THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS.*

Αρχετε, Μωσαι φιλαι, αρχετ' αοιδας.—Theocritus.

Begin, dear Muses, *but* begin.[1]

I.

"Twenty sweet summers I will tie together,"[2]
Said the rejoicing bridegroom in the play,
Who was to have one month of honied weather,
And then, to please the tyrant, die next day. (1)[3]
The vile, hard-hearted——yet I don't know either—
However, what I was about to say
Was this,—that in these light poetic spinnings,
I tie together twenty sweet beginnings.

II.

Exordiums are my theme.—Thou great "O thou!"
Whoe'er thou art, whom poets thou by thousands,
Whether thou sit'st upon the Olympian brow
Of epic bard, or wonderest at the cow's hands
Of rude invoker, rhyming any how,
Allow me to be clerk for both advowsons;[4]
For if my own rhyme's nothing of itself,
It sings of others worthy of thy shelf.

* Author: Leigh Hunt / Transcribed by Fernando Cioni; Annotated by Giacomo Ferrari.

III.

I want, in fact, to finish a whole poem
At once; and to write properly, I find
I can't have flow'rs as quickly as I sow 'em
Something will still take place, not to my mind,
Some weakness, lameness, some hard buddings (blow 'em!)
Some graftings, which I hate to leave behind:
So I must take my time with such grave matters,
And sow, meanwhile, my cresses in these tatters. (2)[5]

IV.

I must have light refreshment, relishes quick,
Fruits that I can dispatch with a brief eating,
And yet that I can eat too in the thick
Of trees and gardens; sketches of one sitting,
But then of looks, at which a painter's stick
Might feel the life return to it, ev'n to beating.
When I want more, I go and wrap me round
In Milton's, Chaucer's, Spenser's holy ground.[6]

V.

I'm like a knight of old. I'm fierce to-day,
Desperate and grim, in middle of the fight;
Nothing will serve me but to hack my way
At kings and chieftains, tramplers of the right:
Anon, I'm gentle as a morn of May,
Am all for flow'rs, and loving dreams at night,
And must go waken blossoms in the bushes,
Warblings of birds, and worlds of rosy blushes.

VI.

See,—the word "May" disturb'd my simile,
And took me with it, like a lass-led boy.
I meant to say, that as the knight would be
Now all for fighting, and the terrible joy
Of riding plumed battle like a sea,
And now would be rapt off, far from annoy,
Into the arms of fairies and their bowers,
So frown and smile my party-colour'd hours.

VII.

So when my turn comes to repose, I read
My magic books, and then with a bird's eye
Dart me far off, as he does to his bed,
Now to some piping vale of Arcady,[7]
Now to some mountain-top, which I've heard said,
Holds the most ghastly breath in Tartary;[8]
And then I'm cradled 'twixt my Appenines,[9]
Spying the blue sky through the yellow vines.

VIII.

And then I'm all with Ovid and his changes,[10]
Or all with Spenser and his woods, or all
With Ariosto and his endless ranges,
Riding his Hippogriff,[11] till I grow too small
For eye to see:—then lo! I'm by the Ganges,
Quick as that fatal wight, who gave a call
To Solomon to send him out o' the way
Of Death, and met him there that very day. (3)[12]

IX.

And then again I'm playing fast and loose
With girls, in isles that stud the Grecian sea: (4)[13]
And then I'm in old Greece, and Edipus
Holding his blind eyes up, creeps quietly
By his dear daughter's side, whom I would chuse,
Were I a god, my worshipp'd wife to be: (5)[14]
And then I'm in the valley, "wonder deep,"
Where the cold waters lull old Sleep to sleep. (6)[15]

X.

And then I'm all for Araby, my first love;
I'm Giafar, I'm a "genie," I'm a jar;
I'm Sindbad in some very horrid grove,—
Which is delicious: I'm the Calendar,
Who with the lady was *one* hand and glove;[16]
I am the prince, who shot his bow so far,
And found that cellar, with a stock divine
Of lips to kiss, still redder than the wine. (7)[17]

XI.

And then I take a pen, pluck'd from the wing
Of the rich hour, and let my fancy flow,
Dipping delighted in my ebony spring,
(For Sindbad would have call'd my ink-stand so);
And first of all (which you will think a thing
Not needing to be mention'd, but 'tis though,
For it's my subject, and I hold me in,
Not to have done too quickly) I *begin!*

XII.

Beginnings are high moments. I appeal
To you, musicians, when you're all prepar'd
To pour some storm of harmony you know well;
Painters, to you, when after studying hard,
You've got a subject, that you're sure you feel;
Readers, to you, when suddenly your regard
Is cast upon a packet, square, tight, brown,—
"Ah, you mean books?"—I do,—the new from town.

XIII.

"Dinner on table" after a long walk
Has it's exordium: so has going to sleep,—
Fading by fine degrees from a friend's talk:
Reaching a wood is not to be held cheap,
After a ride through sun, and dust, and chalk:
But the beginning the most sweet and deep,
The first of firsts,—ah, you know what it is,—
Is the first trembling, touching, trusting kiss.

XIV.

I give up that. But not the breathing wood,
Enter'd, with hat off, after sun and dust;
Not going to sleep in smiling gratitude;
Nor meal that we approach, as walkers must;
Not cutting string from books; nor subject good,
Hit on by finger'd pencil; nor the gust
Of Philharmonic winds, waked all at once, (8)[18]
Touch like a bard's pen, tilted for the nonce.[19]

XV.

Gravely I feel it, lightly though I say.
All bards have felt it, great as well as small,
And shew the proud delight with which they lay
Their hand to pen. Lo, listen first of all,
To Homer,[20] opening his triumphant way!
What Horace[21] says of modesty withal
And meek beginnings, must be read *cum grano*,[22]
Or what becomes of arms *virumque cano?*[23]

XVI.

The opening, like the ending, must be settled
By nature and the occasion. Homer, treating
Of the wise wanderer,[24] and how well he battled
Through his long ills by patient wit (and cheating),
As calmly brings him in; but when the high-mettled
And fierce Achilles is to give us greeting,
He strikes a trumpet up in his first line,
Fit for the coming of a wrath divine.

XVII.

Beginnings please us, some for the mere style,
Some for the sentiment, and some for both.
All should be musical; and most, the while,
Seem full of a sure pleasure, nothing loth,
Whether their business be to mourn or smile,
Whether the Delphic voice be sweet or wroth:[25]
For 'tis a task so noble, that of verse,
It aye must taste the pleasure it confers.

XVIII.

Hesiod's Theogony commences well,[26]
He puts the Muses first with such delight,
Their bathings, and their dances amiable,
And that delicious voice they send at night
Over the mountain-tops on which they dwell,
Like choral nuns, and take a hymning flight.
He heard them under Helicon,[27] he says,
A shepherd; and they fill'd his hand with bays. (9)[28]

XIX.

E'en Burns's holly must submit to this,
True as it is, and blithe with berries red;
For Hesiod really pass'd those nights of his
Under the mountain with it's laurell'd head,
Where those fair birds were thought to live in bliss.
But fancies are facts too:—let that be said.
Besides, we've Fairy-land. The Muse, I grant her,
Kept house in Greece; but then we've Tam o' Shanter.[29]

XX.

Dante's first lines are simple, grave, sincere,
Too full of awe for shew (10):[30]— Milton's the same.[31]
Dryden's Religio Laici[32] takes my ear
With an exordium, that should put to shame
All the monotonous lines we hold so dear,
Time-beaters for dull heads (11).[33] Think not I blame
Nevertheless the glorious Rape o' the Lock,[34]
The airiest wit that ever rais'd a joke. (12)[35]

XXI.

Pope was a true-born poet, modified
By his infirm complexion and small sphere;
But then so great in that, that he could hide
Scores of us dwarfs in our savannahs here:
His rooms were not mere rooms, but worlds beside
Of spirits, who hung pearls in every ear.
Wit, lover, friend, his lays were like his lawns;
His face, as rich and sensitive as a fawn's. (13)[36]

XXII.

Yet what is fit for miniature, may not suit
With oils, and lets more trifling copiers pass.
But to return. The learn'd will think me a brute,
But I must own, such is my taste, alas!
For what is natural, and new to boot,
That I could wish it proved (granting it was
As foreign to his subject too as Pegu),[37]
That Virgil did begin with *Ille ego*.[38]

XXIII.

The bard was a dear lover of the woods,
He loved their loving nymphs, he lov'd their dreams;
Glens and philosophy were his two great goods;
And when he thought of quitting his mild streams
For seats of war and their ensanguin'd floods,
It was as natural he should turn his beams
Once more to look on what he left, as men,
When the drum calls them, kiss their wives again. (14)[39]

XXIV.

Lucretius[40] opens nobly with his hymn
To Venus, and her warm Dædalian sway:[41]
You bask in it; nor wonder that Mars grim
Doats on her face in that devouring way. (15)[42]
I like all poets, who thus seem to swim
Into their subject, proud of the sweet play:
The lordly swan, let out on his own river,
Feels not the dimpling with a sweeter shiver.

XXV.

"Le donne, i cavalier, l'arme, gli amori, (16)[43]
Le cortesie, l'audaci imprese, io canto,
Che furo al tempo che passaro i Mori
D'Africa il mare, e in Francia nocquer tanto,
Seguendo l'ire e i giovenil furore
D'Agramante lor re, che si diè vanto
Di vendicar la morte di Trojano
Sopra re Carlo, imperator Romano."[44]

XXVI.

"Ladies, and cavaliers, and loves, and arms,
And courtesies, and haughty deeds I sing,
What time the Moors of Africa in swarms
Came o'er the sea with Agramant their king,
And did such harm in France, and blew the alarms
He made in his young rage, vowing to bring
To fierce account, for his old father slain,
The illustrious Roman emperor, Charlemagne."

