

## Don Juan Canto Eleventh

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### 1.

When Bishop Berkeley said “there was no matter”,  
And proved it, ’twas no matter what he said;<sup>1</sup>  
They say his System ’tis in vain to batter –  
Too subtle for the airiest human head –  
And yet who can believe it? I would shatter 5  
Gladly all matters, down to Stone, or Lead,  
Or Adamant, to find the World a Spirit – –  
And wear my head, denying that I wear it;

### 2.

What a sublime discovery ’twas to make the  
Universe universal Egotism, 10  
That all’s ideal – *all ourselves*: I’ll stake the  
World (be it what you will) that *that’s* no Schism;  
Oh, Doubt! – if thou be’st Doubt, for which some take thee,  
But which I doubt extremely<sup>2</sup> – thou sole prism  
Of the Truth’s rays, spoil not my draught of Spirit! 15  
Heaven’s brandy, – though our brain can hardly bear it.

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**1:** *When Bishop Berkeley said “there was no matter”, / And proved it, ’twas no matter what he said:* George Berkeley (1685-1753) was an Irish Anglican bishop with a social conscience (*the virtuous Berkeley*, B. calls him (CMP 167) claiming to have read him when young (CMP 5). He is most famous as the philosopher who asserted, in *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710) the primacy of spirit over matter – not that matter does not exist, as B. here would seem to wish us to think, but that it cannot be said to exist without spirit to perceive it: ... *in denying the Things perceiv’d by Sense, an Existence independent of a Substance, or Support wherein they may Exist, we detract nothing from the receiv’d Opinion of their Reality, and are guilty of no Innovation in that respect. All the Difference is, that according to us the Unthinking Beings perceiv’d by Sense, have no Existence distinct from being Perceiv’d, and cannot therefore Exist in any other Substance, than those Unextended, Indivisible Substances, or Spirits, which act, and think, and perceive them ...* – *Treatise*, first edition (1710) section 91, pp.136-7. B.’s misreading is derived from Boswell: *I observed, that though we are satisfied his [Berkeley’s] doctrine is not true, it is impossible to refute it. I shall never forget the alacrity with which Johnson answered, striking his foot with mighty force against a large stone, till he rebounded from it, “I refute it thus.”* (*Life of Johnson*, Oxford 1904, p.315). A neo-Platonist and precursor of Kant (see above, X, 476) Berkeley is an apt figure for B. to choose as dialectical opponent, for B. is concerned in *Don Juan* to query whether spirit can possibly survive the battery to which matter subjects it. See his account of the illness he had recently suffered, above, commentary to IX sts.33-4. The phrase ... *’twas no matter what he said* can be interpreted punningly: Berkeley’s words denying the primacy of matter were themselves “no matter”, that is, either irrelevant, or emanations of spirit (or both). Compare below, XVI, 114, 6.

**2:** *Oh, Doubt! – if thou be’st Doubt, for which some take thee, / But which I doubt extremely:* for B.’s model in affecting to doubt the reality of doubt, see Montaigne’s account of the Pyrrhonian philosophers, quoted in the note to IX st.18 above. His scepticism is indeed balanced by the suspicion that simple piety may be preferable – see this canto, st.4.

2a.<sup>3</sup>

[*unincorporated stanza*]

When I am gay, I'm all agog for Spirit;  
When I am sober, then comes heavy Matter;<sup>4</sup>  
My very thought so clogged that I can't bear it –  
My nerves so lumpish – thoughts torn to a tatter –  
Their every shred's a Mountain, but I wear it, 5  
And them, as well's I can; and as the Water  
Sustains all ships, I bear the usual bore<sup>5</sup>  
Till I can drown, or dash it on the shore.

[*unrelated couplet*]

Oh Job! who wishest that thy foes were editors  
Of books – why to thy boils not add thy Creditors? –

3.

For ever and anon comes Indigestion  
(Not the most “dainty Ariel”)<sup>6</sup> and perplexes  
Our soarings with another sort of question –  
And that which after all my Spirit vexes 20  
Is, that I find no spot where Man can rest eye on,  
Without confusion of the sorts and sexes –  
Of Being – Stars – and this unriddled Wonder  
The World – which at the worst's a Glorious blunder,

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**3:** B. sketched out either a rough version of st.3, or a rough version of an alternative to it (the most likely possibility) plus an experimental couplet on Job, on the reverse of the manuscript fragment on which he sketched st.2.

**4:** *When I am gay, I'm all agog for Spirit; / When I am sober, then comes heavy Matter:* a paradox. One would expect gaiety to cause matter, and sobriety spirit, to predominate in a person's thoughts.

**5:** *bore:* (i) tedium (ii) a tidal surge.

**6:** *For ever and anon comes Indigestion / (Not the most “dainty Ariel”):* the illness for which B. had suffered in late September 1822 had been severe constipation; but he was often a prey to savage gastric disorders of all kinds – probably a result of his diet. Ariel is Prospero's familiar in *The Tempest*. For *dainty*, see V i 95: though Ariel was, when Prospero arrived on the island, confined within *a cloven pine* (I ii 277) as painfully subject to matter as B. or anyone.

4.

If it be Chance; or if it be according 25  
To the Old Text, still better;<sup>7</sup> lest it should  
Turn out so, we'll say nothing 'gainst the wording,  
As several people think such hazards rude;  
They're right<sup>8</sup> – our days are too brief for affording  
Space to dispute what *no one* ever could 30  
Decide, and *every body one day* will  
Know very clearly, or, at least, lie still.<sup>9</sup> –

5.

And therefore will I leave off Metaphysical  
Discussion, which is neither here nor there<sup>10</sup> –  
If I agree that what is is,<sup>11</sup> then this I call 35  
Being quite perspicuous and extremely fair;  
The truth is, I've grown lately rather Phthisical<sup>12</sup> –  
I don't know what the reason is – the air,  
Perhaps – but as I suffer from the shocks  
Of Illness, I grow much more orthodox: 40

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7: ... *if it be according / To the Old Text, still better*: that is, if Christianity has the correct explanation, and the Universe is not the result of Chance. There is an echo here of Olivia's words to Orsino at *Twelfth Night*, V i 102: *If it be aught to the old tune* ...

8: *several people think such hazards rude; / They're right*: B. carefully hedges his theological bets – having set up a doubt about the Creation, he now hastily assures us that the doubt can't be justified.

9: *every body one day will / Know very clearly, or, at least, lie still*: at the Last Judgement. B. puns with *lie still*; although how people will continue to *lie* in the sense of continue to make false statements about their disbelief, in the face of the Last Judgement, is not clear.

10: *And therefore will I leave off Metaphysical / Discussion, which is neither here nor there*: compare above, IX ll.321-2. B. implies the world to be so overwhelmingly a province of matter that metaphysics bring little light to its problems. Behind the lightness may be a serious dualistic position which says that matter is the creation of the immediate and successful devil, and spirit of the remote and impotent God.

11: Compare Feste at *Twelfth Night*, IV ii 15: *That that is, is*.

12: *I've grown lately rather Phthisical*: phthisic, or phthisic, is a wasting disease of the lungs, or pulmonary consumption – a form of illness of which B. never complains. His need for a rhyme may be paramount.

6.<sup>13</sup>

The first attack at once proved the Divinity  
 (But *that* I never doubted – nor the devil);  
 The next, the Virgin's mystical Virginity;  
 The third, the usual Origin of Evil;  
 The fourth at once established the whole Trinity 45  
 On so uncontrovertible a level,  
 That I devoutly wished the three were four,  
 On purpose to believe so much the more.

7.

T'our theme. – The Man who's stood on the Acropolis  
 And looked down over Attica, or he 50  
 Who's sailed where picturesque Constantinople is,  
 Or seen Tombuctoo, or hath taken tea  
 In small-eyed China's Crock'ry-ware Metropolis,  
 Or sate amidst the bricks of Nineveh,  
 May not think much of London's<sup>14</sup> first appearance – 55  
 But ask him what he thinks of it a year hence!

8.

Don Juan had got out on Shooter's hill<sup>15</sup> –  
 Sunset the time – the place the same declivity,  
 Which looks along that Vale of Good and Ill,  
 Where London Streets ferment in full activity, 60  
 While everything around was calm and still  
 Except the creak of wheels, which on their pivot he  
 Heard, and that bee-like, bubbling, busy hum  
 Of Cities<sup>16</sup> that boil over with their Scum;

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**13:** St.6 is paradoxical in the light of the Canto's argument so far: the more matter ravages us, in B.'s experience, the more inclined we are to believe in spirit – the reverse of what should logically be the case.

**14:** *Attica ... Constantinople ... Tombuctoo ... China's Crock'ry-ware Metropolis ... Nineveh ... London:* B. was a stranger to the third, fourth and fifth. For *Tombuctoo travels*, see above, I l.1054 *et. seq.* For Nineveh, capital of Assyria, and home of Ninus, husband to Semiramis and subsequently of Sardanapalus, see above, VIII 477: no mention is made of Peking (Beijing) anywhere else in the poem.

**15:** *Shooter's Hill:* with its gallows at the foot and its gibbet at the summit – see above, X l.640n. The rest of the Stanza sets up the idea of London as Hell, which B. will dilate upon for the rest of the canto.

**16:** *that ... busy hum / Of Cities:* compare CHP III 72, 2-4: *to me / High mountains are a feeling, but the hum . Of human cities – torture.* Andrew Nicholson (*MSYR Byron IX 186-7*) draws our attention to Milton, *L'Allegro*, 118:

*Towres Cities please us then,  
 And the busie humm of men,  
 Where throngs of Knights and Barons bold  
 In weeds of Peace high triumphs hold,  
 With store of Ladies ... and so on.*

The subject is the same, but the mood of *Don Juan* is not that of *L'Allegro*.

9.<sup>17</sup>

I say, Don Juan, wrapt in contemplation, 65  
 Walked on behind his carriage o'er the summit,  
 And, lost in wonder of so great a nation,  
 Gave way to't, since he could not overcome it;  
 "And here", he cried, "is Freedom's chosen station;<sup>18</sup>  
 "Here peals the People's voice, nor can entomb it 70  
 "Racks, Prisons, Inquisitions;<sup>19</sup> Resurrection  
 "Awaits it each new Meeting or Election".<sup>20</sup> –

10.

"Here are chaste wives, pure lives; here people pay  
 "But what they please – and if that things be dear,<sup>21</sup>  
 "'Tis only that they love to throw away 75  
 "Their cash to show how much they have a year;  
 "Here laws are all inviolate – none lay  
 "Traps for the traveller – every highway's clear –  
 "Here –" he was interrupted by a knife,<sup>22</sup>  
 With "Damn your eyes! your money or your life!"<sup>23</sup> 80

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**17** Sts.9-10: Juan's naive and unprepared-for enthusiasm for England echoes much of the cant current at the time – and subsequently.

**18:** The joke here is from *Hope's Anastasius*. Anastasius apostrophises the Arabian desert: "... here no man obeys a sovereign he never saw, or is bound by laws he never heard of: here man will give, and women will deny: here no walls are raised to keep travellers out, nor are tolls demanded for letting them in: no one here legally detains the property of the stranger, nor churlishly avoids his person. Here I may consider all things my eyes embrace as my own; and in a succession of short easy saunters, roam free as air unto my journey's end!"

At this period of my reverie, out started from behind a little knoll a fierce looking Bedoween, who, couching his lance against my breast, haughtily bade me stop (*Anastasius III*, 135-6).

**19:** *Racks, Prisons, Inquisitions ...*: common in Spain under Ferdinand IV when B. wrote the canto in 1822; B.'s friend Hobhouse had been imprisoned by the English Parliament on a trumped-up charge of abuse of privilege only two years previously.

**20:** ... *Resurrection* / "Awaits it each new Meeting or Election": connects Westminster and Heaven, Polling Day with the Last Trump.

**21:** ... *if that things are dear*: see Juan's surprise at his first English hotel bill, above, X sts.69-70.

**22:** ... *he was interrupted by a knife*: it would have been a very poorly-prepared highwayman indeed who threatened a traveller with only a knife; a lesson which this highwayman, experienced though he seems, learns too late.

**23:** "*Damn your eyes! your money or your life!*": the highwayman Tom, whose first words these are, is Juan's first indigenous Englishman (Johnson is a finer representative of the species) and is presumably chosen, like Southey, as being *representative of all the race* (above, Dedication 1.2). The most famous literary treatment of highwaymen – Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728) – used them so confidently as a metaphor for politicians that new censorship laws were passed to silence such insults. Nonetheless, everyone, from the King, Princes of Wales, Prime Ministers, Bishops and Judges downwards, commonly went abroad in the eighteenth century in the sure expectation that they would be robbed on the road at some time or another.

11.

These free born sounds proceeded from four pads  
In ambush laid, who had perceived him loiter  
Behind his carriage, and, like handy lads,  
Had seized the lucky hour to reconnoitre;  
In which the heedless Gentlemen who gads 85  
Upon the road, unless he prove a fighter,  
May find himself, within that Isle of riches,  
Exposed to lose his life as well as breeches.<sup>24</sup>

12.

Juan, who did not understand a word  
Of English,<sup>25</sup> save their Shibboleth “God damn”<sup>26</sup> – 90  
And even that he had so rarely heard  
He sometimes thought ’twas only their “Salam”,<sup>27</sup>  
Or “God be with you!” – and ’tis not absurd  
To think so, for half English as I am  
(To my misfortune)<sup>28</sup> never can I say 95  
I heard them wish “God with you” save that way;

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**24:** *breeches*: money.

**25:** *Juan, who did not understand a word / Of English*: Juan’s linguistic competence comes and goes as occasion demands. At VIII 1.450 above he is announced, unsurprisingly, as knowing neither German nor Sanskrit: but if he cannot understand a word of English, in what language did Johnson address him on the slave-market?

**26:** ... *their Shibboleth “God damn”*: compare the musing of Donna Inez, above, I.1.111-12:

“’Tis strange – the Hebrew Noun which means ‘I am,’

*The English always use to govern d—n.*”

The joke impugns English piety. A Shibboleth is “a catchword or formula adopted by a party or sect, by which their adherents or followers may be discerned, or those not their followers may be excluded” (O.E.D.). See *Judges* 12 6, where the ability to pronounce *Shibboleth* distinguishes the Gileadites from the Ephraimites: *Then said they unto them, Say now Shibboleth: and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right. Then they took him, and slew him at the passages of Jordan: and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand.*

This part of the poem celebrates English crime and English verbal corruption simultaneously. Soon Juan will hear his would-be assailant complain briefly in the argot of crime, and B. will indulge at st.19 in a virtuoso choric exercise in versified slang.

