeds that led them on;
Where Glory smiled on Freedom's son,
Who of all the Despots banded
With that youthful chief competed?
Who could boast o'er France defeated,
Till lone Tyranny commanded?
Till, goaded by Ambition's sting,
The Hero shrunk into the King?
Then he fell – so perish all
Who would men by Man enthrall!

3.

And thou, too, of the snow white plume – Whose realms refused thee even a tomb! * Better had'st thou still been leading France o'er Hosts of hirelings bleeding, Than sold thyself to death and shame 40 For a meanly royal name, Such as He of Naples³⁷ wears Who thy blood-bought title bears. Little did'st thou deem, when dashing On thy warhorse through the ranks, 45 Like a stream which bursts its banks, While Helmets cleft, and sabres clashing Shone and shivered fast around thee – Of the fate at last which found thee. – Was that haughty plume laid low 50 By a slave's dishonest blow? Once, as the Moon sways o'er the tide, It rolled in air, the warrior's guide; Through the smoke-created night Of the black and sulphurous fight, 55 The soldier raised his reeking eye To catch that crest's ascendancy; And as it onward rolling rose, So moved his heart upon our foes. There, where Death's brief pang was quickest 60 And the battle's wreck lay thickest, Strewed beneath the advancing banner Of the Eagle's burning crest – (There, with Thunder-clouds to fan her, Who her could then her wing arrest, 65 Victory beaming on her breast?) Where the broken line enlarging Fell or fled along the plain – There be sure was MURAT charging – There he ne'er shall charge again! 70

^{*} Murat's remains are said to have been torn from the grave and burnt.³⁸

^{37:} Ferdinand I, the Bourbon King of Naples, who replaced Murat. A reactionary, to understate the case.

^{38:} Joachim Murat, Napoleon's cavalry commander, his brother-in-law, made by him King of Naples. After Waterloo he was hunted down and shot.

O'er glories gone the invaders march – Weeps Triumph o'er each levelled arch; But Let Freedom rejoice With her heart in her voice -But, her hand on her sword, 75 Doubly shall she be adored – France hath twice too well been taught The "Moral lesson" dearly bought 39 – Her Safety sits not on a throne With CAPET or NAPOLEON! 80 But in equal rights and laws, Hearts and hands in one great cause, Freedom such as God hath given Unto all beneath his heaven With their breath, and from their birth. 85 Though Guilt would sweep it from the earth, With a fierce and lavish hand Scattering nations' wealth like sand; Pouring nations' wealth like water In imperial seas of Slaughter. -90

5.

But the heart and the mind
And the voice of mankind
Shall arise in communion —
And who shall resist that proud union?
The time is past when swords subdued;
Man may die — the soul's renewed —
Even in this low world of care
Freedom ne'er shall want an heir;
Millions breathe but to inherit

39: ... *great moral lessons*: a prime example of English cant. Compare *Don Juan* XII 434-6:

My Muses do not care a pinch of rosin

About what's called success – or not succeeding – Such thoughts are quite below the strain they've chosen; 'Tis a "great moral lesson" they are reading ...

McGann (CPW VI 673) refers us to Scott, *The Field of Waterloo*, Conclusion, 6, 3: *Write, Britain, write the moral lesson down*; but the quotation is minus a word, as it would be at the other echo McGann favours (see CPW V 754) namely the Preface to Cantos VI VII and VIII: *In his life he* [Castlereagh] was - what all the world knows - and half of it will feel for years to come - unless his death prove a moral lesson to the surviving Sejani of Europe. The phrase is in fact from a despatch which Wellington wrote to Castlereagh from Paris on 23rd September, 1815. It concludes:

It is, besides, on many accounts, desirable, as well for their own happiness as for that of the world, that the people of France, if they do not already feel that Europe is too strong for them, should be made sensible of it; and that, whatever may be the extent, at any time, of their momentary and partial success against any one, or any number of individual powers in Europe, the day of retribution must come.

Not only, then, would it, in my opinion, be unjust in the Sovereigns to gratify the people of France on this subject, at the expense of their own people, but the sacrifice they would make would be impolitic, as it would deprive them of the opportunity of giving the people of France a great moral lesson. / Believe me, &c. / WELLINGTON Wellington, Dispatches, ed Lieut. Colonel Gurwood, London, John Murray (1838) vol. XII pp. 645-6).

ble,

100

Her for ever bounding Spirit – When once more her hosts assemble, Tyrants shall believe and tremble; Smile they at this idle threat? Crimson tears will follow yet. –

ON THE STAR OF THE "LEGION OF HONOUR" From the French

[First published anonymously in The Examiner, April 7th 1816. Republished in Poems (1816), pp. 34-6.]