XXVII.

So enters on his task, with gallant joy,
The Ferrarese,[45] whose very name's a pleasure.
Nor scarcely less charms he, who chose to employ
His time in polishing another's treasure: (17)[46]
He brings his wine, like the Idæan boy;[47]
Like pleasant friendship, comes he on our leisure;
For our own sakes he comes, as well as his,
Touching a brilliant lute;—and here he is:—

XXVIII.

"Leggiadri amanti, e donne innamorate,
Vaghe d'udir piacevol cose e nuove,
Benignamente, vi prego, ascoltate
La bella istoria, che'l mio canto muove;
E udirete l'opre alte e lodate,
Le gloriose, egregie, inclite pruove,
Che fece il conte Orlando[48] per amore,
Regnando in Francia Carlo imperadore."

XXIX.

"Gallants in love, and ladies touch'd as they,
Who love to hear delightful things, and new,
Benignly lend your gentle ears, I pray,
To the high story I'm preluding to;
And you shall hear the great, the glorious way,
In which a thousand wonders were gone through
By County Orlando, for a loving glance,
What time the Emperor Charles was king in France."

XXX.

'Tis music truly,—tis a myrtle tree,—
Incense lit up,—a bunch of heart's-ease roots:
Remember too, these rhymes of Italy
Once on a time were really sung to lutes:
Petrarch[49] sung his: and such a taste had he,
Not only in voice, which warbled like a flute's,
Or rather was brimful of liquid power,
But his own airs were sung in every bower. (18)[50]

XXXI.

Our only lyrist, now-a-days, in the sense
Of Greece and Tuscany, is Thomas Moore:[51]
But all should write, as under influence
Of modulated sounds and their full store;
And then, and only then, they may commence
With their "O Thou's,"—"I sing's,"—and harps of yore;
And this reminds me of that prelate merry,
Who has a name so militant, Forteguerri.[52]

XXXII.

"Emmi venuta certa fantasia, (19)[53]
Che non posso cacciarmi da la testa,
Di scriver un istoria in poesia
Affatto ignota, o poco manifesta.
Non è figlia del Sol la Musa mia,
Nè ha cetra d'oro, o d'ebano contesta:
E rozza villanella, e si trastulla
Cantando a aria, conforme le frulla.

XXXIII.

"Ma con tutto che avezza a le boscaglie,
E beva acqua di rio, e mangi ghiande,
Cantar vuole d'eroi e di battaglie,
E d'amori e d'imprese memorande;
E se avverrà, che alcuna volta sbaglie,
Piccolo fallo è in lei ogni error grande,
Perchè non studiò mai; e il suo soggiorno
Or fu presso un abete, or presso un orno.

XXXIV.

"E intanto canterà d'armi e d'amori,
Perchè in Arcadia nostra oggi son scesi
Così sublimi e nobili pastori,
Che son di tutte le scienze intesi:
Vi son poeti, vi sono oratori
Che passan quelli de gli altri paesi:
Or ella, che fra loro usa è di stare
Si è messo in testa di saper cantare.

XXXV.

"Ma, come voi vedrete, spesso spesso
S'imbroglierà ne la geografia,
Come formica in camminar sul gesso,
O su la polve, o farina che sia;
O come quel pittor, ch' alto cipresso
Nel bel turchino mare coloria,
E le balene poi su gli erti monti;
Così forse saranno i suoi racconti.

XXXVI.

"Ma non per questo maltrattar si dee,
Nè farle lima lima, e vella vella:
La semplicetta non ha certe idee,
Che fan l'istoria luminosa e bella;
Nè lesse mai in su le carte Achee,
Ovver di Roma, o di nostra favella,
Le cose belle che cantar' coloro,
Ch' ebber mente divina e plettro d'oro.

XXXVII.

"Ma cantar per istar allegramente,
E acciò che si rallegri ancor chi l'ode:
Nè sa, nè bada a regole niente,
Sprezzatrice di biasimo e di lode,
Che tiraneggia cotanto la gente;
Che v'è infino chi l'ugna si rode,
E il capo si stropiccia, e'l crin si strazia,
Per trovar rime ch'abbian qualche grazia.

XXXVIII.

"Voi la vedrete ancor (tanto è ragazza)
Or qua, or là, saltar, come un ranocchio;
Nè in ciò la biasmo, nè fa cosa pazza;
Che da gli omeri infin sotto il ginocchio
La poesia ha penne onde svolazza;
E va più presto che in un batter d'occhio
Or quinci, or quindi; e così tiene attente
L'orecchie di chi l'ode, e in un la mente.

XXXIX.

"Così veggiamo nel furor de l'armi,
Tra il sangue, tra le stragi e le ruine,
In un momento rivoltarsi i carmi
Ai dolci amori; e quindi a le divine
Cose, e parlar di templi e sagri marmi;
Indi volare su l'onde marine,
E raccontar le lagrime e il cordoglio
D'Arianna lasciata in su lo scoglio.

XL.

"Ma già si è posta in man la sua zampogna,
E canta sotto voce, e non si attenta.
Non la guardate ancor, che si vergogna,
E come rosa il volto le diventa:
Ma presto passa un poco di vergogna:
Principiato che ell' ha, non si spaventa:
E già incomincia: or noi, dov' ella siede,
Taciti andiamo, ed in punta di piede."

XLI.

"A certain freak has got into my head,
Which I can't conquer for the life of me,
Of taking up some history little read,
Or known, and writing it in poetry.
My Muse is no Sun's daughter, be it said;[54]
She has no harp of gold and ebony:
She is a little clown, one of your singers
Who sport it to the snapping of their fingers.

XLII.

"And yet for all she has been used to keep
Within the woods, drinks water, and eats nuts,
She's fain to sing of arms and soldiership,
And loves, and lofty cuttings of one's throats:
So that, if any time she makes a slip,
You must not give her very savage cuts;
Because she never studied. Her degrees
Have all been taken underneath the trees.

XLIII.

"But she must sing of warriors and amours,
Because of late so many noble swains
Have come down to this Arcady of ours,
Who've been through all the sciences and their reigns:
There are your poets, there your orators,
Not to be found on any other plains! (20)[55]
Now she being used to hear them, the vain thing,
Has got it in her head, she too can sing.

XLIV.

"But, as you'll find, she will embroil herself
Often and often with geography,
Just like an ant poking about a shelf
Midst plaister, dust, and bits of cookery;
Or as the painter did, who in a gulf
Of fine blue water put a cypress-tree,
And made his craggy mountains produce whales:
Such, very probably, will be her tales.

XLV.

"But you must not abuse her for all that,
Nor keep on finding fault, and teazing her:
The little simpleton was never pat
At things that render histories fine and clear;
She never read Greek books, never look'd at
Latin ones, nay, knows not one's own, poor dear!
She never knew the fine things, new or old,
Done by the mind divine and harp of gold.

XLVI.

"All that she sings is for her own pure pleasure,
Including, it is true, the hearer's too:
She neither knows nor cares for rules and measure;
Deaf to the blames or praises, false or true,
Which make such holes in other people's leisure,
Making this bite his nails, and that look blue,
And t'other claw his head and tear his hair,
For rhymes that may look pretty here and there.

XLVII.

"You'll find her also (she is such a romp).
Leaping, like frog, about her on all sides;
And yet you mustn't set her down *non comp*.,[56]
For every Muse has feathers which she hides,
Enabling her at will to frisk and jump;
And in the twinkling of an eye she glides,
Now here, now there; and so in occupation
Holds all that witness her divine flirtation.

XLVIII.

Thus we shall see, amidst the rage of arms,
Midst blood and slaughter and huge overthrow,
That in a wink she'll turn with all her charms
To love and joy, and then get up and go
To church, and talk of shrines and saints in swarms;
And then she'll whisk me to the sea-shore, lo!
And tell us of the tears and the sad shock
That Ariadne met with on the rock.[57]

XLIX.

But see,—her hand is placed upon her reed;
She preludes *sotto voce*,[58]—she composes;—
Don't you look yet;—she'll blush,—she will indeed;
Her little cheeks will be all over roses;
'Tis but a touch of bashfulness, soon fled;
When once begun, there's nothing she refuses:
Now she begins;—there,—now then let us go
Near where she sits,—but softly,—on tip-toe."

L.

The reason why I turn this toy so long,
Is, that I took it up but t'other day.
It spins, as it proceeds, too coarse a song;
But then refines, and makes a pretty play
Of giddy colours. You may think it wrong
To say, he came to scoff, but stayed to pray;
But the fact is, our laugher at romance
Grew fond of his wild partner in the dance.

LI.

How could he help it, seeing that she had
Through all her laughing ways so sweet an eye,
Such stories for him, grave as well as glad,
And unaffected tears, when grief went by;
A face, as Chaucer says, "sweet, glad, and sad?"[59]
I'm none of those who take to misery
To rouse a callous palate; but the very
Profoundest want of mirth's profoundly merry.

LII.

Our lively prelate,[60] living in a sphere
Of hypocrites, and courtiers, and gay nothings,
And having got perhaps he scarce knew where,
Was much inclined to laugh at high and low things;
But being in his nature kind, sincere,
And much a man, for all his lordly clothings,
He grew in love with his romantic shelves,
And only mock'd the hypocrites themselves.

LIII.

Tyrannous ills, that patriots would pull down,
Slaveries, and slaughters, inequalities
Extreme and insolent, and of use to none,
Cause tears indeed, that from all human eyes
Brave hands should seek to wipe; but if but one
Huge, glaring, broad-eyed mirth laugh'd in our skies,
'Twould dry up all kind things, tears, smiles, and flowers,
And make our hearts as wither'd as our bowers.

LIV.