**27:** *their “Salam”, / Or “God be with you!”*: in Arabic.

**28:** *half English as I am / (To my misfortune)*: B., who prided himself on his Scots ancestry, distances himself from his linguistic subject-matter.

13.

Juan yet quickly understood their gesture,  
And being somewhat choleric and sudden,  
Drew forth a pocket pistol from his vesture,  
And fired it into one Assailant's pudding, 100  
Who fell as rolls an Ox o'er in his pasture,  
And roared out, as he writhed his native mud in,  
Unto his nearest follower or henchman,  
"Oh Jack – I'm floored by that 'ere bloody Frenchman!"

14.

On which Jack and his train set off at speed, 105  
And Juan's suite, late scattered at a distance,  
Came up, all marvelling at such a deed,  
And offering as usual late assistance;  
Juan, who saw the Moon's late Minion<sup>29</sup> bleed  
As if his Veins would pour out his existence,<sup>30</sup> 110  
Stood calling out for bandages and lint –  
And wished he'd been less hasty with his flint.

15.

"Perhaps," thought he, "it is the Country's Wont  
"To welcome foreigners in this way; now  
"I recollect some Innkeepers who don't 115  
"Differ – except in robbing with a bow,<sup>31</sup>  
"In lieu of a bare blade, and brazen front;  
"But what is to be done? I can't allow  
"The fellow to lie groaning on the road –  
"So take him up – I'll help you with the load." – 120

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**29:** *the Moon's late Minion*: see Falstaff to Hal at *Henry IV I I ii* 22-8: *Marry, then, sweet wag, when thou art king, let not us that are squires of the night's body be called thieves of the day's beauty; let us be Diana's foresters, gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon; and let men say we be men of good government, being governed, as the sea is, by our noble and chaste mistress the moon, under whose countenance we steal.* The robbery which Falstaff and his followers carry out, and which Hal and Poins in turn foil (see *Henry IV I II ii*) occurs on Gads Hill, two miles from Rochester, and on the same Canterbury road as Shooter's Hill, where Tom waylays Juan.

**30:** *As if his Veins would pour out his existence*: compare the lines describing the death of the Tartar Khan, above, VIII 943-4:

*And throwing back a dim look on his sons,  
In one wide wound poured forth his soul at once.*

**31:** *"I recollect some Innkeepers who don't / "Differ – except in robbing with a bow*: recalls his shock at his first English hotel bill; see above, X st.70.

16.<sup>32</sup>

But ere they could perform this pious duty,  
The dying man cried, “Hold – I’ve got my gruel –  
Oh! for A Glass of *Max!*<sup>33</sup> We’ve missed our booty –  
“Let me die where I am” – – and as the fuel  
Of Life shrunk in his breast, and thick and sooty                   125  
The drops fell from his death wound, and he drew ill  
His breath, he from his swelling throat untied  
A kerchief, crying “Give Sal that!” – and died.

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**32: Stanza 16** parodies, as CPW points out, not only the death of the Old Tartar Khan in Canto VIII (see above, this Canto, l.110n) but also that of the dying Gladiator at *CHP* IV st.140:

*I see before me the Gladiator lie:  
He leans upon his hand – his manly brow  
Consents to death, but conquers agony,  
And his drooped head sinks gradually low –  
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow,  
From the red gash fall heavy, one by one,  
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now  
The arena swims round him – he is gone,  
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hailed the wretch who won.*

**33: Max:** gin, described above at X 1.500 as *The poor man’s sparkling substitute for riches.*



17.

The Cravat, stained with bloody drops, fell down  
 Before Don Juan's feet; he could not tell 130  
 Exactly why it was before him thrown,  
 Nor what the meaning of the Man's farewell;  
 Poor Tom was once a kiddy upon town –  
 A thorough varmint, and a *real* swell;<sup>34</sup>  
 Full flash – all fancy – until fairly diddled;<sup>35</sup> 135  
 His pockets first, and then his body, riddled.

18.

Don Juan, having done the best he could  
 In all the circumstances of the case,  
 As soon as "Crowner's quest"<sup>36</sup> allowed, pursued \*  
 His travels to the Capital apace, – 140  
 Esteeming it a little hard he should,  
 In twelve hours' time, and very little space,  
 Have been obliged to slay a freeborn native  
 In self defence; this made him meditative. –

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**34:** *A thorough varmint, and a real swell:* VARMINT, ("Varment"): Natty, dashing. He is quite varment, he is quite the go (Captain Grose, *A Dictionary of Buckish Slang*, 1811). ... a real swell: *Swell – a man highly dressed, in a white upper tog and lilly shallow, (for example,) is a swell, however circumstanced in pocket; but to keep up the name he must lay out his blunt [money] freely; bet, and swear 'damme Sir' [see above, this Canto, l.90 and n]. If he does not fight, at least he ought to know how, and take lessons [B.'s note to st.19 below shows his affection for his boxing teacher] – or give them. No fighting man by profession can ever be a swell; he is a tulip, if he dresses thereafter, and looks swellish: – 'tis esteemed the first grade towards Corinthianism [sports-loving nobility], which he can never reach by any possibility whatever. No man who ever performed any duty or service for hire (except doctors, lawyers, parsons and statesmen) can possibly be a real swell, certainly not a Gentleman, most indubitably not a Corinthian (Jon Bee (John Badcock), *Slang. A Dictionary of the Turf, The Ring, the Chase, the Pit, of Bon-Ton*, 1823: for Corinthian, see *Henry IV I II iv 14*).*

**35:** *Full flash – all fancy – until fairly diddled:* FLASH-MAN, a favourite or fancy-man; but this term is generally applied to those dissolute characters upon the town, who subsist upon the liberality of unfortunate women; and who, in return, are generally at hand during their nocturnal perambulations, to protect them should any brawl occur, or should they be detected in robbing those whom they have picked up. (*Memoirs of the First Thirty-Two Years of the Life of James Hardy Vaux, a Swindler and Pickpocket; now transported, for the second time, and for life, to New South Wales. Written by Himself. The acquisition of flash puts many a man fly to what is going on, adversely or otherwise. Flash in a blow-up is mainly conducive towards victory (Bee). ... all fancy:* Eric Partridge's *Dictionary of Historical Slang* relates the word *fancy* to the boxing fraternity. *fairly diddled:* *diddle: to cheat by sneaking means (Bee).*

**36:** "Crowner's quest": the coroner's inquest. See *Hamlet*, V i 21-2: Second Gravedigger: *But is this law?* / First Gravedigger: *Ay, marry is 't; crowner's quest law.*

## 19.

He from the world had cut off a great man,<sup>37</sup> 145  
 Who in his time had made heroic bustle;<sup>38</sup>  
 Who in a row like Tom could lead the van,  
 Booze in the ken, or at the Spellken hustle?<sup>39</sup>  
 Who queer a flat?<sup>40</sup> who (spite of Bow Street's ban)  
 On the high toby-spice so flash the muzzle?<sup>41</sup> 150  
 Who on a lark with black eyed Sal (his Blowing)<sup>42</sup>  
 So prime, so swell, so nutty, and so knowing?<sup>43</sup> – \*

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**37:** *He from the world had cut off a great man:* parallels Tom with Fielding's Jonathan Wild, the highwayman whose "greatness" Fielding stresses, comparing him to conventional "great" men at the ironical expense of the latter. For B.'s admiration of the book (he called Fielding "**The prose Homer of human nature**") (BLJ VIII 12-13), see *Detached Thought* 116, written November 5 1821: "**I have been reading Fielding over again. – They talk of Radicalism – Jacobinism & c. in England (I am told) but they should turn over the pages of 'Jonathan Wild the Great'. – The inequality of conditions and the littleness of the great – were never set forth in stronger terms – and his contempt for Conquerors and the like is such that had he lived now he would have been denounced in the 'Courier' as the great Mouth-piece and Factionary of the revolutionists. – And yet I never recollect to have heard this turn of Fielding's mind noticed though it is obvious in every page. –**" (BLJ IX 50-1) See BLJ VI 91, 94, and 253 for his citing Fielding's continued popularity as an example of how hypocritical the public was when it condemned *Don Juan*. See also Peachum's words at *The Beggar's Opera*, I xi: *But really, my dear, it grieves one's heart to take off a great man ...* or at II v: *Your case, Mr Macheath, is not particular. The greatest heroes have been ruined by women.*

**38:** *heroic bustle:* the phrase carries two implications. *Bustle* – is blunt or money, but collective. If a man is worth a thousand pounds, 'tis *blunt*; if as much money is collected in *various sums*, 'tis *bustle*. Should a fellow steal a shopkeeper's till, 'tis all *bustle*; whilst the same sum in one note would be *blunt* (Bee). BUSTLE, any object effected very suddenly, or in a hurry, is said to be *done upon the bustle*. To *give it to a man upon the bustle*, is to obtain any point, as borrowing money, &c., by some sudden story or pretence, and affecting great haste, so that he is taken by surprise, and becomes duped before he has time to consider of the matter. (Vaux).

**39:** *Booze in the ken, or at the Spellken hustle:* KEN, a house; often joined to other descriptive terms, as, a *flash-ken*, a *bawdy-ken*, &c. (Vaux). SPELL, the play-house. (Vaux). *Hustling* – forcible robbery, by two or more thieves seizing their victim round the body, or at the collar (Bee).

**40:** *Who queer a flat:* QUEER, to puzzle or confound. I have queered the old full bottom; i.e. I have puzzled the judge. (Grose). FLAT, ... when used particularly, it means the person you have a design to rob or defraud. (Vaux). *Flat* – one who pays money when he can avoid it, is reckoned a *flat* by most people; if he gets done out of any, we also consider him a *flat*, and recommend him to take vinegar that is *sharp* to whet up his wits (Bee).

**41:** *On the high toby-spice so flash the muzzle:* TOBY, to *toby* a man, is to rob him on the highway; a person convicted of this offence, is said to be *done* for a *toby*. *The toby* applies exclusively to robbing on horseback; the practice of footpad robbery being properly called *the spice*, though it is common to distinguish the former by the title of *high toby*, and the latter of *low toby*. (Vaux). *To-by* – On the *High-toby* – high fellows who spend much money, but care little how 'tis got, mostly gamblers (Bee).

**42:** *Who on a lark with black eyed Sal (his Blowing):* LARK, fun or sport of any kind ... (Vaux). *Black eyed* implies Sal to be an habitual drinker: We gave the bottle a black eye, i.e. drank it almost up (Grose). *Sal* would imply infection: SAL. An abbreviation of salivation. In a high sal; in the pickling tub, or under a salivation (Grose). BLOWEN, [Blowing] a prostitute; a woman who cohabits with a man without marriage. (Vaux). The blowen kidded the sal into a snoozing-ken, and shook him of his dummy and thimble; the girl inveigled the gentleman into a brothel and robbed him of his pocket-book and watch (Grose). Compare Autolycus at *The Winter's Tale*, IV ii 26: *With die and drab I purchased this caparison, and my revenue is the silly cheat. Gallows and knock are too powerful on the highway; beating and hanging are terrors to me; for the life to come, I sleep out the thought of it.*

\* Note:<sup>44</sup> the advance of Science and of Language has rendered it unnecessary to translate the above good and true English, spoken in its original purity by the select Mobility<sup>45</sup> and their Patrons; the following is a stanza of a Song which was very popular, at least, in my early days. –

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**43:** *So prime, so swell, so nutty, and so knowing:* PRIME, ... anything very good of its kind, is called a *prime article* (Vaux); the word may also, as CPW suggests, carry a sexual meaning (“primed and ready”) although none of the dictionaries give it. SWELL, a gentleman; but any well-dressed person is emphatically called a *swell*, or a *rank swell*. (Vaux). NUT, to please a person by any little act of assiduity, by a present, or by flattering words, is called *nutting* him ... (Vaux). The cove’s nutting the blowen; the man is trying to please the girl (Grose). *Knowing Ones:* Sportsmen on the turf, who from experience and an acquaintance with the jockies, are supposed to be in the secret, that is, to know the true merits or power of each horse; notwithstanding which it often happens that the knowing ones are taken in (Grose).

**44:** **Lines 147-52** may thus be paraphrased, “Who was better than Tom at getting drunk in thieves’ houses, or at mugging people in the theatre? Who was better at taking advantage of the gullible, or (despite the prohibitions of the law) better at armed highway robbery? Who was more entertaining, well-dressed, amorous and apparently sophisticated when in the presence of such as his [drunken and diseased] girl Sal?” It could be that B., who would hate it to be known that he relied on a Dictionary for his apparently virtuoso command of underworld and sporting slang, includes the song from his “early days” to draw attention away from the borrowing. In literary terms, the “Poor Tom” stanzas and their note place *Don Juan* in the tradition of Fielding, and of Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera* (see notes); but in them B. gives us the real underworld, as opposed to an elegantly distanced version of it, satirical mainly of the Great World of soldiers and politicians (neither Fielding nor Gay employ slang this thoroughly). B.’s use of lowlife associations to comment on the conventionally Great is less blatant: Jonson’s *Bartholomew Fair* may be a closer precedent.

**45:** ... *Mobility:* the Mob, a sort of opposite to Nobility (Grose).

“On the high toby spice flash the muzzle<sup>46</sup>  
 “In spite of each gallows old Scout  
 “If you at the Spellken can’t hustle  
 You’ll be hobbled in making a Clout –  
 “Then your Blowing will wax gallows haughty  
 “When she hears of your scaly mistake –  
 “She’ll surely turn snitch for the Forty –  
 “That her Jack may be regular weight.<sup>47</sup> –

If there be any Gemman<sup>48</sup> so ignorant as to require a traduction,<sup>49</sup> I refer him to my old friend and corporeal pastor and master, John Jackson Esqre., Professor of Pugilism,<sup>50</sup> who, I trust, still retains the strength and symmetry of his model of a form, together with his good humour, and athletic as well as mental accomplishments.

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**46:** “*On the high toby spice flash the muzzle ...*: the authenticity of this lyric is clear from its appearance in 1828 in *The Finish of the Adventures of Tom, Jerry, and Logic*, sequel to *London Life* by Pierce Egan the Elder (see 1887 edition, p.168) where it appears precisely as in *Don Juan*, and is described as the “Primer” of a character called Jack Doublehead, an *alter ego* for Egan himself.