The friend who favoured us with the following lines, the poetical spirit of which wants no trumpet of ours, is aware that they imply more than an impartial observer of the late period might feel, and are written rather as by Frenchman than Englishman: – but certainly neither he, nor any other lover of liberty, can help feeling and regretting, that in the latter time, at any rate, the symbol he speaks of was once more comparatively identified with the cause of freedom.

1.

Star of the brave! – whose beam hath shed
Such glory o'er the quick and dead –
Thou radiant and adored deceit!
Which millions rushed in arms to greet, –
Wild meteor of immortal birth!
Why rise in Heaven to set on Earth?

2.

Souls of slain heroes formed thy rays;
Eternity flashed through thy blaze;
The music of thy martial sphere
Was fame on high and honour here;
And thy light broke on human eyes,
Like a Volcano of the skies.

3.

Like lava rolled thy stream of blood,
And swept down empires with its flood;
Earth rocked beneath thee to her base,
As thou did'st lighten through all space;
And the shorn Sun grew dim in air,
And set while thou wert dwelling there.

4

Before thee rose, and with thee grew,
A rainbow of the loveliest hue
Of three bright colours, each divine,*
And fit for that celestial sign;
For Freedom's hand had blended them,
Like tints on an immortal gem.

*The tri colour.

5.

One tint was of the sunbeam's dyes; One, the blue depth of Seraph's eyes; One, the pure Spirit's veil of white 5

15

Had robed in radiance of its light; The three so mingled did beseem The texture of a heavenly dream.

30

6.

Star of the brave! thy ray is pale, And darkness must again prevail! But, oh thou Rainbow of the free! Our tears and blood must flow for thee. When thy bright promise fades away, Our life is but a load of clay.

35

7

And Freedom hallows with her tread The silent cities of the dead; For beautiful in death are they Who proudly fall in her array; And soon, oh Goddess! may we be For evermore with them or thee!

40

FROM THE FRENCH

[First published in Poems (1816), pp. 31-33.]

"All wept, but particularly Savary, 40 and a Polish officer who had been exalted from the ranks by Bonaparte. He clung to his master's knees: wrote a letter to Lord Keith, 41 entreating permission to accompany him, even in the most menial capacity, which could not be admitted."

1.

Must thou go – my glorious Chief –
Severed from thy faithful few?
Who can tell thy warrior's grief –
Maddening in that long adieu?
Woman's love – and Friendship's Zeal,
Dear as both have seemed to me –
What are they to all I feel –
With a soldier's faith for thee?

2.

Idol of the soldier's soul!

First in fight – but mightiest now – 10

Many could a world controul –

Thee alone no doom can bow –

By thy side for years I dared

Death – and envied those who fell,

When their dying shout was heard – 15

Blessing him they served so well.* –

* "At Waterloo, a man was seen, whose left arm was shattered by a cannon ball, to wrench it off with the other, and throwing it up in the air, exclaimed to his comrades, 'Vive l'Empereur, jusqu'à la mort.' There were many other instances of the like: this you may, however, depend on as true."

3.

Would that I were cold with those
Since this hour I live to see –
When the hearts of coward foes
Scarce dare trust a man with thee –
Dreading each should set thee free –
Oh, though in other dungeons pent –
All their chains were light to me
Gazing on thy soul unbent. –

4.

Would the sycophants of him

Now so deaf to duty's prayer –

Were his borrowed Glories dim,

In his native darkness share? –

Were that world this hour his own –

40: Jean Savary, duc de Rovigo, general and politician.

^{41:} George Keith Elphinstone, Viscount Keith; Mercer Elphinstone's father.

All thou calmly dost resign Could he purchase with that throne Hearts like those that still to thine?	30
5.	
My Chief – my King – my Friend – adieu – Never did I droop before – Never to my Sovereign sue, As his foes I now implore – All I ask is to divide Every peril he must brave – Sharing by the hero's side	35
His fall – his exile – and his grave. –	40