Alas! I need not speak in the behalf
Of tears, the very best, I who have long
Seen what a cup the world consents to quaff,
Doing sweet smiles and sacred nature wrong:
'Tis Melancholy's laugh, and Mockery's laugh,
I speak of; and ev'n they utter a strong
And shuddering voice against the ills they clasp,
E'en while they kiss the beldams, and cry "Grasp!"

LV.

But I digress; so here I stop; for *Finis*
Coronat opus,—"a good end's a crown;"
A maxim,[61] that in my mind so divine is,
That heartily, and with "devocioun,[62]
As Chaucer says, I wish that every Highness
And Majesty (but ours)[63] may soon lie down,
And treat their realms with the sole coronations
That give a perfect finish to their stations.

NOTES TO THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS.

(1) "*Twenty sweet summers I will tie together*."—Fletcher's *Wife for a Month*.[64]—What divine plays would not Beaumont and Fletcher[65] have left us, if they had not been "fine gentlemen about town"[66] as well as poets, and ambitious to please a perishing generation. Their Muse is like an accomplished country beauty, of the most exquisite kind, seduced up to town, and made familiar with the most devilish parts of it, yet retaining through all her debauchery a sweet regret, and an adoring fondness for nature. She has lilies about her paint and patch-boxes, and loves them almost as much as when she was a child.

(2) *And sow, meanwhile, my cresses in these tatters*.—It is well known that this species of small salad will spring up in the course of a few hours in a piece of flannel.

(3) *Of Death, and met him there that very day*.—A fine story, illustrative of the great Eastern dogma of fatality, has been told somewhere by Voltaire.[67] He says, that Solomon was one day walking out of doors with somebody, when the latter, with much consternation, said, "Who is this terrible figure approaching? He fills me with horror. Send me, I pray thee, to the remotest mountain of India." Solomon, in his quality of magician, sent him thither accordingly. The figure by this time had come up, and addressing the monarch, said, "Solomon, how came that person to be walking here? I was to have fetched him from the remotest mountain of India." "*Angel of Death,*" replied Solomon, "thou wilt find him there."[68]

(4) *With girls in isles that stud the Grecian sea.*—An allusion to a modern Greek dance, supposed to have been handed down from antiquity, and to represent the story of Theseus and Ariadne in the Labyrinth.[69]

(5) *Were I a god, my worshipp'd wife to be.*—With the exception of the Philoctetes, I have but lately had the happiness to become acquainted with the divine dramas of Sophocles.[70] I do not quote dramatic exordiums, because they speak the feelings of the author's characters, rather than his own; and my business is with a sort of personal consciousness of commencement: but the allusion in the text is to the beginning of the *Œdipus in Colonus*,[71]—which see. Let no one imagine however he will find the least resemblance of Sophocles in a translator like Franklin, who, albeit he was an University Professor, could not write common English, much less translate some of the noblest poetry in the world.[72] It is a pity that so many glorious works are lost to readers of taste, who do not happen to understand the ancient languages. Why does not Mr. Jones, the author of the Greek and English Grammar,[73] oblige his countrymen with it's natural successor, a Greek and English Dictionary?[74] Many might be allured to the study of a single language, who are deterred by the alarming necessity of understanding two, and by the comparatively frigid medium of Latin; for the Romans do not present themselves to the minds of people in general in the same glowing and poetical light as the Greeks; and this deduction from their history is a just one. Latin compared with Greek is a statue compared with a spirit.

(6) *Where the cold waters lull old Sleep to sleep.*—See *Chaucer's Dream*, beginning

> I have great wonder, by this light,
> How I live:—

for there is another under the same title.[75] The poem in question is full of the deepest imagination and sentiment. The beginning conveys some touching information respecting the poet himself; and

nothing can surpass the faculty of abstraction in the account of the Valley of Sleep, or the living presence of his portrait of a woman afterwards, perhaps the completest ever painted.[76]

(7) *Of lips to kiss, still redder than the wine.*—"The Story of Prince Ahmed and the Fairy Pari Banou."[77] The reader knows it, of course; but I write the words for the pleasure of repeating them.

(8) *Of Philharmonic winds waked all at once.—Audi* the Philharmonic Society;[78] or if you cannot do that as soon as you wish, go to the Portuguese Ambassador's chapel in South-street, Grosvenor-square,[79] and hear the organ there waked up by the hand of a master. I, to wit, one of the "Satanic School"[80] (Oh Bob!)[81] have stood in that chapel, under the influence of that organ, and with a tenderness for which an ill state of health must excuse me to my Scottish friends (whose ancestors called an instrument of that description "a grit box o' whustles")[82] have felt the tears run down my cheeks at the crowd of thoughts that came upon me. "Aye," quoth the Laureat, "you were sorry that you had no longer a faith."[83] Excuse me; I have a faith, though not in your damnatory one, or your verses: but I was struck to think of all the miseries and bloody wars that had accompanied the spread of the kindest of doctrines: and wondered how it was possible for men to look upon the altar-piece before me, and hear the music that melted towards it, and not find out, that to injure and damn one another to eternity, was unbecoming even the wrath of charity.

(9) *A shepherd; and they fill'd his hand with bays*.

> Μουσαων ῾Ελικωνιάδων αρχωμεθ' αειδειν,
> ῾Αιθ 'Ελικωνος εχουσιν ορος μεγα τε ζαθεοντε,
> Και τε προ χρηνην ιοειδεα ποσσ' 'απαλοισιν
> Ορχευνται, και βωμον ερισθενεος Κρονιωνος
> Και τε λοεσσαμεναι τερενα χροα Τερμησσοιο,
> Η῾ ιππου κρηνης, η Ολμειου ζαθεσιο,

Ακροτατω ‘Ελικωνι χορους ενεποιησαντο
Καλους , ίμεροεντας επερρώσαντο δε ποσσιν.
Ενθεν απορνυμεναι, κεκαλυμμεναι περι πολλω,
Εννυχιαι ϛειχον, περικαλλεα οσσαν ίεισαι,
‘Υμνουσαι Δια τ’ αιγιοχον, κ. τ. λ.[84]

With it's own Muses be our strain begun,
Who hold the top of haunted Helicon,
Who make a choral altar of the mountain
To Jove, and dance about the dark-blue fountain.
With delicate feet they dance, first having been
With their sweet limbs inside of Hippocrene,[85]
Or other sacred waters of the hill;
And then they mount its starriest pinnacle,
And weave the dance, the lovely, the desired,
Warming it more and more, because their souls are fired.
Thence, rapt away, and wrought up to delight,
Veil'd by the dark, they follow through the night,
Uttering a charming voice, and singing hymns
To Jove,[86] who hangs a shadow on his limbs:
&c. &c.

There follows a list of deities, with the translation of which I have not time to please myself; nor can I add the Muse's visit to Hesiod, which succeeds. It is hardly necessary to observe, that the translations attempted in this article are only intended to furnish the English reader with some idea of the originals, in default of a better. Ricciardetto is a trifle;[87] but exordiums like those of Hesiod, are to be approached with reverence.

(10) *Too full of awe for shew:—Milton's the same.*—I do not mean to say that both these exordiums are not very impressive, particularly Dante's; but see the beginning of Note 5. The following is the commencement of the great saturnine Italian,[88] who, except in the bitterness of his intolerance, was more a northern genius than a southern. The strong apprehension of the literal imagery in unison with the metaphorical, announces at once the hand of a great poet. The trunks of his trees are tangible and gigantic: and every thing

admirably expresses the fierce and gloomy doubts likely to fall upon a mind subject to violent passions, but capable of reflection.

> Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
> Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,
> Che la diritta via era smarrita:
> E quanto a dir qual'era, è cosa dura,
> Questa *selva selvaggia* ed aspra e *forte*,
> Che nel pensier rinnuova la paura
> Tanto è amara, che poco è più morte.
>
> "In the midway of this our mortal life
> I found me in a gloomy wood, astray,
> Gone from the path direct: and e'en to tell
> It were no easy task, how savage wild
> That forest, how robust and rough it's growth,
> Which to remember only, my dismay
> Renews, in bitterness not far from death."
>
> CARY.[89]

(11) *Time-beaters for dull heads*.—This passage of noble and various music is as follows:—

> Dim as the borowed beams of Moon and stars
> To lonely, weary, wandering travellers,
> Is Reason to the soul:—and as on high,
> Those rolling fires discover but the sky,
> Not light us here; so Reason's glimmering ray
> Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,
> But guide us upward to a better day.
> And as those nightly tapers disappear,
> When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere,
> So pale grows Reason at Religion's sight,
> So dies,—and so dissolves,—in supernatural light.[90]

I never repeat this dignified strain of verse, without being at once soothed and elevated. Nor are my feelings without an echo to the sentiment, though by the word Reason I take leave to understand "common reasoning," and by Religion something very different from what is irrational. It is possible, perhaps, that the ear might have had a greater glut of satisfaction by a shifting of one of the pauses,

and the insertion of another couplet between the last two; but I do not know: and it might have hurt the earnestness of the thoughts, and so re-acted in an injurious manner upon itself. Dryden, after all, was only writing an epistolary style; but he could not deny himself the pleasure of this noble exordium. The first four lines are perfect; and how divinely, and like the image it presents to the mind, does the last couplet linger, and fade away! Spenser himself has not a more glorious Alexandrine.[91]

It was hardly my intention to bring examples of commencement from poems so short as this of Dryden; but I could not resist the recollection of an old favourite. Dryden abounds in spirited exordiums, worthy of his conscious power of versification. The opening of Absalom and Achitophel is another instance, and that of the Hind and Panther[92] a third. It is observable, that in the last, where he begins with a description of his spotless favourite the Hind, he adopts a smooth and lady-like versification like that of Pope;—but see how with one vigorous touch,—one fervid and unhalting union of one of his couplets with another,—he rescues his softness from monotony.