**47:** *On the high toby spice ... regular weight*: “Rob people confidently at gun-point, despite your fear of the gallows and of the watch – if you can’t mug theatre-goers, you’ll be reduced to picking handkerchiefs from people’s pockets, and will get arrested; your woman will get uppity when she hears how stupid you’ve been – she’ll turn King’s Evidence for the forty pounds reward, [if necessary either perjuring herself, or encouraging you to commit more and more crimes] to make sure you have done enough to get her the full amount.” See Peachum at *The Beggar’s Opera*, I iv: ... *he spends his life among women, and as soon as his money is gone, one or other of the ladies will hang him for the reward, and there’s forty pound lost to us forever.*

**48:** ... *Gemman*: Gentleman.

**49:** ... *traduction*: at once translation, slander, and betrayal.

**50:** ... *my old friend and corporeal pastor and master, John Jackson Esqre., Professor of Pugilism*: “Gentleman” John Jackson (1769-1845) was boxing champion of England between 1795 and 1803, during which period he only had to defend his title three times. Jon Bee refers to him as *The Commander-in-Chief* (Bee, 204); and Pierce Egan writes (*Life in London*, 1822, p.217) *As a teacher of the Art of Self-Defence, Mr. JACKSON has no competition*. B., himself clearly a *Corinthian* (see above, this canto, l.134n) knew him well, took lessons from him (ibid) and based Jack Johnson in Cantos V, VII and VIII in part on him: see above, V ll.81 and 108nn. The title *my pastor and master* is shared in B.’s correspondence between Jackson (BLJ V 179) B.’s Cambridge drinking- and gambling-companion William Banks (BLJ VII 230) and Father Pascal Aucher (BLJ V 152) his tutor in Armenian on the Venetian island monastery of San Lazzaro. The previous appearance of the phrase in *Don Juan* is at II 622-4, when Juan is faced with the prospect of having to eat his tutor, Pedrillo: *’Twas not to be expected that he should, / Even in Extremity of their disaster, / Dine with them on his Pastor and his Master.* –

20.

But Tom's no more, and so no more of Tom;  
 Heroes must die,<sup>51</sup> and by God's blessing 'tis  
 Not long before the most of them go home. – 155  
 Hail Thamis! – hail! – upon thy verge it is  
 That Juan's Chariot, rolling like a drum  
 In thunder, holds the way it can't well miss –  
 Through Kennington, and all the other "tons"<sup>52</sup>  
 Which make us wish ourselves in town at once. – 160

21.

Through Groves so called as being void of trees  
 (Like *Lucus* from *no light*)<sup>53</sup> through prospects named  
 Mounts Pleasant – as containing nought to please,  
 Nor much to climb – through little Boxes, framed  
 Of Bricks, to let the dust in at your ease, 165  
 With "to be let" upon their doors proclaimed;  
 Through "Rows", most modestly called "Paradise",<sup>54</sup>  
 Which Eve might quit without much sacrifice.<sup>55</sup> –

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**51:** *Heroes must die*: another echo of *Jonathan Wild*, paraphrasing Chapter XIV, penultimate paragraph.

**52:** *Through Kennington, and all the other "tons"*: Juan has passed through south-east London after killing Poor Tom in what is now Blackheath, and is approaching Westminster Bridge via Greenwich, Newington and Kennington; but *ton* also implies "exclusive idiom", as in *haut ton*, or *bon ton*, and B. is commencing his further satire on London as a place of both petty and tyrannical elitism.

**53:** *Groves so called as being void of trees / (Like Lucus from no light)*: the groves being paradoxically treeless reminds B. of the joke about false etymological derivation, which he has used already above at VI 436-8 above, borrowing it in turn from William Rose and / or Churchill and / or Quintilian. The echo sets up in turn a series of further thoughts upon the inept naming of London Streets, which then turns into thoughts about the hypocrisy of English Christians, and the undesirability of English women.

**54:** *Mounts Pleasant – as containing nought to please ... "Rows", most modestly called "Paradise"*: E.H.Coleridge refers to a Pleasant Row and a Paradise Walk "on the way from Kennington to Westminster Bridge" in 1819; neither exists any more. He also thinks B. may be "paltering with us in a double sense", which is undoubtedly true. He would wish us to see London as offering little interesting in the way of fleshly diversion. Compare *Beppo*, ll.39-40:

... bating Covent Garden, I can't hit on  
 A Place that's called Piazza in Great Britain.

The 1994 *London A to Z* lists sixteen Mounts Pleasant, but only one Paradise Row (there is one Paradise Passage). Such places were in fact often named ironically: the most famous Mount Pleasant (now behind Roseberry Avenue) ran down to the Fleet river and was used as a rubbish tip.

**55:** *Which Eve might quit without much sacrifice*: the implication that London is no substitute for Eden is soon deepened into the corollary, which is that it is a more than adequate substitute for Hell.

22.

Through coaches, drays, choaked turnpikes,<sup>56</sup> and a whirl  
 Of Wheels, and roar of voices, and confusion – 170  
 Here taverns wooing to a pint of “purl”,<sup>57</sup>  
 There Mails fast flying off like a delusion –  
 There Barber’s blocks with periwigs in curl  
 In windows, here the lamplighters’ infusion  
 Slowly distilled into the glimmering glass 175  
 (For in those days we had not got to Gas);<sup>58</sup>

23.

Through this, and much more, is the approach  
 Of travellers to mighty Babylon,<sup>59</sup>  
 Whether they come by horse, or chaise, or coach;  
 With slight exceptions, all the ways seem one – – 180  
 I could say more,<sup>60</sup> but do not choose to encroach  
 Upon the Guide-book’s privilege; the Sun  
 Had set some time, and Night was on the ridge  
 Of Twilight, as the party crossed the bridge.<sup>61</sup>

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**56:** *Through coaches, drays, choaked turnpikes:* B.’s dislike of the crush and squalor of English transport, whether urban or rural, is further seen at *Beppo* st.42:

*I like on Autumn Evenings to ride out  
 Without being forced to bid my Groom be sure  
 My Cloak is round his middle strapped about,  
 Because the Skies are not the most secure;  
 I know too that if stopped upon my route  
 Where the Green Alleys windingly allure,  
 Reeling with Grapes red Waggons choak the way –  
 In England ’twould be Dung, Dust, or a Dray.*

**57:** *a pint of “purl”:* “Purl Royal, Canary wine with a dash of the tincture of wormwood” (Coleridge, quoting Grose); “a kind of malt liquor, in which wormwood and aromatics are infused” (Wright, DJV, DJP); “a mixture of hot beer and gin” (CPW, quoting without acknowledgement the OED, which in fact allows either).

**58:** *in those days we had not got to Gas:* the City, Westminster and Southwark were supplied with gas lighting from 1812, after an experiment in Pall Mall in 1805 to celebrate the birthday of the Prince of Wales. The reference reminds the reader that the action is set in the early 1790s. Compare above, VII l.349 and n.

**59:** *mighty Babylon:* Biblical city of Sin, and one to which B. had not compared London in st.7 of this canto.

**60:** *With slight exceptions, all the ways seem one – – / I could say more:* cryptic.

**61:** *the Sun / Had set some time, and Night was on the ridge / Of Twilight, as the party crossed the bridge:* compare *Macbeth*, III ii 50-3, and III iii 5-7: *Light thickens, and the crow / Makes wing to th’ rooky wood; / Good things of day begin to droop and drowse, / While Night’s black agents to their preys do rouse ... The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day; / Now spurs the lated traveller apace / To gain the timely inn ...* The bridge is Westminster Bridge, the southern entrance into the West End, opened in 1750 as an alternative to Putney or London Bridges (Waterloo Bridge was built in 1817, Southwark Bridge in 1819).

24.<sup>62</sup>

That's rather fine, the gentle Sound of Thamis, 185  
 Who vindicates a moment, too, his stream,  
 Though hardly heard, through multifarious "dammes",<sup>63</sup>  
 The Lamps of Westminster's more regular gleam;  
 The breadth of pavement, and yon Shrine where Fame is  
 A spectral resident, whose pallid beam<sup>64</sup> 190  
 In shape of Moonshine hovers o'er the pile,  
 Makes this a sacred part of Albion's Isle. –

25.

The Druids' Groves are gone – so much the better –  
 Stonehenge is not; but what the devil is it?  
 But Bedlam still exists, with its sage fetter,<sup>65</sup> 195  
 That Madmen may not bite you on a visit;  
 The Bench, too, seats, or suits, full many a debtor;<sup>66</sup>  
 The Mansion House, too (though some people quiz it)  
 To me appears a stiff yet grand erection;<sup>67</sup>  
 But then the Abbey's worth the whole collection. 200

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**62:** The southern route to Westminster, through St George's Fields, was much more spectacular than we can now imagine. A writer of 1790 – about Juan's time – reports that the way was "... the wonder of foreigners approaching by road to our capital, through avenues of lamps, of magnificent breadth and goodness. I have heard that a foreign ambassador" [such as Juan is] "who happened to make his entry at night" [as Juan does] "imagined that these illuminations were in honour of his arrival, and as he modestly expressed, more than he could have expected". The skyline would not have included the Houses of Parliament, and instead would have been dominated – as st.25 is here – by Westminster Abbey.

**63:** *multifarious "dammes"*: refers again to the English *Shibboleth* (see above, this canto, ll.90 and n, and 134 n).

**64:** *yon Shrine where Fame is / A spectral resident*: B. refers to Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey.

**65:** *But Bedlam still exists, with its sage fetter*: the Priory and Hospital of St. Mary Bethlehem started taking in lunatics in 1377; the sagacity of its fettering included at first chaining to the wall, ducking, and whipping. Originally at Bishopsgate, then at Moorfields, it was moved to Lambeth in 1815, by which time the madness of George III had caused public sympathy with the insane to increase, and whipping to be abolished. In B.'s time the public was still admitted to gaze at the caged inmates – but by ticket only. The Hospital's main building now houses the Imperial War Museum.

**66:** *The Bench, too, seats, or suits, full many a debtor*: King's Bench Prison, mainly for debtors, had been in St. George's Fields, between Southwark and Lambeth, since 1758. By B.'s time it was a flourishing community, with tailors, barbers, piano-makers, chandlers, oyster-sellers and thirty [sic] gin shops. Distinguished prisoners had included the King of Corsica, John Wilkes, and Admiral Lord Cochrane, associate of Simon Bolivar.

**67:** *The Mansion House, too (though some people quiz it) / To me appears a stiff yet grand erection*: the official residence of the Lord Mayor was opened in 1752 and much altered subsequently. B. quizzes it at BLJ II 37. The exact import of B.'s obscene punning is not clear; and Juan could not in any case have seen the building as he approached the West End from the south-east.

26.

The line of lights, too, up to Charing Cross,  
 Pall Mall, and so forth,<sup>68</sup> have a coruscation  
 Like Gold as in comparison with dross,  
 Matched with the Continent's illumination,  
 Whose cities Night by no means deigns to gloss; 205  
 The French were not yet a lamp-lighting nation,  
 And when they grew so, on their new-found lanthorn,  
 Instead of Wicks, they made a wicked man turn.<sup>69</sup>

27.

A Row of Gentlemen along the Streets  
 Suspended, may illuminate mankind, 210  
 As also bonfires made of Country seats;<sup>70</sup> –  
 But the old way is best for the purblind;  
 The other looks like phosphorus on sheets,  
 A sort of Ignis fatuus to the Mind,<sup>71</sup>  
 Which, though 'tis certain to perplex and frighten, 215  
 Must burn more mildly ere it can enlighten.<sup>72</sup>

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**68:** *The line of lights, too, up to Charing Cross, / Pall Mall, and so forth:* then visible from the western approach to Westminster Bridge, Charing Cross formed, before the creation of Trafalgar Square, the junction of The Strand and Whitehall; the west end of Pall Mall, visible too across St. James's Park, was by this time one of the most desirable streets in London, containing Carlton House (see above, X 675) Marlborough House, and Buckingham House; it was not, however, properly gas-lit until 1820, thirty years after the action of *Don Juan*.

**69:** *Instead of Wicks, they made a wicked man turn:* refers to the mass executions of unpopular or merely unlucky French aristocrats in 1789. Some were hanged from lamp-posts. See the *Ça ira*:

'Ra, 'ra, 'ra, ça ira, ça ira, ça ira!

*Les aristocrats à la lanterne!*

'Ra, 'ra, 'ra, ça ira, ça ira, ça ira!

*Les aristocrats, on les pendra!*

**70:** *As also bonfires made of Country seats:* refers to the despoliation of many French landowners' mansions during the early 1790s, and similar burnings in English agricultural unrest after 1815. Despite B.'s immediate disclaimer, both this and the line just annotated are intended to make his English readership squirm either with anticipatory delight or with horror.

**71:** *A sort of Ignis fatuus to the Mind:* one of the most central and deterministic images in B.'s work is here used in one of its most important contexts. Compare above, VII 365; below, XV, 430; *TVOJ*, 837; *Manfred*, I i 195; *The Prisoner of Chillon*, 35; *Mazeppa*, 619; *The Deformed Transformed*, stage-direction at I i 480; *Werner*, III iii 40-1; and *The Island*, IV 86. It can not be said, however, to relate very well to Juan himself, who is conscious of no goal, and of no guiding light, delusive or otherwise.

**72:** ... *though 'tis certain to perplex and frighten, – / Must burn more mildly ere it can enlighten:* how the flame of revolution can burn *mildly* is mysterious. Compare *Coriolanus*, III ii 139, 142 and 144.



28.

But London's so well lit that if Diogenes  
 Could recommence to hunt his *honest man*,<sup>73</sup>  
 And found him not amidst the various progenies  
 Of this enormous City's spreading spawn, 220  
 'Twere not for want of lamps, to aid in dodging his  
 Yet undiscovered treasure; what *I* can,  
 I've done, to find the same throughout Life's journey –  
 But see the World is only one Attorney.<sup>74</sup>

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**73:** ... *if Diogenes / Could recommence to hunt his honest man*: the story of the cynic philosopher Diogenes searching Athens with a lantern in broad daylight, looking for an honest man, is untraceable. For Diogenes, see also above, VII 1.31, and below, XV 1.583, and XVI 1.388. See also *CHP* III 41, 8, and *The Age of Bronze*, 478. CPW adduces the opening line of the epic, *I want a Hero*, as another quotation.

