

Countess of Blessington, *Conversations of Lord Byron with the Countess of Blessington*, London: Bentley, 1834.

There was a time (said Byron) when fame appeared the most desirable of all acquisitions to me; it was my being's end and aim, but now—how worthless does it appear! Alas! how true are the lines

La Nominanza è color d'erba,
Che viene e va; e quei la discolora
Per cui vien fuori della terra acerba.

And dearly is fame bought, as all have found who have acquired even a small portion of it

Che seggendo in piuma
In Fama non si vien, ne sotto coltre.

No! with sleepless nights, excited nerves, and morbid feelings, is fame purchased, and envy, hatred, and jealousy follow the luckless possessor.

O ciechi, il tanto affaticar che giova ?
Tutti tornate alla gran madre antica,
E il vostro nome appena si ritrova.

Nay, how often has a tomb been denied to those whose names have immortalized their country, or else granted when shame compelled the tardy justice ! Yet, after all, fame is but like all other pursuits, ending in disappointment—its worthlessness only discovered when attained, and

Senza la qual chi sua vita consuma
Cotal vestigio in terra di se lascia
Qual fummo in aere, ed in acqua la schiuma (pp. 279-80)