> A milk-white hind, immortal and unchanged,
> Fed on the lawns, and in the forest rang'd;
> Without unspotted, innocent within,
> She feared no danger, for she knew no sin:
> Yet had she oft been chas'd with horns and hounds
> And Scythian shafts, and many winged wounds
> *Aim'd at her heart;* had oft been forc'd to fly,
> And doom'd to death, though fated not to die.[93]

Dryden was the last English poet who studied versification, or in another word, *numbers*, which are the soul of it. The word itself has now become obsolete; at least it is never mentioned in connexion with modern poetry. Of Pope, I have no scruple to repeat, especially as the public are now used to the repetition from others, that he had a poor ear for the music of his art, as well as for all other music. But it was good enough to discover, and to be satisfied with, the softest and most obvious melodies in the poetry of Dryden and Wal-

ler;[94] and, what is called his system of versification, was made up of nothing but their unvaried repetition. The ears of the multitude of readers are no better, especially in the North; and as they are not only satisfied with the versification when they read, but find it very easy to imitate when they write, their self-love has completed the delusion, and they cry up that as the finest *system* of verse, which by their own facility in copying it, they must feel to be no system at all. It may be asked,—why not be content with this sort of melody, or why not even think it the best, if it pleases the greatest number of people? I answer, first, that the greatest poets have not been satisfied with it themselves; secondly, that the object of the finest poetry is not to please the greatest multitude of readers, but the greatest number of readers who have wit and sensibility enough to be moved by it; and thirdly, that as this wit and sensibility may be extended, and rendered more common, by the very circumstance of the poet's not truckling to every thing which he finds established, so the general ear, like a particular one, may undoubtedly be rendered better or worse, according to the music to which the reigning poets accustom it.—Before any body however quotes the opinion here expressed of Pope, let him do me the justice to consult the two following Notes, 12 and 13.

Among other poets, who begin small compositions in a spirited and enjoying manner, I must not omit Theocritus and Chaucer.—There is scarely an idyl of the former, which might not be adduced as an example; and though the construction of most of his pieces is dramatic, we have more right to identify a moral dramatist with his speakers, than any other, because his subject is generally of a more willing and ordinary nature, and turns upon pleasures common to every body's apprehension. How delightfully Theocritus opens his volume with that mention of the breathing pine-tree, the water, and the goat-herd's pipe!

> ῾Αδυ τι το ψιθυρισμα και άπιτυς, αιπολε, τηνα
> ῾Α ποτι ταις παίαισι, μελισδεται άδυ δε και τυ
> Ευρισδες.

> Goat-herd, the pine-tree, over the springs there,
> Has a delicious whisper in it's hair;
> And you too play us a delicious air.[95]

We imagine that the goat-herd has been playing something on his pipe,—that a silence of admiration has taken place, in which the pine-tree was heard over those fresh little plashes of water,—and that his friend the shepherd suddenly breaks out into that beautiful comparison. But I must apologize for this sorry translation. Theocritus makes the comparison completer by saying that the whisper, or *ψιθυρισμα*, of the pine-tree (what a charming word!) "*sings* something delicious,"— *αδυ τι μελισδεται*. I could willingly spend a whole morning in trying to turn the passage better; but I did not intend to write notes of such a length as have grown upon me; and though the excuse is a very bad one in general, the periodical nature of this publication really does not allow me time to linger upon them more than I do. Turning to Creech,[96] who had a real genius for translation, if he could have been more patient with it, I find he has very properly retained the word in question:—

> Goat-herd, that pine-tree's boughs, by yonder spring,
> In pleasing murmurs mix, and sweetly sing;
> And thou dost sweetly pipe.[97]

But then we lose the happy indefinite air of the "something sweet;" —"murmurs" does not express the whispering sound of the original word; and "spring" is by no means the same thing as *springs*, in the plural, which suggest a variety of little waters leaping out of the ground together. Add, by the way, to this glimpse of Theocritus's scenery, the climate of Sicily, and perhaps the mountain in the distance, and what a picture for Claude or Gaspar Poussin![98]

I will take this opportunity of observing, that although the error with Creech was on the more promising side, he was as wrong in making Theocritus's shepherds talk so often like mere clowns, as more common-place translators have been in giving them the mere smoothness and conventional polish of Pope's Pastorals.[99] The truth lies in a certain medium of strength and simplicity, leaning however to ele-

gance: for there is not such a difference between the languages of the various classes of society in the South as there is in the North, and most likely never was; the cause being of a nature as much physical as moral, namely, the more general diffusion of an equal quantity of enthusiasm and sensibility. All the senses of the South are critical. A Tuscan of the poorer orders trolls the pearls of his native language consciously over his tongue,—and addresses you on the most ordinary occasion with speeches that would be high-flown and affected in the mouth of an Englishman of the same class. The Sicilian dialect, I believe, though much less renowned, piques itself to this day upon a similar refinement, and is accounted a very sweet and happy one. I have read somewhere that there are modern pastorals in it of great beauty.

I have gone a great way from Chaucer, but it is always easy to return to him. His exquisite series of portraits, at the beginning of the Canterbury Tales, may be accounted a string of happy exordiums. But see also the Dream referred to in Note 6,[100] the Complaint of Mars and Venus,[101] the Flower and the Leaf,[102] &c. never forgetting the exordium of the Wife of Bath's Tale, in which he jokes the friars so happily upon their succeeding to the ubiquitous privileges of the fairies.[103] Readers of taste, who have suffered themselves to be dismayed by the imaginary difficulties of Chaucer's language, are astonished when they come to find how melodious, as well as easy to read, is this "rude old poet" as some have called him.—The syllables, it is to be observed, that form the plural terminations, are to be pronounced,—motès , burghès, &c . as they are to this day in many instances among the uneducated classes of the metropolis; and it is a pity we ever left off pronouncing them, our consonants being at all times too ready to crowd together and thrust out their softer neighbours, like fellows in a pit at the theatre. The final *e* also in many words must be humoured, as it still is in French poetry, the common ancestor of our own.

> In oldè dayès of the king Artoùr,
> Of which that Bretons speke gret honour,
> All was this lond ful filled of faërie;

The elf-quene with her joly compagnie
Danced ful oft in many a grenè mede.
This was the old opinion as I rede;
I speke of many hundred yeres ago;
But now can no man see non elvès mo;
For now the gretè charitee and prayeres
Of limitoures and other holy freres,—
That serchen every land and every streme,
As thikke as motès in the sunnè-beme ,
Blessing hallès , chambres , kitchenès , and boures,
Citees and burghès, castles high and toures,
Thropès and bernès , shepènès and dairies,
This maketh that there ben no faëries;
For ther as wont to walken was an elf,
Ther walketh now the limitour himself,
In undermelès* and in morwënings,
And sayth his matinès and his holy thinges ,
As he goth in his limitatioun:
Women may now go safely up and down;
In every bush and under every tree,
There is non other incubus but he.[104]

(12) *The airiest wit that ever rais'd a joke*.—If ever the enamelled versification of Pope was proper for any poem throughout, it was for this lightest and most polished of satires, which in my opinion surpasses all other mock-heroics beyond all comparison. It has been said that Boileau[105] has the advantage of Pope in *propriety*; that is to say, his characters always act in a manner suitable to real life, while Pope's wage imaginary battles in drawing-rooms, make addresses to the gods, &c. I am not sure that the objection is not more than specious; but the play between truth and fiction is one of the merits of poems of this description; and as the characters in Pope are taken from a more airy and fanciful class of life than those in Boileau, perhaps we may apply to them what a friend of mine once said to me about actors,—a remark, which I have good reason to remember, because it overturned, in two or three words, a certain reputation for criticism in stage matters, which I had been raising ever since I was

* After dinner.

a youth. He observed, that it is not the business of actors to be natural, and nothing more: they should shew that they are masters of the literal truth, but add to it a certain spiritual colouring of their own, so as to unite ideal pleasure to the representation of reality, and make us admire their art without losing sight of nature. Now if we can suppose a certain dramatic consciousness in the personages of the Rape of the Lock, the prayers to the gods, the altar of "twelve vast French romances,"[106] &c. become matters of propriety as well as grace, the nature of comedy being duly considered; and unless we do suppose it, the battle in the last canto becomes a mere tragedy, and the metaphorical deaths by ladies' eyes, &c . real coroner's-in-quest catastrophes, which the author certainly never intended.[107] Be this as it may, the Rape of the Lock can afford to be something short of perfection; and I will here observe, that the only real advantage which the Lutrin[108] appears to me to have over it, is in possessing a livelier exordium. The first paragraph of the Rape of the Lock is the only common-place passage in the poem. The author redeems it, to be sure, instantly; but still it is unworthy of what follows. The story of the Lutrin turns upon a dispute that happened between the Treasurer of a Chapter (whose station answers to our Dean)[109] and the Chanter.[110] An enormous Pulpit or Reading-desk stood in the way of the Chanter, and obscured his dignity. He had it removed. The Dean insisted on its being restored. Boileau sets out in high spirit, and a true mock-heroic vein:—

> Je chante les combats, et ce prélat terrible,
> Qui par ses longs travaux, et sa force invincible,
> Dans une illustre église exerçant son grand cœur,
> Fit placer, à la fin, un Lutrin dans le chœur.
> C'est en vain que le Chantre, abusant d'un faux titre,
> Deux fois l'en fit ôter par les mains du Chapitre.
> Ce prélat, sur le banc de son rival altier,
> Deux fois le rapportant, l'en couvrit tout entier.[111]
>
> Arms and the mighty-hearted dean I sing,
> Who in a church divinely triumphing,
> By his long toils and his resistless ire,

> Got placed, at last, a Pulpit in the choir.
> In vain the Chanter, on a false pretence,
> Twice got the Church to take the Pulpit thence;
> The Dean, upon his lofty rival's place,
> Twice took it back, and fixed, for ever, in his face.