**74:** *the World is only one Attorney*: that is, one who is determined to deprive you of all your money. B. is probably thinking of his own lawyer John Hanson. See *The Beggar's Opera*, I ix:

*A fox may steal your hens, Sir,  
 A whore your health and pence, Sir,  
 A wife your goods and plate;  
 But it ever was decreed, Sir,  
 If lawyer's hand is fee'd, Sir,  
 He steals your whole estate.*

29.

Over the Stones still rattling! – up Pall Mall,<sup>75</sup> 225  
 Through Crowds and Carriages – but waxing thinner  
 As thundered knockers broke the long-sealed spell  
 Of doors 'gainst duns,<sup>76</sup> and to an early dinner  
 Admitted a small party as Night fell;  
 Don Juan, our young diplomatic sinner, 230  
 Pursued his path, and drove past some hotels,  
 St. James's Palace,<sup>77</sup> and St. James's "Hells."<sup>78</sup> –

\* "Hells" – gaming houses. What their number may be in this life I know not; before I was of age I knew them pretty accurately, both "gold" and "silver".<sup>79</sup> I was once nearly called out by an acquaintance,<sup>80</sup> because when he asked me where I thought his Soul would be found hereafter – I answered "in Silver Hell." –

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**75:** *Pall Mall*: so called from the mallet-and-ball game. To the north of St. James's Park, it remains one of the most expensive streets in London. John Murray's publishing house is not too far away, on the other side of Piccadilly.

**76:** *As thundered knockers broke the long-sealed spell / Of doors 'gainst duns*: as debt-collectors (or the creditors themselves) beat violently, demanding payment. *Duns* are demands for payment, of which B. had had his fair share during his stay at 13 Piccadilly Terrace (not far from St James's either) during his marital crisis of 1816.

**77:** The proximity of St James's Palace to a sort of Hell, and the arrival nearby of *Don Juan, our young diplomatic sinner* (l.230) indicates that the poem is arriving at a central metaphor, at least. The well-lit London is a venue both for the rapacious and for the damned, and the monarchy is evidently associated with both.

**78:** *St. James's Palace, and St. James's "Hells"*: also on the north side of St. James's Park, the Palace was the official residence of the monarch, Buckingham Palace not yet having been appropriated. The Hells were the gambling dens in nearby Pall Mall and St. James's Street. Commentators are coyly silent on the word-association game B. is playing. George III was married at the Palace, and George IV born there. In 1809 a large part of it was burnt down, but was rebuilt in time for the Year of the Monarchs in 1814. Recent scandals there included the assault on the Duke of Cumberland – brother to the Regent – by his Corsican valet. B. himself had lived in St. James's Street (see his note) as had James Gillray.

**79:** *both "gold" and "silver"*: gambling houses where the stakes were restricted to coins in those respective metals. In *Detached Thought* 21 (BLJ IX 19) B. defines the latter as *a cant name for a second rate gambling house*.

**80:** *... an acquaintance*: Captain Wallace. See *Detached Thought* 21 again. Hobhouse records in his diary (BL Add. Mss. 47234 25r) that Wallace has been condemned to the Venetian galleys *for some robbery*.

They reached th'hotel; forth streamed from the front door  
 A tide of well-clad waiters, and around  
 The mob stood, and, as usual, several score 235  
 Of those pedestrian Paphians, who abound  
 In decent London, when the daylight's o'er;<sup>82</sup>  
 Commodious but immoral, they are found  
 Useful, like Malthus, in promoting marriage;<sup>83</sup>  
 But Juan now is stepping from his carriage 240

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**81:** St.30 runs, in rough:

At length the boys drew up before a door  
 From whence poured forth a tide of well-clad waiters  
 (While on the pavement many a hungry whore,  
 With which this Moralest of cities caters  
 For Gentlemen whose passions may boil o'er)  
 Stood, as the unpacking gathered more spectators,  
 And Juan found himself in an extensive  
 Apartment, fashionable but expensive.

B. manages in re-writing (presumably in proof) to be at once more reserved and more offensive.

**82:** ... *those pedestrian Paphians, who abound / In decent London, when the daylight's o'er*: especially in the vicinity of the gambling hells. For *Paphian*, see also above, V 763: the isle of Paphos contained a temple to Aphrodite.

**83:** ... *they are found / Useful, like Malthus, in promoting marriage*: B. seems to anticipate his satire on the London marriage-market in Canto XII. His implication about the Rev. Thomas Malthus is either (i) that London wives cannot satisfy the urges for which the Paphians cater or (ii) that with so many Paphians, marriage is rendered unnecessary, and thus the population is kept down. Compare the role played by the hours, above, VIII sts.113-15. For Malthus, see also above, I st.131n, and below, XII ll.108 and 160, and XV ll.290 and 297.

31.

Into one of the sweetest of hotels,  
Especially for foreigners,<sup>84</sup> and mostly  
For those whom Favour or whom Fortune swells,<sup>85</sup>  
And cannot find a bill's small items costly;  
There many an Envoy either dwelt, or dwells 245  
(The den of many a diplomatic lost lie)  
Until to some conspicuous square they pass,  
And blazon o'er the door their names in brass.

32.

Juan, whose was a delicate commission –  
Private, though publicly important – bore 250  
No title to point out with due precision  
The exact affair on which he was sent o'er;  
'Twas merely known that, on a secret mission,  
A Foreigner of rank had graced our shore –  
Young, handsome and accomplished – who was said 255  
(In whispers) to have turned his Sovereign's head.

33.

Some rumour also of some strange adventures,  
Had gone before him, of his wars and loves;<sup>86</sup>  
And, as romantic heads are pretty painters,  
And above all an Englishwoman's roves 260  
Into the excursive, breaking the indentures  
Of sober Reason, wheresoe'er it moves,<sup>87</sup>  
He found himself extremely in the fashion,  
Which serves our thinking people for a passion: –

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**84:** *Into one of the sweetest of hotels, / Especially for foreigners:* E.H.Coleridge writes, *Perhaps Grillion's Hotel (afterwards Grillion's Club) in Albemarle Street.* In 1822 diplomats patronized more than one hotel in and near St. James's Street, but among the "Departures from Grillion's Hotel," recorded in the Morning Chronicle of September 17, 1822, appositely enough, is that of H.E. Don Juan Garcia, del Rio. For a comparable coincidence, see the note above at IX l.530, on Catherine the Great's Hispanic lover.

**85:** *those whom Favour or whom Fortune swells:* indecent, with a reference to Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts:* compare above, IX ll.502-3. The Paphians outside Juan's hotel would not in this analysis lack employment.

**86:** *... his wars and loves:* echoes B.'s misquotation of Spenser at VII l.57 above: *Fierce loves and faithless Wars ...*

**87:** *... breaking the indentures / Of sober Reason, wheresoe'er it moves:* equates English female fantasy with that of Catherine the Great. Compare above, IX sts. 59-62.

34.

I don't mean that they're passionless, but quite 265  
The contrary – but then 'tis in the head;  
Yet, as the consequences are as bright  
As if they acted with the heart instead,  
What after all can signify the site  
Of ladies' lucubrations?<sup>88</sup> so they lead 270  
In safety to the place for which you start,  
What matters if the road be head or heart?

35.

Juan presented, in the proper place,  
To proper placemen, every Russ credential,  
And was received with all the due grimace 275  
By those who govern in the mood potential,<sup>89</sup>  
Who, seeing a handsome Stripling with smooth face,  
Thought (what in state affairs is most essential)  
That they as easily might *do* the youngster,  
As Hawks may pounce upon a Woodland Songster. 280

36.

They erred, as aged men will do, but by  
And bye we'll talk of that, or if we don't,  
'Twill be because our notion is not high  
Of politicians, and their double front,  
Who live by lies, yet dare not boldly lie; 285  
Now what I love in women is, they won't,  
Or can't do otherwise than lie<sup>90</sup> – but do it  
So well, the very Truth seems Falsehood to it. –

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**88:** ... *the site / Of ladies' lucubrations*: *site* is indecent. See next note. To lucubrate is to use up the midnight oil in literary activity. Compare *Beppo*, 371: *I like to speak and lucubrate my fill ...*

**89:** ... *those who govern in the mood potential*: commentators allege these to be the *placemen* of l.274, that is, the real grey men of power behind the seeming politicians. But B. is also punning rudely with the word *place* at ll.271 and 273 – signifying with it at once St James's Palace, the *place* where Juan would have presented his credentials as envoy, and *place* as in *the forfended place* (*King Lear*, V i 11). Thus real political power in England is defined as lying at once with the bureaucrats and bankers who manipulate the politicians, and with the wives of those same politicians. This pun leads on to a similar one at *do the youngster* at 279; signifying (i) take him for a ride and (ii) bed him. B.'s observation of Lady Holland, and his experience with Lady Oxford, may lie behind the jokes.

**90:** *Now what I love in women is, they won't, / Or can't do otherwise than lie*: compare Donna Julia's speech to Don Alfonso, above, I sts.145-57; followed by B.'s erotic description of her at st.158.

37.

And after all, what is a lie? 'tis but  
 The Truth in Masquerade;<sup>91</sup> and I defy 290  
 Historians, heroes, lawyers, priests to put  
 A fact without some leaven of a lie;<sup>92</sup>  
 The very Shadow of the Truth would shut  
 Up Annals, Revelations, Poesy,  
 And Prophecy; except it should be dated 295  
 Some years before the incidents related.

38.

Praised be all liars and all lies! – who now  
 Can tax my Mild Muse with Misanthropy?  
 She rings the World's "Te Deum,"<sup>93</sup> and her brow  
 Blushes for those who will not; but to sigh 300  
 Is idle – let us like most others bow,  
 Kiss hands, feet, any part of Majesty,  
 After the good example of "Green Erin,"  
 Whose Shamrock now seems rather worse for wearing.<sup>94</sup>

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**91:** *And after all, what is a lie? 'tis but / The Truth in Masquerade:* in this analysis, to return to B.'s mis-citing of Bishop Berkeley in the first stanza of this canto, to assert either the primacy of Spirit over Matter, or that of Matter over Spirit, would in *both* cases be to counter one false assertion with another.

**92:** *I defy / Historians, heroes, lawyers, priests to put / A fact without the leaven of a lie:* the perpetual elusiveness of Truth, and the folly of asserting that any human can put it into words even with the best will in the world, is a commonplace of *Don Juan*. See above, I ll.1-4; or VII l.636; or IX l.644.

**93:** She rings the World's "Te Deum": the full force of the joke only becomes clear when we read the *Te Deum*, substituting "... all liars and all lies" for "God": *Te Deum laudamus: te dominum confitemur. / Te aeternum Patrem omnis terra veneratur, / Tibi omnes angeli, tibi caeli et universae potestates: / Tibi Cherubim et Seraphim incessabili voce proclamant: / Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth. / Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloriae tuae!* "We praise Thee, o God; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord. / All the earth doth worship thee, the father everlasting, / To thee angels cry aloud, the heavens, and all the powers therein, / To thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry: / Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth! / Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of thy glory!" Man's incapacity for putting the truth into words (see above, this canto, 289-92 nn, on previous page) is used perversely by him as an excuse for worshipping truth's opposite. Now see next note.

**94:** *... let us like most others bow, / Kiss hands, feet, any part of Majesty, / After the good example of "Green Erin," / Whose Shamrock now seems rather worse for wearing:* see above, Dedication, 125, for B.'s lament over *Erin's yet green wounds*; yet in late August and early September 1821 George IV had made a triumphant visit to Dublin, corresponding to the one he made to Edinburgh in August of the following year, to which B. has already alluded at the end of Canto X. The Dublin visit occurred just after the death of his estranged wife Caroline. The welcome given him in both capitals would have been seen despairingly by B. – who had already written of George's Dublin visit in *The Irish Avatar* – as showing the inherent slavishness of both Celtic nations towards their common English oppressor.

39.

Don Juan was presented<sup>95</sup> – and his dress 305  
And mien excited general admiration –  
I don't know which was more admired or less;  
One monstrous diamond drew much observation,  
Which Catherine in a moment of "Ivresse"  
(In Love or Brandy's fervent fermentation)<sup>96</sup> 310  
Bestowed upon him, as the Public learned;  
And, to say truth, it had been fairly earned. –

40.

Besides the Ministers and Underlings,  
Who must be courteous to the accredited  
Diplomatists of rather wavering kings, 315  
Until their royal riddle's fully read,<sup>97</sup>  
The very Clerks, those somewhat dirty springs  
Of Office, or the House of Office, fed  
By foul corruption into streams;<sup>98</sup> even they  
Were hardly rude enough to earn their pay. – 320

41.

And Insolence, no doubt, is what they are  
Employed for, since it is their daily labour  
In the dear Offices<sup>99</sup> of peace or war;  
And should you doubt, pray, ask of your next neighbour<sup>100</sup>  
When for a passport, or some other bar 325  
To Freedom he applied<sup>101</sup> (a grief and a bore)  
If he found not this spawn of Tax-horn Riches,  
Like lap-dogs, the least civil sons of b——s. –

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**95:** *Don Juan was presented – and his dress / And mien excited general admiration:* compare his first audience with Catherine, above, IX sts.43-7.

**96:** ... in a moment of "Ivresse" / (In Love or Brandy's fervent fermentation): compare above, II ll.1351-2: ... *Bacchus, / Without whom Venus will not long attack us.*

**97:** ... *their royal riddle:* associates the *wavering* monarchs with such impotent wordsmiths as Castlereagh – see above, IX sts.49-50.

**98:** *The very Clerks, those somewhat dirty springs / Of Office:* anticipates Dickens' satire on the Circumlocution Office in *Little Dorrit*.

**99:** *Insolence ... Offices:* embedded quotation from *Hamlet*, III i 73: *The insolence of office.*

**100:** ... *your next neighbour:* the tautology echoes Leontes at *The Winter's Tale*, I ii 195-6: ... *his next neighbour ... Sir Smile, his neighbour.* B. re-uses the phrase at l.331 in the next stanza.

**101:** *When for a passport, or some other bar / To Freedom:* a symptom of the general mis-use of language and power which B. is satirising. Seeming to give freedom, the "pass-port" in fact symbolises the extent to which one's movements are at the mercy of the state.

42.

But Juan was received with much “empressement”<sup>102</sup>  
 (These phrases of refinement I must borrow 330  
 From our next neighbour’s land – where like a Chess Man  
 There is a Move set down for Joy or Sorrow,  
 Not only in merely Talking but the Press);<sup>103</sup> Man  
 In islands is, it seems, downright and thorough  
 More than on Continents – as if the Sea 335  
 (See Billingsgate) made even the tongue more free.<sup>104</sup>

43.

And yet the British “Damme’s” rather Attic<sup>105</sup> –  
 Your Continental Oaths are but Incontinent –  
 And turn on things, which no Aristocratic  
 Spirit would name – and therefore e’en I wont anent \* 340  
 This Subject quote, as it would be Schismatic  
 In Politesse, and have a sound affronting in’t;  
 But “Damme’s” quite ethereal, though too daring –  
 Platonic blasphemy – the Soul of Swearing.<sup>106</sup> –

\* “Anent”<sup>107</sup> was a Scotch phrase meaning “concerning”, “with regard to” – it has been made English by the Scotch novels, and, as the Frenchman said, if it be not, “ought to be” English.<sup>108</sup> – –

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**102:** *But Juan was received with much “empressement”*: with the politest and closest attention.

**103:** *our next neighbour’s land – where like a Chess Man / There is a Move set down for Joy or Sorrow, / Not only in merely Talking but the Press*: that is, French has much finer and more hard-and-fast vocabulary distinctions than English. DJP comments on the much greater incidence of French in the latter cantos of the epic.

**104:** *... the Sea / (See Billingsgate) made even the tongue more free*: Billingsgate has always provided a by-word for gross language. B.’s joke involves the implication that English “freedom” is a convention largely linguistic.

**105:** *... the British “Damme’s” rather Attic*: it was the wit of Donna Inez, a version of B.’s wife, whose wit – when she aimed at it – was described (above, I l.91) as *Attic all*, that is, pure and succinct, and who was concerned (I ll.111-12) about the shibbolethic English use of “damn” as a universal curse.

**106:** *Platonic blasphemy – the Soul of Swearing*: as all swearing is offensive to God, the Englishman’s habit of asking God to damn him has the virtue of economy, and does indeed embody the intention and effect of swearing in their very essence. The joke implies that vaunting one’s Englishness is an open invitation to God to damn one.

**107:** See Scott, *The Abbot*, Chapter XVII: “... nor is it worth while to vex one’s self anent what cannot be mended”. I am grateful to Yasushi Morita for the quotation.

**108:** *Your Continental Oaths are but Incontinent – / And turn on things, which no Aristocratic / Spirit would name*: that is, continental swearing is obscene, where English is sacrilegious.



44.

For downright rudeness, Ye may stay at home; 345  
 For true or false politeness (and scarce *that*,  
*Now*) Ye may cross the blue deep, and white foam;  
 The first emblem (rarely though) of what  
 You leave behind, the next of much you come  
 To meet; however, 'tis no time to chat 350  
 On general topics: poems must confine  
 Themselves to Unity, like this of mine.

45.<sup>109</sup>

In the Great World – which being interpreted  
 Meaneth the West or worst end of a city,  
 And about twice two thousand people bred 355  
 By no means to be very wise or witty,<sup>110</sup>  
 But to sit up while others lie in bed,  
 And look down on the universe with pity –  
 Juan – as an inveterate Patrician<sup>111</sup> –  
 Was well received by persons of condition. 360

46.

He was a bachelor, which is a matter  
 Of import both to virgin and to bride,  
 The former's Hymeneal hopes to flatter; –  
 And (should she not hold fast by love or pride)  
 'Tis also of some moment to the latter; 365  
 A rib's a dead thorn in a wed Gallant's side<sup>112</sup> –  
 Requires decorum – and is apt to double  
 The horrid sin, and, what's still worse, the trouble.

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**109:** CPW says that B.'s satire on London and, by clear implication, England, finally gets under way at st.45: as he has already compared the Royal Palaces to Hell, it is hard to see how much more radical his satire can become.

**110:** *In the Great World – which being interpreted / Meaneth the West or worst end of a city, / And about twice two thousand people bred / By no means to be very wise or witty:* for an earlier denial of London's claim to global representativeness, see *Beppo*, st.59:

*The rest are but a vulgar Set – the Bore  
 Of public places, where they basely brave  
 The fashionable stare of twenty Score  
 Of well-bred persons called "The World" – but I,  
 Although I know them, really don't know why. –*

Compare also below, XIII, 48, 6 and 49, 2.

**111:** *Juan – as an inveterate Patrician:* see above, I l.300: *His Sire was of Castile, his Dam from Arragon.*

**112:** *A rib's a dead thorn in a wed Gallant's side:* woman, sprung from Adam's rib, is apt to stay only partially severed, and remain as a thorn in his flesh.

47.

But Juan was a bachelor – of Arts,  
 And parts, and hearts; he danced and sung, and had 370  
 An air as sentimental as Mozart’s  
 Softest of melodies,<sup>113</sup> and could be sad  
 Or cheerful without any “flaws or starts”,<sup>114</sup>  
 Just at the proper time, and, though a lad,  
 Had seen the world, which is a curious sight, 375  
 And very much unlike what people write. –

48.

Fair virgins blushed upon him; wedded dames  
 Bloomed also, in less transitory hues;  
 For both Commodities dwell by the Thames –  
 The painting and the painted: Youth, Ceruse,<sup>115</sup> 380  
 Against his heart preferred their usual claims,  
 Such as no Gentleman can quite refuse;  
 Daughters admired his dress<sup>116</sup> – and pious Mothers  
 Enquired his income, and if he had brothers. –

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**113:** *An air as sentimental as Mozart’s / Softest of melodies:* apart from the most glancing mention in a letter to Stendhal of May 29 1823 (see also BLJ VII 25) and below, XIV st.45, B.’s note, this is the only reference B. makes to Mozart in all of his surviving work. Even so, it is hard not to see the parallels in tone and subject between the da Ponte operas and the ottava rima satires as a pure case of great minds thinking and creating alike.

**114:** *“flaws or starts”:* B. quotes Lady Macbeth, speaking to her husband at III iv 63-6: *Oh, these flaws and starts, / Impostors to true fear, would well become / A woman’s story at a winter’s fire, / Authorized by her grandam.* The line indicates Juan’s style when under pressure, and the seamless smoothness of his deportment at all times – a “mobile” capacity (see below, XVI l.820) noticeably lacking in Macbeth. For a more extended quotation, see letter to Moore, August 3 1814 (BLJ IV 153).

**115:** *Ceruse:* white lead used in paint, ointment, and cosmetics. In the two latter cases it caused, at the very least, a severe rash.

**116:** The stress on dressing as a necessary prelude to respectable prostitution echoes Juan’s dressing by Baba in Canto V, and his dressing in St Petersburg in Canto X. I have retained some of the manuscript readings in B.’s note.

49.

The Milliners, who furnish “Drapery Misses” \* 385  
 Throughout the Season upon speculation  
 Of payment, ere the Honey Moon’s last kisses  
 Have waned into a Crescent’s coruscation,<sup>117</sup>  
 Thought such an Opportunity as this is –  
 Of a rich foreigner’s initiation<sup>118</sup> – 390  
 Not to be overlooked – and gave such credit,  
 That future Bridegrooms swore – and sighed, and paid it.<sup>119</sup> –

\* Note: “Drapery Misses” – This term is probably anything now but a *mystery*; it was, however, almost so to me when I first returned from the East in 1811 – 1812. – – – It means a pretty, a high-born, a fashionable young female, well-instructed by her friends, and furnished by her Milliner with a wardrobe upon credit, to be repaid, when *married*, by the *husband*. The riddle was first read to me by a young and pretty heiress, on my praising the “drapery” of an “*untochered*” but “pretty virginities” (like Mrs. Anne Page) of the *then* day – which has now been some years yesterday. – – She assured me that the thing was as common as Candlelight in London, and as her own thousands and blooming looks and rich simplicity of array put any suspicion in her own case out of the question, I confess I gave some credit to the allegation: if necessary, authorities might be cited. I could quote both, in which case: “Drapery” and wearers. – – Let us hope, however, that it is now obsolete.<sup>120</sup> –

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**117:** ... *ere the Honey Moon’s last kisses / Have waned into a Crescent’s coruscation*: a crescent moon is strictly one in the first, not the last, quarter; though moons presumably “coruscate” (glitter) with equal pathos in both. B. to Moore, February 2 1815: *the treaclemoon is over, and I am awake, and find myself married* (BLJ IV 263).

**118:** ... *a rich foreigner’s initiation*: into the depraved rituals of the West End of London.

**119:** ... *gave such credit, / That future Bridegrooms swore – and sighed, and paid it*: notice that they pay in advance, not after the marriage as B.’s note says was customary. Juan makes them nervous.

**120:** *untochered*: undowered (Scots). ... “*pretty virginities*” (like Mrs. Anne Page): see *The Merry Wives of Windsor* I i 41-2, where Anne Page is described by Sir Hugh Evans as *pretty virginity*. The plural *virginities* is not used by Evans; B. may be confusing him with Fluellen in *Henry V*.

50.

The Blues, that tender tribe, who sigh o'er sonnets,<sup>121</sup>  
 And with the pages of the last Review  
 Line the interior of their heads or bonnets,<sup>122</sup> 395  
 Advanced in all their azure's highest hue –  
 They talked bad French of Spanish, and upon its  
 Late Authors asked him for a hint or two,  
 And which was softest, Russian or Castilian?<sup>123</sup>  
 And whether in his travels he saw Ilion?<sup>124</sup> 400

51.

Juan, who was a little superficial,  
 And not in literature a great Drawcansir,<sup>125</sup>  
 Examined by this learned and especial  
 Jury of Matrons, scarce knew what to answer;  
 His duties, warlike, loving, or official, 405  
 His steady application as a dancer,  
 Had kept him from the brink of Hippocrene,  
 Which now he found was blue instead of Green.<sup>126</sup>

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**121:** *The Blues, that tender tribe, who sigh o'er sonnets:* The Blues – female intellectuals – are addressed by B. above, at IV sts.108-12. Juan's association with them is reminiscent of B.'s own fame in London earlier in his life.

**122:** *Line the interior of their heads or bonnets:* waste paper (from remaindered poetry books, for example) lined not only trunks and pastry-dishes, but also the interiors of bonnets. B. confounds the insides of women's heads with those of their headgear. See the joke about Wordsworth at *The Blues*, II 60-1: *I shall think of him oft when I buy a new hat: / There his works will appear.*

**123:** ... *which was softest, Russian or Castilian?:* two of the languages in which Juan may be presumed most fluent when making love (the third being Greek).

**124:** *And whether in his travels he saw Ilion?:* Ilion is Troy. Juan passes its site at IV sts. 75-9, but is too weak from loss of blood to pay it much attention.

**125:** ... *not in literature a great Drawcansir:* Drawcansir is a blustering braggart, like Shakespeare's Pistol, who appears in Lord Buckingham's 1671 Restoration farce *The Rehearsal*, a play which, like *Don Juan*, satirises the Laureate of the day. The line implies Juan's innocence of literary coteries and in-fighting. Compare *Hints from Horace*, ll.171-2: *If some Drawcansir you aspire to draw, / Present him raving, and above all law ...* B. may be echoing what Murray had quoted to him, in a letter of July 23 1819, of an internal memo about *Don Juan* from William Gifford: *Gifford who admires even in his tears this splendid effort of Genius – says in a letter ["I read again the Second Canto of Don Juan & lost all patience at seeing so much beauty, so wantonly & perversely disfigured. A little care & a little wish to do right, would have made this a superlative thing – As it is it better [sic] than any other could have written – but this is poor praise for Lord Byron." [Murray omits Gifford's exclamation "What a store of shame & sorrow is he laying up for himself?"] – I never much admired the vaunt of Drawcansir / "And all this I dare do, because I dared?" / Yet what but is this Lord Byron's plea? (John Murray Archive / National Library of Scotland.)*

**126:** ... *the brink of Hippocrene, / Which now he found was blue instead of Green:* Hippocrene was the spring on Mount Helicon, sacred to the Muses. See above, I l.1638.

52.

However, he replied at hazard, with  
 A modest confidence and calm assurance, 410  
 Which lent his learned lucubrations pith,<sup>127</sup>  
 And passed for Arguments of good endurance;  
 That prodigy, Miss Araminta Smith  
 (Who at sixteen translated “Hercules Furens”  
 Into as furious English) with her best look<sup>128</sup> 415  
 Set down his sayings in her common place-book. –

53.

Juan knew several languages – as well  
 He might – and brought them up with skill in time;  
 To save his fame with each accomplished belle,  
 Who still regretted that he did not rhyme, 420  
 There wanted but this requisite to swell  
 His qualities (with them) into sublime;<sup>129</sup>  
 Lady Fitz-Frisky, and Miss Mævia Mannish,  
 Both longed extremely to be sung in Spanish.<sup>130</sup>

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**127:** ... *he replied at hazard, with / A modest confidence and calm assurance, / Which lent his learned lucubrations pith:* that is, he conned his way through the literary discussions so smoothly that no-one realised he didn't know what he was talking about. For *lucubrations* see above, this canto, ll.269-70 and n.

**128:** *Miss Araminta Smith / (Who at sixteen translated “Hercules Furens” / Into as furious English):* no-one has tracked Miss Smith down, though DJV suggests Lydia White, referred to by B. at BLJ III 214 and VI 46, and, as Miss Diddle, in *The Blues*. Smith's energetic translation of Seneca's drama *Hercules Insane* is evidence of what B. would have us see as a typical Blue-stocking trait, namely the substitution of literary activity for sexual.

**129:** *There wanted but this requisite to swell / His qualities (with them) into sublime:* obscene. For *swell* see above, this canto, l.243 and n, and IX ll.502-3 and n.

**130:** *Lady Fitz-Frisky, and Miss Mævia Mannish, / Both longed extremely to be sung in Spanish:* that is, desired Juan carnally. See above, this canto, l.399 and n. Lady Fitz-Frisky's name anticipates that of Lady Fitz-Fulke, Juan's last sexual partner in the epic; Miss Mævia Mannish's Christian name is derived from the dull poet Maevius at l.90 of Virgil's third Eclogue.

## 54.

However, he did pretty well – and was 425  
 Admitted as an Aspirant to all  
 The Coteries, and, as in Banquo’s glass,<sup>131</sup>  
 At great assemblies or in parties small,  
 He saw ten thousand living Authors pass –  
 That being about their average Numeral – – 430  
 Also the eighty “greatest living poets”<sup>132</sup> –  
 As every paltry Magazine can show *it’s*. –

## 55.

In twice five years the “greatest living poet”,  
 Like to the Champion in the fisty ring,<sup>133</sup>  
 Is called on to support his claim or show it, 435  
 Although ‘tis an imaginary thing;  
 Even I, Albeit I’m sure I did not know it,  
 Nor sought of foolscap subjects to be king,<sup>134</sup>  
 Was reckoned a considerable time  
 The grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme. – 440

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**131:** ... *as in Banquo’s glass*: compares the daily passage of poets singled out for temporary immortality with the show of Banquo’s issue, which his spirit shows the appalled Macbeth at IV i 111-24. See above, I l.13, where the daily parade of gazeteer heroes is described in the same way; or X ll.141-2, where B. describes his nostalgic dreams of childhood.