I ought to have mentioned this exordium in the text; but an Englishman when thinking of poetry is so apt to forget the French, that it never occurred to me. I allude of course to poetry in it's more poetical sense. In it's other sense, as a sayer of lively and pithy things in verse, the French have all the abundance that was to be expected of a nation of their good sense and good humour. But as Terence was called Half-Menander,[112] so Boileau is Half-Pope. He wants Ariel:[113] he wants his invisible world: he wants that poetical part of poetry, which consists in bringing a remote and creative fancy to wait upon the more obvious wit and graces that lie about us. For as to the machines in the Lutrin, besides being too grave and heavy, they are not his own, nor rendered so by sufficient novelty of handling.

(13) *His face as rich and sensitive as a fawn's.*—This comparison must not be taken as a rhyme to fill up. It struck me forcibly when I was looking at a bust of Pope, that was exhibited in the British Institution. I think it is by Roubilliac.[114] I never saw any thing that exhibited a nicer sensibility, a more delicate apprehensiveness. The nose seemed the very "tip of taste;" as if it were snuffing up the odour of his Banstead mutton,[115] or the flowers he had gathered for Miss Blount.[116] And when I recollected the fine dark eye in his painted portrait, the simile was complete. I have anticipated most of what I intended to say upon this stanza in the note preceding; but with respect to his style of composition, a word or two remains to be said, which has been suggested to me by a consideration of his person; especially as contrasted with that of Dryden. The physical conformation of a writer becomes a just ground of criticism and illustration, when there can be no suspicion of malignity. The portraits

of Dryden are those of a robust, or at least of a sufficiently able-bodied person, with a manly and breathing countenance. Pope's countenance is fine, and perhaps his eye has a more internal look with it; but it is unnecessary to inform the reader, that he had a person equally small and infirm, and that he could not even dress without assistance. I cannot help thinking that there is the same difference between Pope and Dryden in their verses, as in their persons. Pope goes to work cautiously, and with a certain minuteness of intention, like a miniature-painter preparing his ivory. Dryden takes up his brush with ease, and dashes at his oil-painting in a broader and more confident style. Pope, as if conscious of a complexional want of strength, takes all possible pains to do nothing amiss or incorrectly. Dryden trusts to the aspect of his strength for an effect, when he does not chuse to take the pains of proving it. As there is a vigour in his laxity, so there is a weakness in the very strength of the other. Pope seems to fear every stepping-stone in his way, and to resolve to get over the gutter handsomely, without detriment to his "little suit of black:"[117]—Dryden puts forth a "manly leg,"[118] and steps across at once, certain that he shall go well over, whether with care or not. This kind of sympathy between mental and bodily conformation might afford some curious enquiries, and I think would be found to hold good throughout biography. Nothing however, which has been here said, can apply to the weak carelessness of many who might allege Dryden as an excuse, or to the smooth nothings of those who find their master in Pope. Both these great geniuses are always full of matter, and never write to fill up. Their poems are not plaster-walls, with an occasional look out. The whole edifice is enchanted work, instinct with life, and illuminated with fretting fires.

(14) *When the drum calls them, kiss their wives again.*

> Ille ego qui quondam gracili modulatus avena
> Carmen, et egressus silvis, vicina coegi
> Ut quamvis avido parerent arva colono,
> Gratum opus agricolis; at nunc horrentia Martis
> Arma virumque cano, &c.[119]

I, who erewhile warbled in sylvan shades,
And issued then to light, and forc'd the meads
To glut the exacting swain, who loved my song;
Yet now, a fierce note blowing, and a strong,
Arms and the man I sing—

I confess I have not only most of the commentators against me, Heyne included, but what is worse, Dryden himself, and that in a very peremptory manner. I must own also, that what he so finely observes respecting the ordinary commencement,—that "the author seems to sound a charge, and begins like the clangor of a trumpet," is very true; and that, as I have hinted in the text, such an exordium is more directly to the purpose.

"Arma virumque cano, Trojæ qui primus ab oris."

"Scarce a word," says Dryden, "without an r, and the vowels, for the greater part, sonorous."[120] But still I must venture to refer to what I have said respecting the poet's natural inclinations. Dryden himself thinks the Georgics his most perfect work; and with regard to the verbal objections which he and the commentators make to the passage in question, they might perhaps have been quite as ingenious and peremptory in defending the words, had the humour been upon them, especially the word *horrentia*, of which (including of course it's root and derivatives) Virgil, I will be bold to say, was even fond, and not the less so for it's being suggested by certain rural images, such as the bristling of corn, of reeds, &c. The exordium has the same charm with it, to me, which is found in the allusions to themselves made by other great poets. It even looks like the triumph of Virgil's nature over his art, or that famous "judgment" for which he is so cried up,—often, I cannot help thinking, both at the expense of his better reputation and the matter of fact. However, if I find Dryden against me, which ought to make me diffident, my confidence is restored by having Spenser and Milton on my side: at least I have a right to consider them so, when they have both imitated this very exordium,—Milton in the commencement of his Paradise Regained,[121] and Spenser more particularly in that of his great poem, the Faerie

Queene. He was enabled to do so, by his having written pastorals himself. The stanza is a fine one, though the enthusiasm is subdued. I will delay no farther upon this subject, but finish with quoting it:

> Lo! I, the man, whose Muse whylome did maske,
> As time her taught, in lowly shepheard's weeds,
> Am now enforst (a farre unfitter taske)
> For trumpets stern to chaunge mine oaten reeds,
> And sing of knights, and ladies' gentle deeds;
> Whose praises having slept in silence long,
> Me, all too meane, the sacred Muse areeds
> To blazon broade amongst her learned throng:
> Fierce warres and faithful loves shall moralize my song.[122]

(15) *Doats on her face in that devouring way*.—Spenser, as well as several other poets, has also given an imitation of this magnificent exordium of Lucretius,[123] one of the finest in the world, and worthy of his Greek inspiration: for Lucretius was evidently conversant with the more poetical part of Greek philosophy as well as Epicurus's,[124] and, like all men of imagination, had a religion in spite of himself. Certainly, Venus[125] would never have asked a nobler or more passion ate address from the most orthodox of her worshippers.

> "Æneadum genetrix, hominum Divûmque voluptas,
> Alma Venus, coeli subter labentia signa
> Quæ mare navigerum, quæ terras frugiferentes
> Concelebras; per te quoniam genus omne animantum
> Concipitur, visitque exortum lumina solis;
> Te, Dea, te fugiunt venti, te nubila coeli,
> Adventumque tuum: tibi suaves dædala tellus
> Summittit flores; tibi rident æquora ponti,
> Placatumque nitet diffuso lumine coelum.
> Nam simul ac species patefacta est verna diei,
> Et reserata viget genitabilis aura Favonî,
> Aëriæ primùm volucres te, Diva, tuumque
> Significant initum, perculsæ corda tuâ vi.
> Inde feræ pecudes persultant pabula læta,
> Et rapidos tranant amnes; ita capta lepore,
> Ille labrisque tuis, omnis natura animantum
> Te sequitur cupidè, quo quamque inducere pergis.

Denique per maria, ac montes, fluviosque rapaces,
Frondiferasque domos avium, camposque virentes,
Omnibus incutiens blandum per pectora amorem,
Efficis, ut cupidè generatim sæcla propagant."

Parent of Rome, delicious Queen of Love,
Thou joy of men below and gods above;
Who in one round of ever-blest increase
Roll'st the green regions and the dancing seas;
From whom all beings catch the race they run,
And leap to life, and visit the dear sun;
Thee, Goddess, thee, the winds, the winters fly,
Thee, and the coming of thy suavity:—
For thee the earth lays forth its flowers: for thee
A lustre laughs along the golden sea,
And lightsome heav'n looks round on all, for thou hast made it free.
For soon as Spring, thrown open, re-appears,
And forth, with kisses, come the genial airs,
The birds, first smitten to their hearts, announce
Thee, Goddess, and thy balmy benisons:
The herds, made wild again, in pastures bound,
And track the rivers till their mates be found;
And every living thing, drawn with delight,
Follows with greedy will the charming ofthy might,
Through seas, o'er mountains, through the fields, the floods,
And the green houses of the birds, the woods;
All snatch into their hearts the generous wound,
That still the ages may roll on, and nature's place be found.[126]

I would fain translate further on, to come at the beautiful passage alluded to in the text; but the poet's fit of enthusiasm certainly makes a pause here. The long line, more than an Alexandrine, into which I have run out at the conclusion, is a modulation often practised by Dryden on passionate occasions, and I think amply deserves to be revived. It lets the spirit have its full vent, and carries it off in triumph, like the long blast of a trumpet. For Spenser's imitation or paraphrase, see the Faerie Queene, book 4. canto 10. He lengthens the original into a strain of voluptuous languor, like the incense fuming up from the altars at which it is sung; for the scene is laid in Venus's temple.

(16) *Le donne, i cavalier, l'arme, gli amori*.—The first stanza of the Orlando Furioso.[127] Ariosto is said to have written the two first verses over and over again, and to have bestowed upon them an "incredible" attention. Thus it is that even the most enjoying spirits work for immortality.

(17) *His time in polishing another's treasure*.— Berni,[128] who re-modelled the Orlando Innamorato of Boiardo.[129] The stanza that follows is the exordium of his *Rifacimento*.[130] Though I have been in two eminent cities of Italy, one of them famous for its literature, I have not yet been able to meet with Boiardo's work among the booksellers. I have great faith, however, in these old beginners; and much as I admire Berni, am inclined to suspect that the gallant old Lombard,[131] (who is said to have come galloping home one day in a fit of enthusiasm, and have set all the bells a-ringing in his jurisdiction, because he had found out a fine name for his hero) must have stuff in him well worthy of being read for its own sake. Nor am I shaken in this opinion by the exordium of the original poem, quoted by Sismondi in his *Littérature du Midi de l'Europe*, tom. 2, p. 58,[132] though undoubtedly Berni has given it an address and delicacy, which leave him in full possession of the praise in the text.[133]

I will take this opportunity of observing, now that I am upon the Italian poets, that the opening stanza of Tasso's Jerusalem[134] is not what his readers might have expected from that great writer, especially as he had an ear finely tuned for the dignified and imposing. It was Voltaire (confound him!) that made me discover there were too many O's in it,[135]—a fault, seemingly, frivolous enough to notice, but still less worthy of being committed. The charge is undoubtedly true.