**132:** *the eighty “greatest living poets”*: echoes *Marino Faliero*, Dedication to Goethe, where, as here, the idea is associated with *Macbeth*: “**This opinion of yours only proves that the “Dictionary of ten thousand living English authors” has not been translated into German. – You will have <seen> read in your friend Schlegel’s version the dialogue in Macbeth – “There are ten thousand! – Macbeth. Geese – Villain! – Answer. Authors – Sir[’]. – Now of these “ten thousand authors” – there are actually nineteen hundred and eighty seven poets – all alive at this moment – whatever their works may be – as their booksellers well know”** (CPW IV 545). See also letter to Murray, August 31 1820: “**I believe that (except Milman perhaps) I am still the youngest of the fifteen hundred first of living poets”** (BLJ VII 168).

**133:** *the “greatest living poet”, / Like to the Champion in the fisty ring*: prior to his more sensational self-comparison with Napoleon, B. compares himself with his tutor Gentleman John Jackson (see above, this canto, B.’s note to st.19) who had indeed only to defend his title three times in eight years.

**134:** ... *of foolscap subjects to be king*: compare above, IV l.866: *A ball-room bard, a foolscap, hot-press darling ...*

But Juan was my Moscow,<sup>136</sup> and Faliero  
 My Leipsic,<sup>137</sup> and my Mont Saint Jean seems Cain;<sup>138</sup>  
 “La Belle Alliance” of dunces down at zero,<sup>139</sup>  
 Now that the Lion’s fall’n, may rise again;  
 But I will fall at once as fell my Hero,<sup>140</sup> 445  
 Nor reign at all, or as a *Monarch* reign,  
 Or to some lonely Isle of Jailors go,  
 With turncoat Southey as my turnkey Lowe.<sup>141</sup>

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**135:** CPW reads the proud, yet facetious and self-deflating st.56 as B.’s gift to the New Historicism. B. identified with Napoleon to the extent of always using the initials *N.B.* when the death of his mother-in-law, Lady Noel, enabled him to take them over.

**136:** *But Juan was my Moscow:* carrying on the parallel started in the previous line, *Don Juan* has been – or will be – to B.’s career what the capture of, and then retreat from, Moscow was to Napoleon’s in 1812: a sign that he had finally gone too far.

**137:** ... *Faliero / My Leipsic:* the battle of Leipzig in 1813 destroyed Napoleon’s power, and resulted in his first exile on Elba. B.’s tragedy *Marino Faliero* had in 1821 failed on the London stage, though he had not actually wanted it put on. See introduction to the edition on this website.

**138:** ... *my Mont Saint Jean seems Cain:* the *Mont Saint Jean* farmhouse on the field of Waterloo was the final rallying-point of the French army, and Napoleon’s last hope of victory. *Cain* had been of all B.’s poems the one which had been greeted with the greatest negative critical outcry.

**139:** “*La Belle Alliance*” of dunces down at zero: the *La Belle Alliance* farmhouse – also on the field of Waterloo – was where Wellington and Blücher met to celebrate their victory. The Holy Alliance comprised Austria, Prussia and Russia, with England a somewhat self-conscious fourth. With Castlereagh masterminding it, it presided over the re-division of Europe between tyrants after Napoleon’s defeat at Waterloo in 1815.

**140:** *But I will fall at once as fell my Hero:* either (i) fall from poetical power as Napoleon did from political or (ii) fall from grace as Juan has.

**141:** *Or to some lonely Isle of Jailors go, / With turncoat Southey as my turnkey Lowe:* Sir Hudson Lowe was the governor of St. Helena during Napoleon’s final imprisonment there. He was as mean and vindictive as a Southey could have desired – or as B. might imagine a Southey being, in the event of B. being jailed himself in Keswick. Count Las Cases puts it: “Every thing, even down to the most petty details, betrays the personal character and disposition of our gaoler; he puts into our hands the journals in which we are harshly treated, and keeps from us those in which we are spoken of in less hostile terms; he retains the works which are favourable to us, under the pretext that they did not come through the hands of the ministry, and he displays the utmost zeal in furnishing us with every libel against us from his own private library.” – Las Cases, *Memoirs*, 1818, pp.149-50.

Sir Walter reigned before me; Moore, and Campbell,  
 Before and after;<sup>142</sup> but now more holy grown, 450  
 The Muses upon Sion's hill must ramble  
 With poets almost clergymen, or wholly,<sup>143</sup>  
 And Pegasus hath a Psalmodic amble  
 Beneath the reverend Cambyses Croly,<sup>144</sup>  
 Who shoes the glorious Animal with Stilts, 455  
 A modern Antient Pistol "by these Hilts!"<sup>145</sup> –

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**142:** *Sir Walter reigned before me; Moore, and Campbell, / Before and after:* compare above, Dedication l.55.

**143:** *The Muses upon Sion's hill must ramble / With poets almost clergymen, or wholly:* several poets of B.'s day were parsons, Crabbe, Milman (see next stanza) and Croly being some examples. See B. to Murray, October 12 1820: *I say nothing against your parsons, your Smedleys and your Crolys ...* (BLJ VII 201). Sion was the Jerusalem hill on which the Temple stood (see *Lamentations* 1, 17): B. claims it has taken over from Parnassus.

**144:** *the reverend Cambyses Croly:* the Reverend George Crowley (1780-1860) wrote drama criticism, poems, plays and novels. Irish, he was rhetorical in manner, which earned him his nickname *Cambyses* after the Elizabethan tragedy mentioned by Falstaff at *Henry IV I II iv* 376. See B. to Murray, November 9 1820: *Croly is superior to many – but seems to think himself inferior to Nobody* (BLJ VII 225).

**145:** *A modern Antient Pistol "by these Hilts!":* the exclamation is made not by Pistol but, again, by Falstaff, at *Henry IV I II iv* 197. Lines 453-6 were cut in the first edition; when Moore – assisted by Wright – restored them, he substituted *the very Reverend Rowley Powley* for *the reverend Cambyses Crowley* at l.454, out of respect for his compatriot Croly, then still living (see note). Coleridge, DJV and DJP all follow suit, even though *Roly-poly* meant, according to John Bee's *Dictionary of the Turf*, tumbling down Greenwich Park Hill and making love at the bottom. DJV and DJP even take over Moore's misprint "by the hilts!" for "by these hilts!" in l.456.



58.

Still he excels that artificial, hard  
 Labourer in the same vineyard, though the Vine<sup>146</sup>  
 Yields him but Vinegar for his reward;  
 That neutralised dull Dorus of the Nine,<sup>147</sup> 460  
 That swarthy Sporus,<sup>148</sup> neither man nor bard,  
 That Ox of Verse, who *ploughs* for every line,<sup>149</sup>  
 Cambyses' roaring Romans beat at least  
 The howling Hebrews of Cybele's Priest.<sup>150</sup>

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**146:** ... *that artificial, hard / Labourer in the same vineyard*: B. refers to another parson-poet, the Reverend Henry Hart Milman (1791-1868). The vineyard image encompasses both his callings, poetic and religious.

**147:** *That neutralised dull Dorus of the Nine*: Dorus is a senile eunuch in the comedy *Eunuchus* by Terence: *the Nine* are the Muses.

**148:** *That swarthy Sporus, neither man nor bard*: Sporus was Nero's favourite, whom he castrated and married. The name is used by Pope in the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* (*This painted Child of Dirt, that stinks and stings*) and links Milman firstly with Southey, and secondly with Castlereagh: see above, Dedication.

**149:** *That Ox of Verse, who ploughs for every line*: part of the joke may be that Milman was Professor of Poetry at Oxford; but oxen are famously dull and inexpressive.

**150:** *Cambyses' roaring Romans beat at least / The howling Hebrews of Cybele's Priest*: that is, the poetry of the bombastic Croly (see previous stanza) is at least an improvement on that of the dull castrate Milman. Croly's *roaring Romans* are in his play about Catiline: Milman's *howling Hebrews* in his tragedy *The Fall of Jerusalem*. Cybele was a Syrian goddess whose priests were eunuchs, and whose votaries would castrate themselves if sufficiently carried away. See Catullus, *Super alta vectus* ...

Then there's my gentle Euphues, who, they say, 465  
 Sets up for being a sort of *moral me*;<sup>151</sup>  
 He'll find it rather difficult some day  
 To turn out both, or, either it may be;  
 Some persons think that Coleridge hath the Sway –  
 And Wordsworth has supporters – two or three<sup>152</sup> – 470  
 And that deep-mouthed Bæotian "Savage Landor"  
 Has taken for a Swan Rogue Southey's Gander.<sup>153</sup>

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**151:** ... *my gentle Euphues, who, they say, / Sets up for being a sort of moral me*: this is Bryan Waller Proctor, another Irishman who wrote under the pseudonym of Barry Cornwall. In 1819 he had published *Diego de Montilla*, a less overtly depraved variation on *Don Juan*

**152:** *Some persons think that Coleridge hath the Sway – / And Wordsworth has supporters – two or three*: Hobhouse had written to B. on January 5 1819, on receipt of the first two cantos of *Don Juan*: *Neither Southey, Wordsworth nor Coleridge have any character except with their own crazed proselytes some fifty perhaps in number: so what harm can you do them and what good can you do the world by your criticism?* (BB 260).

**153:** *And that deep-mouthed Bæotian "Savage Landor" / Has taken for a Swan Rogue Southey's Gander*: *deep-mouthed* is from the introduction to Gifford's *Baviad*: a Boeotian is an inhabitant of the Greek interior, considered provincial and boorish by the cosmopolitan Athenians. Southey's admiration for Landor had been made a joke by B. in 1821, in the preface to *TVOJ*. B. had in his London years been a covert admirer of Southey (see BLJ III 122, 127 and 214, and IV 235): he now mocks Landor for making the same error. Landor's praise for Southey had been in a book of Latin verse called *Idylla Heroica*, published in Pisa in 1820, in which he had also abused B.

60.

John Keats, who was killed off by one Critique,<sup>154</sup>  
 Just as he really promised something great,  
 If not intelligible, without Greek 475  
 Contrived to talk about the Gods of late,  
 Much as they might have been supposed to speak;<sup>155</sup>  
 Poor fellow! his was an untoward Fate;  
 'Tis strange the Mind, that very fiery Particle, +  
 Should let itself be snuffed out by an Article.<sup>156</sup> – 480

\* “Divinæ Particulam Auræ.” –

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**154:** *John Keats, who was killed off by one Critique:* Keats died in Rome on February 23 1821. Shelley and B. both chose to believe, not only that the *Quarterly Review*'s April 1818 article on his *Endymion* had driven him into a consumption, but that Southey might even have written the article, and therefore have killed Keats. Shelley's *Adonais* was fruit of the suspicion, and *TVOJ* may in part have been motivated by it. On July 30 1821 B. wrote to Murray, impugning Milman too: “**Are you aware that Shelley has written an elegy on Keats – and accuses the Quarterly of killing him? –**

**Who killed John Keats?**

**I, says the Quarterly**

**So savage & Tartarly**

<Martyrly>

**'Twas one of my feats –**

**Who <drew the [pen?]> shot the arrow?**

**The poet-priest Milman**

**(So ready to kill man)**

**Or Southey or Barrow. –”** (BLJ VIII 162)

**155:** ... *without Greek / Contrived to talk about the Gods of late, / Much as they might have been supposed to speak:* B. refers to Keats' *Hyperion*, about which he wrote in *Some Observations upon an Article in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*: “**My indignation at Mr. Keats's depreciation of Pope – has hardly permitted me to do justice to his own Genius – which malgré all the fantastic fopperies of his style – was undoubtedly of great promise. – His fragment of “Hyperion” seems actually inspired by the Titans and is as sublime as Aeschylus**” (CMP 113).

**156:** *'Tis strange the Mind, that very fiery Particle, / Should let itself be snuffed out by an Article:* relates Keats' death to the oppression of spirit by matter which has been one subtextual thrust of the canto ever since its first stanza. **B.'s note:** “*Divinæ Particulam Auræ*”: from Horace, *Satires* II ii 79: “the body drags down with itself the mind as well, and fastens to earth *a fragment of the divine spirit*”.

61.

The list grows long of live and dead pretenders  
To that which none will gain, or none will know  
The Conqueror, at least;<sup>157</sup> who, ere Time renders  
His last award, will have the long Grass grow  
Above his burnt-out brain and sapless cinders; 485  
If I might augur, I should rate but low  
Their chances; they're too numerous, like the thirty  
Mock Tyrants, when Rome's Annals waxed but dirty.<sup>158</sup>

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**157:** ... *that which none will gain, or none will know / The Conqueror, at least:* sums up the whole digression. No-one possesses the judgement to tell know who, from his own generation, will gain poetic immortality.

**158:** ... *the thirty / Mock Tyrants, when Rome's Annals waxed but dirty:* refers to the thirty or so Roman generals who revolted and created provincial havoc during the time of the Emperor Gallienus (ruled 260-8). B. implies that the English poets he has been writing about have done parallel harm and are similarly menaces to society. Gibbon tells the story in Chapter 10 of *The Decline and Fall: A licentious crowd of slaves and peasants reigned for a while over the plundered country, and renewed the memory of the servile wars of more ancient times.*

This is the literary *lower Empire*<sup>160</sup> – –  
 Where the Prætorian bands take up the matter;<sup>161</sup> 490  
 A “dreadful trade”, like his who “gathers samphire”<sup>162</sup>  
 The insolent Soldiery to soothe and flatter,  
 With the same feelings as you’d coax a Vampire;  
 Now, were I once at home, and in good satire,  
 I’d try conclusions<sup>163</sup> with those Janizaries<sup>164</sup> – 495  
 And show them *what* an intellectual war is: –

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**159:** B.’s digression – repeating some of the ideas about contemporary poets which he has already expressed in the Dedication, at I sts.205-6, and at III sts.93-5, terminates here by linking the Anglican battalions of parson-poets, Milman, Croly and so on, with the corrupt Praetorian Guard of ancient Rome and the Janissaries of modern Turkey.

**160:** *This is the literary lower Empire:* the lower Empire of George IV looks back to the higher Empire of Pope’s time. See B. to Murray, September 15 1817: “**I took Moore’s poems & my own & some others – & went over them side by side with Pope’s – and I was really astonished (I ought not to have been so) and mortified – at the ineffable distance in point of sense – harmony – effect – and even *Imagination Passion – & Invention – between the little Queen Anne’s Man – & us of the lower Empire – depend on it [it] is all Horace then, and Claudian now among us***” (BLJ V 265).

**161:** *Where the Prætorian bands take up the matter:* in 193 (well before the time of Claudian) the Praetorian guards assassinated the Emperor Pertinax and sold the Empire to the highest bidder. As with the couplet to st.61 above, B.’s source is Gibbon: ... *the more prudent of the Praetorians, apprehensive that, in this private contract, they should not obtain a just price for so valuable a commodity, ran out upon the ramparts; and, with a loud voice, proclaimed that the Roman world was to be disposed of the best bidder by public auction. / This offer, the most insolent excess of military licence, diffused a universal grief, shame, and indignation throughout the city ... (Decline and Fall, Chapter 5).*

**162:** A “dreadful trade”, like his who “gathers samphire”: echoes *King Lear*, IV vi 14-15: *Half-way down / Hangs one that gathers samphire - dreadful trade!* It is not clear that the Praetorian Guard were dependant on samphire, or that money was to be made in providing them with it.

**163:** ... *try conclusions:* incorporates one allusion and one semi-allusion: firstly, Hamlet at III iv 194-6: ... *like the famous ape, / To try conclusions, in the basket creep, / And break your own neck down:* and secondly Launcelot Gobbo at *The Merchant of Venice* II ii 33, who in fact says *I will try confusions with him.*

**164:** ... *those Janizaries* were the Constantinople equivalent of Rome’s Praetorians – the personal troops of the Sultan. B. and Hobhouse had not been impressed by them in 1810; Hobhouse had called them *the very scum of the city (Travels through Albania, II 1001).*

63.

I think I know a trick or two would turn  
Their flanks; -- but it is hardly worth my while  
With such small Gear to give myself concern;  
Indeed I've not the necessary Bile -- 500  
My natural Temper's really aught but stern,  
And even my Muse's worst reproof's a smile;  
And then She drops a brief and modern curtsey,<sup>165</sup>  
And glides aawy, assured she never hurts ye. --

64.

My Juan -- whom I left in deadly peril 505  
Amongst live poets and blue ladies -- past  
With some small profit through that field so sterile;  
Being tired in time, and, neither least nor last,  
Left it, before he had been treated very ill;  
And henceforth found himself more gaily classed 510  
Amongst the higher Spirits of the Day --  
The Sun's true Son, no Vapour, but a Ray. --

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**165:** *She drops a brief and modern curtsey:* echoes Scott, *The Antiquary*, Chapter VI: *Mr Lovel paid his respects to both ladies, and was answered by the elder with the prolonged curtsey of 1760, drawn from the righteous period,*

*When folk conceived a grace  
Of half an hour's space,  
And rejoiced in a Friday's capon.*

*and by the younger with a modern reverence, which, like the festive benediction of a modern divine, was of much shorter duration.*

65.

His Morns he passed in Business, which dissected  
 Was, like all business, a laborious Nothing<sup>166</sup>  
 That leads to lassitude, the most infected 515  
 And Centaur-Nessus-Garb of mortal cloathing,<sup>167</sup>  
 And on our Sophas makes us lie dejected,  
 And talk in tender horrors of our loathing –  
 All kinds of toil, save for our Country's Good,  
 Which grows no better, though 'tis time it should. 520

66.

His Afternoons he spent in visits, luncheons,  
 Lounging, and boxing;<sup>168</sup> and the twilight hour<sup>169</sup>  
 In riding round those vegetable puncheons  
 Called "Parks," where there is neither fruit nor flower  
 Enough to gratify a Bee's slight munchings<sup>170</sup> – 525  
 But after all it is the only "bower"  
 (In Moore's phrase)<sup>171</sup> where the fashionable Fair \*  
 Can form a slight Acquaintance with fresh Air.

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**166:** ... *a laborious Nothing*: Andrew Nicholson (*MSYR Byron IX*) adduces Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, l.326:

*Such labour'd Nothings, in so strange a style,  
 Amaze th'unlearn'd, and make the Learned Smile.*

**167:** *And Centaur-Nessus-Garb of mortal cloathing*: The wife of Herakles, Deianira, was jealous of his affair with Iole. She remembered a gift given her by the centaur Nessus, whom Herakles had killed when he tried to assault her. The gift was a shirt soaked in Nessus's blood, which, he had told her, was a love-charm. The shirt was poisoned, and Herakles had to throw himself on a pyre to rid himself of the agony. Deianira also killed herself. The joke equates *Business* and *toil* with self-destructiveness devoid of understanding.

**168:** *boxing*: one of B.'s own pastimes when in London was watching pugilistic bouts, and taking tuition from his friend the champion Gentleman John Jackson.

**169:** ... *the twilight hour*: compare above, III sts.105-8, for what twilight means to B. in Italy as opposed to London.

**170:** ... *there is neither fruit nor flower / Enough to gratify a Bee's slight munchings*: double-entendre.

**171:** *it is the only "bower" / (In Moore's phrase)*: DJP and CPW both assert Moore to have identified his poem *Come to me, love, I've wandered far* as the quotation here; but the notes to his edition were by John Wright. A relevant use of the word occurs towards the end of *The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan*, the first narrative in *Lalla Rookh*:

*Let loose your glowing wantons from their bowers,  
 He loves, he loves, and can defy their powers!*

67.

Then dress – then dinner – then awakes the World! –  
 Then glare the lamps, then whirl the wheels, then roar 530  
 Through Street and Square fast-flashing Chariots hurled  
 Like harnessed Meteors; then along the floor  
 Chalk mimics Painting;<sup>172</sup> then festoons are twirled<sup>173</sup> –  
 Then roll the brazen thunders of the door,  
 Which opens to the thousand happy few<sup>174</sup> 535  
 An earthly Paradise of “Or Molu.”<sup>175</sup>

68.

There stands the noble Hostess, nor shall sink  
 With the three thousandth Curtsey; there the Waltz,  
 The only Dance which teaches Girls to think,<sup>176</sup>  
 Makes one in love even with its very faults; 540  
 Saloon, room, o’erflow beyond their brink,  
 And long the latest of arrivals halts  
 ’Midst royal dukes and dames, condemned to climb,  
 And gain an inch of Staircase at a time.

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**172:** ... *along the floor / Chalk mimics Painting*: the imputation of false appearance and unreality echoes the descriptions of Constantinople and St. Petersburg earlier in the poem:

*Each Villa on the Bosphorus looks a Screen  
 New painted, or a Pretty Opera Scene. – (above, V, 46, 7-8)  
 Suppose him then at Petersburgh; suppose  
 That pleasant Capital of painted Snows. (IX, 42, 7-8)*

**173:** ... *then festoons are twirled*: compare the description of the Italian countryside at *Beppo*, ll.324-5:

*And Vines (not nailed to walls) from tree to tree  
 Festooned, much like the back Scene of a play  
 Or Melodrame ...*

All London can muster is a costly imitation of Italian reality.

**174:** ... the happy few: an ironic echo of Henry V, IV iii 60: *We few, we happy few, we band of brothers ...*

**175:** *An earthly Paradise of “Or Molu”*: Ormolu (French “Or moulu”, “ground gold”) is gilding for brass or bronze – often used for furniture decorations. London is a debased version of Eden in that it is (i) expensive and (ii) artificial.

**176:** ... *there the Waltz, / The only Dance which teaches Girls to think*: B. does not really mean “think”. Compare B.’s 1812 “Apostrophic Hymn”, *Waltz*, ll.222-9:

*Pronounce – if ever in your days of bliss –  
 Asmodeus struck so bright a stroke as this;  
 To teach the young ideas how to rise,  
 Flush in the cheek and languish in the eyes;  
 Rush to the heart and lighten through the frame,  
 With half-told wish, and ill-dissembled flame;  
 For prurient nature still will storm the breast –  
 Who, tempted thus, will answer for the rest?*



69.

Thrice happy he,<sup>177</sup> who after a survey 545  
 Of the good company, can win a corner –  
 A door – that's *in* – or boudoir *out* o' the way,  
 Where he may fix himself like small "Jack Horner",<sup>178</sup>  
 And let the Babel round<sup>179</sup> run as it may,  
 And look on as a mourner or a scorner, 550  
 Or an Approver, or a mere spectator<sup>180</sup>  
 Yawning a little, as the Night grows later.

70.

But this won't do, save by and bye – and he  
 Who, like Don Juan, takes an active share,  
 Must steer with care through all that glittering Sea<sup>181</sup> 555  
 Of Gems, and plumes, and pearls, and silks, to where  
 He deems it is his proper place to be;  
 Dissolving in the Waltz to some soft Air,  
 Or prouder prancing with mercurial skill  
 Where Science marshals forth her own Quadrille: – 560

71.

Or, if he dance not,<sup>182</sup> but hath higher views –  
 Upon an heiress – or his neighbour's bride –  
 Let him take care that that which he pursues  
 Is not at once too palpably descried;  
 Full many an eager Gentleman oft rues 565  
 His haste; Impatience is a blundering guide<sup>183</sup>  
 Amongst a people famous for reflection,  
 Who like to play the fool with circumspection.<sup>184</sup>

**177:** *Thrice happy he*: echoes the words of Theseus at *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I i 74-5: *Thrice blessed they that master so their blood, / To undergo such maiden pilgrimage ...*

**178:** ... small "Jack Horner": *Little Jack Horner / Sat in a corner / Eating his pudding and pie; / He put in his thumb, / And pulled out a plum, / And said, "What a good boy am I!"*

**179:** ... *the Babel round*: see *Genesis* 11, 1-9. The Tower of Babel is the image of fallen mankind's linguistic confusion, as at above, *Dedication* 4, 8.

**180:** *And look on as a mourner or a scorner, / Or an Approver, or a mere spectator*: figures comparable to Banquo at the Feast, Beppo at sts.69-70 and 81, or to Lambro, above, in *Canto III*.

**181:** ... *he / Who, like Don Juan, takes an active share, / Must steer with care through all that glittering Sea*: navigation-imagery which this echoes is at II sts.62-106, and at XI, 18, 1-2:

*It is a pleasant voyage perhaps to float,  
 Like Pyrrho, in a Sea of Speculation ...*

**182:** *Or, if he dance not, but hath higher views*: B. was unable to dance.

**183:** *Full many an eager Gentleman oft rues / His haste; Impatience is a blundering guide*: B. thinks of his own wooing in 1814.

**184:** *Amongst a people famous for reflection, / Who like to play the fool with circumspection*: a more understated version of Beppo, 37, 7-8: *But Heaven preserve Old England from such courses / Or What becomes of damage, and divorces?*

72.

But if you can contrive, get next at supper –  
 Or, if forestalled, get opposite and ogle;<sup>185</sup> 570  
 Oh ye ambrosial moments! always upper  
 In mind, a sort of sentimental bogle  
 Which sits forever upon Memory's crupper<sup>186</sup> –  
 The Ghost of vanished pleasures once in vogue! Ill  
 Can tender Souls relate the rise and fall 575  
 Of hopes and fears which shake a single Ball.

73.

But these precautionary hints can touch  
 Only the common run, who must pursue,  
 And watch, and ward; whose plans a word too much,  
 Or little, overturns; and not the few, 580  
 Or many (for the number's sometimes such)  
 Whom a good Mien, especially if new,  
 Or fame, or name, for wit, war, sense, or nonsense,  
 Permits whate'er they please, or *did*, not long since. –

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**185:** *ogle*: compare *Beppo*, 81, 8: ... *this Stranger's most outlandish Ogle*.

**186:** ... *a sort of sentimental bogle / Which sits forever upon Memory's crupper*: a bogle is a Scots or North Country goblin; a horse's crupper is either its backside, or a belt passed under its tail to keep the saddle from slipping forwards. The image is a grotesque one for nostalgia, and is perhaps derived from Henry Fuseli's *The Nightmare*, in which a demon sits on the haunch of a sleeping woman. For B.'s knowledge of this painting, see BLJ III 253-4.

## 74.

Our hero, as a hero, young and handsome, 585  
 Noble, rich, celebrated, and a stranger,<sup>187</sup>  
 Like other Slaves of course must pay his ransom<sup>188</sup>  
 Before he can escape from so much danger  
 As will environ a conspicuous man.<sup>189</sup>  
 Some Talk about poetry,<sup>190</sup> and “rack and manger,”<sup>191</sup> 590  
 And ugliness, disease, as toil and trouble;<sup>192</sup>  
 I wish they knew the life of a young Noble.<sup>193</sup> –

75.<sup>194</sup>

They are young but know not youth – it is anticipated;  
 Handsome, but wasted, rich, without a Sou;<sup>195</sup>  
 Their vigour in a thousand arms is dissipated, 595  
 Their cash comes *from*, their Wealth goes *to*, a Jew;  
 Both Senates see their nightly votes participated  
 Between the Tyrant’s and the Tribune’s crew;<sup>196</sup>  
 And having voted, dined, drank, gamed and whored,  
 The family Vault receives another lord.<sup>197</sup> 600

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**187:** *Our hero, as a hero, young and handsome, / Noble, rich, celebrated, and a stranger:* compare the reference to Matthew 25, 35, above, II 129, 7-8.

**188:** *Like other Slaves of course must pay his ransom:* Juan is no more free than he was when Lambro sold him into slavery in the fourth canto.

**189:** ... *so much danger / As will environ a conspicuous man:* compare the quotation from *Hudibras* at III 36, 1-2.

**190:** Not until Andrew Nicholson (*MSYR Byron IX*) did anyone notice that l.590 reads in rough *Some talk about poverty*, not, as all editions have it, *Some talk about poetry*. We do not know whether the change is one made in fair-copy or proof. Nicholson argues for its retention; but B. is thinking about his own poetry as the supposed saving grace of his profligate youth.

**191:** ... “*rack and manger*”: rack and ruin. *Rack* is either wreck, rum (see above, IV 53, 5) or is synonymous with *manger*, that is, the container for horses’ food in a stable. DJP quotes Fielding’s *The Grub Street Opera: The moment my back is turned, everything goes to rack and manger*.