> Canto l'armi pietosa, e 'l capitano,
> Che 'l gran sepolcro liberò di Cristo.
> Molto egli oprò col senno e con la mano;
> Molto soffrì nel glorioso acquisto.
> E invan l'inferno a lui s'oppose; e in vano
> S'armò d'Asia e di Libia il popol misto;
> Che il ciel gli diè favore, e sotto ai santi
> Segni ridusse i suoi compagni erranti.[136]

In revenge, I have the pleasure of knowing that Voltaire began his "epic" with a "vile antithesis,"[137] about the "right of victory and the right of birth:"—

> Je chante le heros, qui regna sur la France,
> Et par droit de conquête, et par droit de naissance.[138]

A poem on the Droits of Admiralty[139] might open as well. Voltaire was a wag of wags, a writer of wonderful variety, a great puller down of abuses, though he did not always know what to spare by the way,—in short, a great man, whom little ones would in vain undervalue, by detecting some failures in the universality of his information, which would be passed over in his inferiors: but for epics,—

> Look at his face, and you'll forget them all.[140]

(18) *But his own airs were sung in every bower.*—I learn this from an interesting article in the Quarterly Review upon Madame de Genlis' *Petrarque et Laure*.[141] There is another, still more so, in the same publication, No. 42, entitled *Narrative and Romantic Poems of the Italians*;[142] and these two, together with one upon Dante in the Edinburgh Review,[143] contain the best and most comprehensive criticism on Italian Poetry, that we have in our language. The second article includes a notice of Mr. Stewart Rose's happy abridgment of the Animali Parlanti,[144] and also of that other piece of wit inspired by Italian romance, entitled a *Prospectus of an intended National Poem*,[145] which only failed of popularity (if indeed it has failed) because it took up a remote subject, instead of one connected with existing manners. It is full of a manly and urbane pleasantry: and here indeed it committed another mistake; for it is in vain put into the mouths of those fraternal handicraft's-men who are supposed to write it. The two saddlers have been used to better society than that of the village-squire, and are as gentlemanly as Archbishop Turpin[146] or the Cid Hamet Benengeli.[147]

I must observe that these articles in the Quarterly Review are in it, not of it. They are even said to be translated from the contributions of a celebrated Italian now resident in England;[148] but be this as

it may, the number above-mentioned contains the usual accompaniment of party paltering and hypocrisy, especially in one of those articles on Mr. Shelley,[149] the disgusting falsehoods and malignity of which I have exposed in another place.[150]

(19) *Emmi venuta certa fantasia*.—The exordium of Forteguerri's tragi-comic romance, Ricciardetto.[151] He was a dignitary of the church in Rome, full of wit and spirit, who hearing his friends one evening wondering at the toil and trouble which it must have cost Ariosto and others to write such a heap of poetry, undertook to shew them it was no such difficult task, and produced the first canto of his romance by the following evening. It is reported, that he wrote all the other cantos with the same expedition. Nor is it incredible, considering the abundance of rhymes in the Italian language, and the natural poetry into which it runs; but with Forteguerri's leave, however delightful he is, and however he may equal Ariosto in parts, he never rises into his glorious beauty;—unless indeed the latter half of his work is different from the first, for I am now but in the middle of it. If so, I must make him the *amende honorable*.[152]

In the meanwhile, I will make the said *amende* to a couple of other accomplished writers, of whom I spoke too hastily some years ago in another piece of rhyming criticism. If any body happens to have a little book in his possession containing "The Feast of the Poets"[153] (which certain critics are always alluding to and never mentioning) he will oblige me by altering the two couplets in which toasts are proposed, to the following:—

> Then, says Bob,[154] "I've a toast," and got up like a gander:
> Says Phoebus[155] "Don't spoil it with prosing: its Landor."[156]
> And Walter[157] look'd up too and begg'd to propose—
> "I'll drink him with pleasure," said Phoebus,—"it's Rose."[158]

What I said in the Feast of the Poets respecting the *talents* of the great Scottish Novelist, was before he had exhibited his genius in prose narrative, and I have unsaid it elsewhere.[159] The corrections are very likely of no importance after all; but they are made out of a sense of the duty which I owe to truth.

(20) *Not to be found on any other plains*.—An allusion , and I suspect an ironical one, to the poetical society of Arcadians in Rome, of which Forteguerri was a member. The associates had *pastoral names* given them by *diploma*,[160] and assembled in a spot set apart for them out of doors, where they "made as if" they were in Arcadia, and recited sonnets about sheep and pipes. They numbered some other good poets among them, Guidi, Filicaia,[161] &c.; but like all other societies, in which genius is to be patronized by the great, degenerated into a mere set of courtiers and tattling pretenders, worthy of the contempt with which Goldsmith treats them in his essay on the then State of Literature.[162] I believe any body can be a member now, who writes a sonnet and is orthodox.

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EDITORIAL NOTES

[1] Theocritus (4th-3rd century BC) was one of the greatest Greek poets of the Hellenistic age. His Idylls and Epigrams have survived in Arthemidorus of Ephesus's collection of bucolic poets, along with Moschus, Bion and others. Hunt's epigraph adapts a refrain from Idyll I (lines 64 ff.), which actually reads, in translation, "Begin, dear Muses, begin the shepherd's song". Hunt omits the word "*βωκολιᾰ́ς*", *i.e.*, bucolic, pastoral. Then, he gives a mock-translation of Theocritus's line: "Begin, dear Muses, *but* begin", where *but* means "only". What follows is indeed an "inspired" collection of renowned beginnings in Hunt's translation. Hunt claims the authorship of the translations in several of his own notes to the text (see for instance p. 119).

[2] Valerio's line from John Fletcher's 1647 *A Wife for a Month*, 3.1.

[3] See Hunt's note (1) p. 116.

[4] *I.e.*, the right to name a candidate for a vacant position in the Church of England. In this context, Hunt claims the right to present both epic and pastoral beginnings.

[5] See Hunt's note (2) p. 116.

[6] A list of immensely influential poets: John Milton (1608-74), poet and polemicist, author of *Paradise Lost* (1667); Geoffrey Chaucer (1343-1400), English poet, author of *The Canterbury Tales* (1387-1400); Edmund Spenser (1553-99), English poet, author of the epic allegorical poem *The Fairie Queene* (1590-6).

[7] A region in Greece that has been turned into the literary topos of a golden age land, inhabited by shepherds, home to the God Pan, dryads and nymphs. "Piping" refers to the musical abilities of the inhabitants.

[8] The reference to the "ghastly breath" is unclear. In Greek mythology, Tartary was the underground chasm where Zeus confined the defeated Titans.

[9] The Apennines are a mountain range in peninsular Italy.

[10] Reference to *Metamorphoses*, celebrated and vastly influential narrative poem by the Roman poet Publius Ovidius Naso (Ovid, 43 BC-17/18 AD)

[11] Reference to Ludovico Ariosto (1474-1533), Italian poet, best known for the epic poem *Orlando furioso* (1516-32). In this poem, the heroes Ruggiero and Astolfo ride the Hippogriff – the legendary creature born of a mare and a griffin – to Ethiopia, beyond the Pillars of Hercules, and around the world.

[12] See Hunt's note (3) p. 116.

[13] See Hunt's note (4) p. 117.

[14] See Hunt's note (5) p. 117.

[15] See Hunt's note (6) p. 117.

[16] References to characters and elements from *One Thousand and One Nights* (15th-18th century), famous collection of folktales in Arabian, originally compiled in Egypt and diffused in Europe through French in the early 18th century. The first English translation from French in the anonymous *The Arabian Nights* (1708). Jafar and the genie are common characters; the jar is probably a reference to "The Fakir and His Jar of Butter"; Sindbad's "horrid grove" is either the back of a whale covered in trees where the hero lands at the beginning of his first voyage, or the island where he washes ashore after that episode. The Calender is one of the three in "History of Three Calenders, Sons of Kings, and of Five Ladies of Bagdad", in *Arabian Nights*.

[17] See Hunt's note (7) p. 118.

[18] See Hunt's note (8) p. 118.

[19] *I.e.*, touch like the pen of a lyrical or epic poet, tilted in order to write in a particular occasion.

[20] Ancient Greek poet (8th century BC).

[21] Quintus Horatius Flaccus (65-8 BC).

[22] *Cum grano salis*, *i.e.*, not too literally. Hunts refers to Horace's calls to moderation and plainness in his *Ars Poetica* (19 BC).

[23] The opening words of Virgil's *Aeneid*.

[24] *I.e.*, Ulysses.

[25] *I.e.*, Wrathful, angry. The lines mean, therefore, "Whether the voice of the Delphic oracle announces good or bad verdicts".

[26] Hesiod, ancient Greek poet, active in the same period as Homer (8th century BC). His *Theogony* is a poem about the genealogy of the gods. This stanza describes scenes from lines 1-34 of the *Theogony*.

[27] Mount Helicon is celebrated in Greek mythology as home to two springs sacred to the Muses. In *Theogony* the lyrical "I" – the shepherd Hesiod – is gifted bay leaf by the Muses on the Helicon.

[28] See Hunt's note (9) p. 118.

[29] Stanza XIX is dedicated to Robert Burns (1759-96), eclectic Scottish poet and lyricist. "Fairy-land" is where Burns's version of the ballad "Tam Lin" (1796) takes place; "Tam o' Shanter" (1790) is Burns's longest narrative poem.

[30] See Hunt's note (10) p. 119. Dante Alighieri (1265-1321).

[31] John Milton (1608-74).

[32] *Religio Laici, or A Layman's Faith* (1682) is a poem in heroic couplets by John Dryden (1631-1700), English poet, playwright, and satirist.

[33] See Hunt's note (11) p. 120.

[34] Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock* (1712), mock-heroic poem.

[35] See Hunt's note (12) p. 125.

[36] See Hunt's note (13) p. 127.

[37] *I.e.*, Bago (formerly spelled Pegu), in Myanmar.

[38] See Hunt's note (14) p. 128.

[39] See Hunt's note (14) p. 128.

[40] Titus Lucretius Carus (99-55 BC), Roman poet and philosopher, author of *De Rerum Natura*, a didactic poem based on Epicurean philosophy.

[41] *I.e.*, the pleasant, complex and inescapable influence that Venus holds on all the earth.

[42] See Hunt's note (15) p. 130. Reference to Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura* I, 31-40.

[43] See Hunt's note (16) p. 132.

[44] Agramante, Trojano and Carlo are characters in Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* (1516-32). Agramante is king of all the Moors in Africa; Trojano was his father, previously killed by Orlando; Carlo Magno was emperor of the Holy Roman Empire.

[45] *I.e.*, Ludovico Ariosto (1474-1533), who spent most of his life in Ferrara, where he worked at court for Duke Alfonso d'Este and published *Orlando furioso*.

[46] See Hunt's note (17) p. 132.

[47] In Greek mythology, Cronus, Zeus's father, was prophesied that he would be deposed by a son of his, and therefore he would eat all his children. Young Zeus was hidden from by his mother Rhea on mount Ida, on Crete (therefore, Idaean boy). Once grown, he entered his father's service disguised as a cupbearer and served him a concoction that had him vomit his swallowed children.

[48] Orlando is a Christian knight known in French as Roland. He is the subject of several epics, such as the 11th-century *chanson de geste Chanson de Roland*, Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato*, and Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*.

[49] Francesco Petrarca (1304-74), scholar, poet and humanist from Arezzo, Italy. His collection of poems *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* or *Canzoniere* was immensely influential during and much after the Renaissance.

[50] See Hunt's note (18) p. 133.

[51] Thomas Moore (1779-1852), Irish poet and musician, author of the hugely successful *Irish Melodies* (1808-34).

[52] Niccolò Forteguerri (1674-1735), Italian poet and presbyter, author of the burlesque chivalric poem *Ricciardetto* (1738). The name sounds "militant" because it translates as "strong, valiant in war".

[53] See Hunt's note (19) p. 134.

[54] In Greek mythology, the Muses were daughters of Zeus. While the sun is more often associated with Apollo or Helios, Zeus is often described as "Zeus the sun" or "sun-eyed".

[55] See Hunt's note (20) p. 135.

[56] Short for the Latin *non compos mentis*, "not of sound mind".

[57] In Greek mythology, Ariadne, daughter of King Minos of Crete, helped Theseus escape from the labyrinth of the Minotaur, but was then abandoned on the island of Naxos by the Athenian.

[58] *I.e.*, in very soft tones.

[59] Adapted quotation from Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Dreame of Chaucer, or The Book of the Duchess*, 860 (in *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, edited by F.N. Robinson, pp. 266-79 [London: Oxford University Press, 1957]).

[60] Niccolò Forteguerri (1674-1735).

[61] A maxim traditionally attributed to Publius Ovidius Naso (Ovid, 43 BC-17/18 AD).

[62] E.g., in *Troilus and Criseyde*.

[63] "(but ours)" is a clearly ironic attempt at self-preservation.

[64] Valerio's line from John Fletcher's 1647 *A Wife for a Month*, 3.1.68.

[65] Francis Beaumont (1584-1616) and John Fletcher (1579-1625), English dramatists who wrote several plays together during the reign of James I. Their collaborations – not all recognised as actually theirs – are collected in the two *Beaumont and Fletcher Folios* (1647, 1679).

[66] The phrase indicates young men of some means who mingle in the pursuits or society of the town.

[67] Unidentified reference. François-Marie Arouet, known as Voltaire (1694-1778), French writer, playwright and philosopher of the Enlightenment.

[68] The tale is Hunt's version of a famous story first narrated by the Iraqi Isma'ili missionary Ibn Hawshab (?-914 AD). Hunt's poem "The Inevitable", first published in *The New Monthly Magazine* LXXXVIII (January 1850): 1-2, is based on the same story.

[69] In Greek mythology, Ariadne, daughter of King Minos of Crete, helped Theseus escape from the labyrinth of the Minotaur, but was then abandoned on the island of Naxos by the Athenian.

[70] *Philoctetes* (409 BC) is one of the seven extant tragedies of the Greek tragedian Sophocles (c. 497-406 BC).

[71] Sophocles's *Œdipus in Colonus* (406 BC) follows the events in *Œdipus Tyrannus* (429 BC?). At the end of the latter, the king of Thebes Oedipus has blinded himself in desperation after his wife's death and leaves his city as an exile with the daughter Antigone. *Œdipus at Colonus* begins with the two before the village of Colonus.

[72] Thomas Francklin (1721-84), Church of England clergyman and writer. His translation of the tragedies of Sophocles, published in two volumes in 1758-9, was actually considered for a long time the best in the English language.

[73] John Jones, *A Grammar of the Greek Language, on a new and improved Plan, in English and Greek*, 3rd ed. (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, and Brown, 1815).

[74] Later in 1823 John Jones would publish *A Greek and English lexicon; in which Are explained all the words used by the best Greek writers of prose and verse* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown).

[75] This other poem entitled *Chaucer's Dream* is not attributed to Chaucer by modern scholars.

[76] All references are from the opening words and several passages in Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Dreame of Chaucer, or The Book of the Duchess*.

[77] In *Arabian Nights* or *One Thousand and One Nights*.

[78] The Philharmonic Society of London was founded in 1813 by professional musicians who wanted a platform for serious, predominantly instrumental and orchestral music (see Cyril Ehrlich, *First Philharmonic. A History of the Royal Philharmonic Society*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995). At the time, it was the only permanent professional orchestra in London and an almost unprecedented project, hence Hunt's euphoric praise.

[79] Today's Grosvenor Chapel in South Audley Street.

[80] The phrase was coined by Robert Southey in the Preface to his 1821 *A Vision of Judgement* to refer in particular to Shelley and Byron, "Men of diseased hearts and depraved imaginations, who […] labour to make others as miserable as themselves, by infecting them with a moral virus that eats into the soul! The school which they have set up may properly be called the Satanic School" (xix-xxi). Hunt's remark shows how the authors of the "Satanic school" would come to take up and embrace the expression with irreverent pride.

[81] *I.e.*, "Oh God". "Bob" is a "euphemistic substitute for God in exclamatory formulae", *OED* "bob (*n.9*)". In 1823, the same year of the present issue of *The Liberal*, Jon Bee (pseudonym) records "So help me *bob*" as "an oath to deceive the hearer" (*Slang: a dictionary of the turf, the ring, the chase, the pit, of bon-ton, and the varieties of life*, London: T. Hughes, 1823). Hunt's interjection also hints at Robert "Bob" Southey, who coined the phrase "Satanic school" (see n. 80 above).

[82] *I.e.*, "great box of whistles". Hunt's exact quotation remains unidentified. However, the expression is representative of the staunchly sober attitude of the seventeenth-century Scottish Presbyterians towards any kind of ceremonial embellishment in Church. The *OED* traces the expression, or similar ones, back to the ejected minister Vincent Alsop: "Pope Vitalian […] first […] taught Mankind the Art of Worshipping God with a Box of Whistles" (*Melius Inquirendum*, 1678, i.ii.99). As for the Scottish variant, the *OED* records "The Kist [chest] fou [full] of Whistles, That make sic a Cleiro" (*A. Ramsay, New Misc. Scottish Sangs* 141, 1772).

[83] The poet laureate Robert Southey (1774-1843). See n. 14 "Advertisement to the Second Volume".

[84] *I.e.*, "kai ta loipá", "*et cetera*". The quotation is from *Theogony*, 1-11.

[85] In Greek mythology, one spring on mount Helicon, source of poetic inspiration.

[86] In mythology, Jove or Jupiter is the Roman counterpart of the Greek Zeus, the chief deity and father of the Muses.

[87] Niccolò Forteguerri's burlesque chivalric poem *Ricciardetto* (1738). Nine stanzas from the poem and Hunt's translation are at pp. 107-13.

[88] *I.e.*, Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), Italian poet, writer, and politician. Hunt's "saturnine" is probably the heritage of Giovanni Boccaccio's description of Dante Alighieri in his *Vita di Dante*: "sempre nella faccia malinconico e pensoso" ("always melancholy and pensive in his face").

[89] Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, I, 1-7. The translation is by Henry Francis Cary (1772-1844), British author and translator, who translated Dante's *Commedia* in the three-volume *The Vision; or, Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise, of Dante Alighieri*.

[90] John Dryden, *Religio Laici, or A Layman's Faith* (1682), 1-11.

[91] A line consisting of twelve syllables.

[92] John Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681) and *The Hind and the Panther* (1687); respectively a satirical and an allegorical poem.

[93] John Dryden, *The Hind and the Panther* (1687), 1-8.

[94] Edmund Waller (1606-87), English poet and Member of Parliament.

[95] The first three lines of Theocritus's Idyll I.

[96] Thomas Creech (1659-1700), English translator of the classics.

[97] Theocritus, "Idyllium I", in *The Idylliums of Theocritus* […], trans. by Thomas Creech (1684).

[98] Claude Lorraine, "Claude" in English (1600-82) and Gaspard Dughet, or Gaspard Poussin, (1615-75), French painters.

[99] Alexander Pope's major work, *Pastorals* (1709), published in *Poetical Miscellanies: The Sixth Part. Containing a Collection of Original Poems, with Several New Translations. By the Most Eminent Hands*, 721-51.

[100] See Hunt's note (6) p. 117.

[101] Two short poems by Geoffrey Chaucer.

[102] The English poem *The Floure and the Leafe*, formerly attributed to Chaucer, is now held to be of the 15th century.

[103] The sixth tale in Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

[104] The first 24 lines of "The Wife of Bath's Tale", in Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

[105] Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux (1636-1711), French poet and critic.

[106] Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock* (1712), Canto II.

[107] Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock* (1712), Canto IV.

[108] Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux's 1674 *Le Lutrin*, a mock heroic poem in four cantos.

[109] Chapter: "The body of canons of a collegiate or cathedral church, presided over by the dean", *OED*, "chapter (*n.*)".

[110] "A person who leads or directs the singing of a church choir or congregation; a precentor", *OED*, "chanter (*n.2*)".

[111] The first stanza in Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux, *Le Lutrin* (1674).

[112] Publius Terentius Afer (Terence, c. 195-59 BC), Roman playwright author of comedies adapted from the late Attic comedy, many from Menander (c. 342-290 BC), Greek representative of Athenian New Comedy. Hence "Half-Menander".

[113] The renowned spirit-character in William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* to whom Hunt attributes – not without cause – "remote and creative fancy".

[114] Louis-François Roubiliac, "Plaster portrait bust of Alexander Pope", 1738, now at the British Museum, London.

[115] Reference to Alexander Pope, "The Second Satire of the Second Book of Horace": "To Hounslow Heath I point, and Bansted Down, / Thence comes your mutton, and these chicks my own".

[116] Martha Blount (1690-1763), Catholic gentlewoman, was a prominent figure in the Roman Catholic high society. Alexander Pope had a special relationship with Miss Blount – between friendship and non-formalised love – from 1707, when the two met, until his death in 1744.

[117] Hunt might be referencing his sister-in-law Elizabeth Kent's *Flora Domestica* (London, 1823), to which he contributed several passages: "One of the most interesting descriptions of [Pope] represents him as being seen before dinner in a small suit of black, very neat and gentlemanly, with a basket in his hand containing flowers for the Miss Blounts" (xvi). The source of Kent's description remains unidentified.

[118] Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock* (1712), III.57.

[119] A few editors in the past have suggested that the first four lines of Hunt's excerpt from Virgil's *Aeneid* are indeed Virgil's beginning. The disputed lines, where the narrator evokes the two works that Virgil completed before the *Aeneid*, the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics*, are not found in the original text of any manuscript of Virgil. Moreover, the personal note in these lines is quite untypical of ancient epic, which usually begins with its central subject.

[120] John Dryden's 1697 translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* begins with the more traditional "Arms, and the Man I sing, who, forc'd by Fate / And haughty Juno's unrelenting Hate […]". In the dedication (306), Dryden describes the beginning in the terms quoted by Hunt here.

[121] *Paradise Regained* (1671) is a poem by John Milton whose incipit explicitly connects it to Milton's previous effort, *Paradise Lost* (1667): "I, who ere while the happy garden sung / By one Man's disobedience lost, now sing / Recovered Paradise to all mankind, / By one Man's firm obedience fully tried / Through all temptation, and the Tempter foiled / In all his wiles, defeated and repulsed, / And Eden raised in the waste wilderness."

[122] The first stanza in Spenser's epic allegorical poem *The Fairie Queene* (1590-6).

[123] Titus Lucretius Carus (99-55 BC), Roman poet and philosopher.

[124] Epicurus (341-270 BC), Greek philosopher whose thought originated the influential philosophical school of Epicureanism.

[125] In Roman mythology, goddess of love, beauty, and desire.

[126] The first twenty-one lines – and Hunt's translation thereof – of Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura*, didactic poem in which he presents the Epicurean philosophy.

[127] Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso* (1516-32).

[128] Francesco Berni (1497-35), Italian poet and playwright, author of an adaptation of Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato* (1483-95).

[129] Matteo Maria Boiardo (1440-94), Italian poet, author of *Orlando innamorato* (1483-95).

[130] *I.e.*, adaptation of a literary work.

[131] *I.e.*, Matteo Maria Boiardo, who was Count of Scandiano, a feud of the Estensi.

[132] Jean-Charles-Léonard Simonde de Sismondi, *De la littérature du Midi de l'Europe*, vol. 2 (Paris: Treuttel et Würtz, 1813), 58-59.

[133] Jean-Charles-Léonard Simonde de Sismondi, *De la littérature du Midi de l'Europe*, vol. 2 (Paris: Treuttel et Würtz, 1813), 58.

[134] *Gerusalemme liberata* (1575) heroic poem by the Italian poet Torquato Tasso (1544-95).

[135] Reference to Voltaire's 1729 *Essai sur la poésie épique* (*Oeuvres Complètes*, tome 8, Paris: Garnier, 362). Voltaire's original *Essay on Epic Poetry* (1727), substantially shorter than the French revision, does mention an excess in vowels in the Italian language, but not in *Gerusalemme liberata* specifically.

[136] The first stanza from Torquato Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata* (1575).

[137] Perhaps a reference to Alexander Pope, "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot".

[138] Incipit of Voltaire, *La Henriade* (1728), epic poem dedicated to the French King Henry IV.

[139] *I.e.*, the rights claimed by the government over the property of an enemy.

[140] Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock* (1712), Canto II.

[141] Madame la Comtesse de Genlis, "Pétrarque et Laure", *The Quarterly Review* XXIV (no. 48, January 1821): 529-66.

[142] "Narrative and Romantic Poems of the Italians" is the running title of Ugo Foscolo's review of John Hookham Frere's *Prospectus and Specimen of an Intended National Work*, and G. B. Casti's "Court and parliament of beasts" in *The Quarterly Review* XXI (no. 42, April 1819): 486-556.

[143] Probably, G. Baglioli, "Dante: With a New Italian Commentary", *The Edinburgh Quarterly* LVIII (February 1818): 453-74.

[144] William Stewart Rose, *The Court of Beasts, freely translated from the Animali Parlanti of Giambattista Casti, a Poem, in seven Cantos*, London: 1819.

[145] John Hookham Frere, *Prospectus and Specimen of an intended National Work, by William and Robert Whistlecraft, of Stowmarket, Suffolk, Harness and Collars Makers, intended to comprize the most interesting particulars relating to King Arthur and his Round Table*, London: 1818.

[146] One of the twelve Peers of France in *Chanson de Roland*.

[147] A fictional Arabian historian in Cervantes's *Don Quijote de la Mancha* (1605-15).

[148] Ugo Foscolo (1778-1827), Italian poet, playwright, translator and literary critic, spent his last years as an exile in England (1816-27), where he produced mainly historical, philological, and critical works, such as the one mentioned here.

[149] Reference to the "Article VII. 1. *Laon and Cythna, or the Revolution of the Golden City. A Vision of the Nineteenth Century, in the Stanza of Spenser.* By Percy B. Shelley. London. 1818. 2. *The Revolt of Islam. A Poem, in Twelve Cantos.* By Percy Bysshe Shelley. London. 1818", in *The Quarterly Review* XXI (no. 42, April 1819): 460-70. The article is very critical towards Shelley's "industrious knot of authors" and "sect", the aforementioned "Satanic school", at the same time dismissing him as "by far the less pernicious of them". His "friend and leader" Leigh Hunt, on the other hand, stands out in the article for having "all that is odious and contemptible", "bustling vulgarity", "ludicrous affectation", "factious flippancy", and "selfish heartlessness" (460, 469).

[150] Leigh Hunt, "Mr. Hazlitt's letter to Mr. Gifford", *The Examiner* 584, 7 March 1819: 156.

[151] Niccolò Carteromaco [Forteguerri], *Ricciardetto* (Venice, 1738), mock-heroic poem in thirty cantos.

[152] *I.e.*, a public apology.

[153] The poem was first published in 1811 as an article in *The Reflector* (Leigh Hunt, "The Feast of the Poets", in *The Reflector, a Quarterly Magazine* 2 (1811, no. 4): 313-23); then in 1814 as a separate, expanded work (*The Feast of the Poets, with Notes and Other Pieces in Verse*, London: James Cawthorn, 1814).

[154] The poet laureate Robert "Bob" Southey (1774-1843). See n. 81 above.

[155] *I.e.*, Apollo. Hunt's poem is a "trifle" on the common literary theme of Apollo holding session as in a tribunal, but here the god is a critic of poetry.

[156] See Hunt's note to his poem: "Mr. Walter Savage Landor, a very worthy person, I believe, and author of an epic piece of gossiping called *Gebir* [1798], upon the strength of which Mr. Southey has dedicated to him his *Curse of Kehama* [1810] […]" (*The Reflector, a Quarterly Magazine* 2 (1811, no. 4): 322).

[157] Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), Scottish poet and novelist.

[158] See Hunt's note to his poem: "Mr. William Stewart Rose [1775-1843], a son of the Right Honourable George Rose, and author of some common-place rhymings […]" (*The Reflector, a Quarterly Magazine* 2 (1811, no. 4): 323).

[159] Unidentified reference.

[160] The Accademia dell'Arcadia was founded in Rome in 1690. Forteguerri became a member under the "Arcadian" pseudonym of *Nidalmo Tiseo*.

[161] Alessandro Guidi (1650-1712), or "Erilo Cleoneo", poet and playwright from Pavia; Vincenzo da Filicaia (1642-1707), or "Polibo Emonio", nobleman and poet from Florence.

[162] *Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe* (London: Dodsley, 1759) by Oliver Goldsmith (1728-74), Anglo-Irish novelist, poet, and playwright.