**192:** ... *toil and trouble:* *Macbeth*, IV i 10-11, 20-1, 35-6.

**193:** ... *the life of a young Noble:* DJP and CPW quote what B. is reported by Medwin as saying about his own youth: *The miserable consequences of such a life are detailed at length in my Memoirs. My own master at an age when I most required a guide, and left to the dominion of my passions when they were the strongest, with a fortune anticipated before I came into possession of it, and a constitution impaired by early excesses, I commenced my travels in 1809, with a joyless indifference to a world that was all before me* (Medwin ed. Lovell, p.72).

**194:** St.75 echoes Pope, *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, ll.339-402.

**195:** ... *without a Sou:* without a farthing (*Sou* – French coin of smallest denomination).

**196:** ... *their nightly votes participated / Between the Tyrant’s and the Tribune’s crew:* the Tyrants are the Tories, the Tribunes the Whigs.

**197:** *The family Vault receives another lord:* compare Pope, *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, ll.401-2:

*The Devil and the King divide the prize,  
 And sad Sir Balaam curses God and dies.*

Stanzas 75a and 75b are in no printed text of the poem. Four conjectural reconstructions exist: DJV; DJP 703-704; CPW V 494; and *MSYR Byron X* 109. B.'s decision to delete them (they are satirical of aristocratic pretensions) is perhaps made from motives of economy, the Popean Stanza 75 having done all he needs, and perhaps because his reference to the Peterloo massacre makes them top-heavy. The effect is to make a sudden transition from the reflections on ruined youth in Stanza 75, and the *Ubi sunt?* Stanzas (76-85) which follow. The reference to Juan as voluptuary in the first two lines is pre-deleted, perhaps because B. still needs us to think of Juan as relatively innocent.

75a.

That is, if the same lordship has an ancestor  
 Of rank enough to rot in stones or lead;  
 Far easier though for the good town of Manchester  
 To find redress for innocent blood shed  
 By butchers in her streets,<sup>198</sup> than for the staunchest, or 5  
 Proudest of those Paria Patricians<sup>199</sup> (bred  
 They know not how) the one *half* the present race  
 Of peers, to prove their title *no* disgrace.

75b.

Bankers, Contractors, Borough Mongers, Bullies,  
 Scotch with green ribbons – Irish with a blue;<sup>200</sup> 10  
 Some, silenced Cuckolds, coroneted Cullies,<sup>201</sup>  
 Others for other dirty work gone through;  
 Dukes, fools by birth; while Clogher's bishop sullies  
 The law,<sup>202</sup> at least until the Bench revert to true  
 Plain simple fornication; now behold 15  
 The Senate which Tiberius met of old.<sup>203</sup> -

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**198:** *Far easier though for the good town of Manchester /To find redress for innocent blood shed / By butchers in her streets:* B.'s only surviving reference to the Peterloo Massacre in Manchester on August 16 1819, in which eleven people were killed and four hundred injured when they were dispersed by militia as they listened to the demagogic radical Henry "Orator" Hunt.

**199:** *Paria Patricians:* "marble aristocrats", from Paros, the Aegean island which supplied marble for Greek buildings and statues.

**200:** *Scotch with green ribbons – Irish with a blue:* the Scots Order of the Thistle had a green ribbon, the Irish Order of St. Patrick a blue one. B. would see aristocrats of either country who acknowledged English decorations as sycophantic.

**201:** *Some, silenced Cuckolds, coroneted Cullies:* DJP has *Some for having turned converted [sic?] cullies;* CPW *Some, for having turned cornoted Cullies;* that is, cuckolded (from the Italian "cornuto"). Andrew Nicholson (*MSYR Byron X*) insists on the reading above. The line means "Some are witting cuckolds rewarded into silence by honours and privileges; others are easily duped, and are rewarded for their gullibility with ennoblement".

**202:** *... while Clogher's bishop sullies / The law:* B. refers to the case of the Hon. Percy Jocelyn, Bishop of Clogher, arrested on Friday July 19 1822. See above, VIII 76, 1-2n.

**203:** *The Senate which Tiberius met of old:* the Emperor Tiberius was notorious for the flagrancy with which he corrupted the Roman Senate.

“Where is the World?” cries Young “at *eighty*? Where  
 “The World in which a man was born?”<sup>205</sup> Alas!  
 Where is the world of *eight* years past? ‘*Twas there* –  
 I look for it – ‘tis gone – a Globe of Glass!<sup>206</sup>  
 Cracked, shivered, vanished, scarcely gazed on, ere                   605  
 A silent change dissolves the glittering mass;  
 Statesmen, Chiefs, Orators, Queens, Patriots, Kings –  
 And Dandies, all are gone on the Wind’s wings.

## 77.

Where is Napoleon the Grand? God knows<sup>207</sup> –  
 Where little Castlereagh? – the devil can tell<sup>208</sup> –                   610  
 Where Grattan – Curran, Sheridan<sup>209</sup> – all those  
 Who bound the Bar or Senate in their spell?  
 Where is the unhappy Queen with all her woes?<sup>210</sup>  
 And where the Daughter whom the Isles loved well?<sup>211</sup>  
 Where are those martyred Saints the Five per Cents?<sup>212</sup>                   615  
 And where, oh where the devil, are the Rents?<sup>213</sup> –

**204:** All the people B. “celebrates” in sts.76-82 – except the Whigs (632) – have massive inconsistency and changeability of temperament or of fortune as their distinguishing characteristic.

**205:** “*Where is the World?*” cries Young “at *eighty*? Where / “*The World in which a man was born?*”: Edward Young (1683-1765) author of *Night Thoughts*, published his last poem, *Resignation*, in 1762.

**206:** *I look for it – ‘tis gone – a Globe of Glass!* / *Cracked, shivered, vanished, scarcely gazed on*: echoes Shelley, *Adonais*, 52, 3-5:

*Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,  
 Stains the white radiance of Eternity,  
 Until Death tramples it to fragments.*

**207:** *Where is Napoleon the Grand? God knows*: Napoleon had died on St. Helena on May 5 1821. At TVOJ 6, 8 B. asserts that the Devil has both Bonaparte’s soul, and that of Wellington, *in reversion*. See also AoB, passim.

**208:** *Where little Castlereagh? – the devil can tell*: Castlereagh had committed suicide on 12 August 1822. Both for his politics, the manner of his death, and his alleged homosexuality, there can be no doubt where B. expects to meet him.

**209:** *Where Grattan – Curran, Sheridan*: Henry Grattan (1746-1820) Irish statesman and patriot; for B.’s admiration of him, see *Detached Thought* 42 (BLJ VIII 27). John Philpott Curran (1750-1817) famous lawyer, and a supporter of Grattan; for B.’s admiration of him, see *Detached Thought* 24 (BLJ VIII 20). Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816) Irish statesman and playwright much admired and quoted by B.; see BLJ III 239.

**210:** *Where is the unhappy Queen with all her woes?*: the death of Queen Caroline, estranged wife of George IV, and object of his infamous Milan Commission, had occurred on 7 August 1821.

**211:** *And where the Daughter whom the Isles loved well?*: the death in childbirth of Princess Charlotte, daughter of George IV and Queen Caroline, occurred on 5 November 1817. B. had heard the news while he was riding on the Lido on 23 November. She had been the subject of his poem *Weep, daughter of a Royal Line*, and of *CHP* IV sts.167-72.

**212:** *Where are those martyred Saints the Five per Cents?*: That is, “What has happened to the government bonds from which we anticipated so much profit?” B.’s letters at this time are full of demands that Douglas Kinnaird get his money out of “the Funds”.

78.

Where's Brummell? Dished. Where's Long Pole Wellesley? Diddled.<sup>214</sup>  
 Where's Whitbread? Romilly? Where's George the third?<sup>215</sup>  
 Where is his will? (That's not so easily unriddled.)<sup>216</sup>  
 And where is "Fum" the fourth, our "royal bird"?<sup>217</sup> 620  
 Gone down, it seems, to Scotland, to be fiddled  
 Unto by Sawney's violin,<sup>218</sup> we've heard –  
 "Caw me – Caw thee";<sup>219</sup> for six months hath been hatching  
 This Scene of royal itch and loyal scratching.

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**213:** *And where, oh where the devil, are the Rents?:* the decline in agricultural rents were a major economic problem in the years after the war against Napoleon ended in 1815. See above, IX st.32, and *AoB* II.620-33.

**214:** *Brummell:* George "Beau" Brummell (1778-1840) chief of the dandies, had had to flee to France in 1816 to escape his creditors. *Long Pole Wellesley:* William Wellesley Pole (1788-1857) a nephew of Wellington's. He had been Secretary to the English Embassy in Constantinople, where B. had heard stories against him.

**215:** *Whitbread:* Samuel Whitbread (1758-1815) brewer, Whig politician and patron of the Drury Lane Theatre, cut his throat on 6 July 1815. *Romilly:* Sir Samuel Romilly, legal reformer (see *Beppo* 68, 7) and the man who, during the separation, accepted briefs for both B. and Annabella without realising it, cut *his* throat on the death of his wife on 2 November 1818. See above, I 15, 4-8. *George the third:* George died, mad and blind, on 20 January 1820.

**216:** *Where is his will? (That's not so easily unriddled):* George III had left two wills, one in 1770, Hanoverian, signed, and the other in 1810, English, unsigned. Compare *TVOJ* 12, 3-5:

... the world is gone

For him – unless he made a German will –

But where's the proctor who will ask his Son?

**217:** *And where is "Fum" the fourth, our "royal bird"?* / *Gone down, it seems, to Scotland:* George's title in Moore's satire *Fum and Hum, Two Birds of Royalty* is actually "Hum", not "Fum". The lines refer to George's excursion to Scotland in August 1822. See above, X st.86, and *The Age of Bronze*, XVIII.

**218:** ... *to be fiddled / Unto by Sawney's violin:* the Sawneys were a mid-seventeenth-century highland family who were arrested for cannibalism. Hence a hostile name for Scotsmen. Their deaths at Edinburgh Castle (without trial) count as the biggest mass execution in British history.

**219:** "Caw me – Caw thee": a less polite version of "You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours".

79.

Where is Lord This? – and where my Lady That? 625  
 The Honourable Mistresses and Misses?  
 Some laid aside like an old Opera hat –  
 Married – unmarried – and remarried – (this is  
 An evolution oft performed of late);  
 Where are the Dublin Shouts? and London Hisses?<sup>220</sup> 630  
 Where are the Grenvilles? Turned as usual.<sup>221</sup> Where  
 My friends the Whigs? Exactly where they were.<sup>222</sup>

80.

Where are the Lady Carolines – and Franceses?  
 Divorced, or doing thereanent;<sup>223</sup> ye Annals  
 So brilliant, where the list of routs and dances is – 635  
 Thou Morning Post, sole record of the pannels  
 Broken in carriages, and all the phantasies  
 Of Fashion;<sup>224</sup> Say! what Streams now fill those Channels?  
 Some die, some fly, some languish on the Continent,<sup>225</sup>  
 Because the Times have hardly left them *one* tenant. 640

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**220:** *Where are the Dublin Shouts? and London Hisses?:* George had made a trip to Ireland in 1821, similar to the one he made to Scotland in the following year. The enthusiasm of the Irish for him had been satirised by B. in *The Irish Avatar*. The line here implies George’s popularity to be great in proportion to his distance from London.

**221:** *Where are the Grenvilles? Turned as usual:* the targets here are George Grenville (1712-1770) who first supported Pitt, then opposed him; and his third son William Wyndham, Baron Grenville (1759-1834) who started as a liberal and ended as a right-wing Tory. His was the “Ministry of all the Talents”, 1806-1807.

**222:** *Where / My friends the Whigs? Exactly where they were:* that is, the Whigs were out of power when B. left England in 1816, and they remain so in 1822.

**223:** *Where are the Lady Carolines – and Franceses? / Divorced, or doing thereanent:* B. boldly puts in references to two women with whom he had been entangled: Lady Caroline Lamb, and Lady Frances Wedderburn Webster. Neither divorced or were divorced by their husbands, but both did “thereanent” (Scots for “something near to it”). Both women had also been entangled with Wellington.

**224:** *Thou Morning Post, sole record of the pannels / Broken in carriages, and all the phantasies / Of Fashion:* the *Morning Post* was a respectable Whig paper, but was not averse to printing society gossip.

**225:** *some fly, some languish on the Continent:* as did B. himself.

81.

Some who once set their caps at cautious Dukes  
Have taken up at length with younger brothers;  
Some heiresses have bit at sharpers' hooks,<sup>226</sup>  
Some Maids have been made – wives, some merely mothers;  
Others have lost their fresh and fairy looks; 645  
In short, the list of Alterations bothers;  
There's little strange in this, but something strange is  
The unusual quickness of these common changes.

82.

Talk not of seventy years as age!<sup>227</sup> in seven  
I've seen more changes – down from Monarchs to 650  
The humblest individuals under heaven –  
Than might suffice a moderate Century through;  
I knew that nought was lasting,<sup>228</sup> but now even  
Change grows too changeable, without being new;  
Nought's permanent among the human race, 655  
Except the Whigs *not* getting into place.<sup>229</sup> –

83.

I've seen Napoleon, who seemed quite a Jupiter,  
Shrink to a Saturn;<sup>230</sup> I have seen a Duke  
(No matter which)<sup>231</sup> turn politician stupider,  
If that can well be, than his wooden look. 660  
But it is time that I should hoist my "Blue Peter,"<sup>232</sup>  
And sail for a new theme; I've seen – and shook  
To see it – the King hissed, and then carest;<sup>233</sup>  
But don't pretend to settle which was best.

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226: *sharpers' hooks*: a sharper is a confidence-trickster.

227: *Talk not of seventy years as age*: echoes Psalm 90, 10: *The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.*

228: *I knew that nought was lasting*: echoes Ecclesiastes, I 14: *I have seen all the works that are done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit*

229: *... the Whigs not getting into place*: echoes this canto, l.632.

230: *I've seen Napoleon, who seemed quite a Jupiter, / Shrink to a Saturn*: echoes this canto, l.609. CPW detects an allusion to Keats' *Hyperion*.

231: *... a Duke / (No matter which) turn politician*: probably Wellington.

232: *... my "Blue Peter"*: a ship's flag signifying immediate departure.

233: *the King hissed, and then carest*: echoes this canto, l.630, albeit more explicitly.



84.<sup>234</sup>

I've seen the landholders without a rap<sup>235</sup> – 665  
I've seen Johanna Southcote<sup>236</sup> – I have seen  
The House of Commons turned to a tax-trap<sup>237</sup> –  
I've seen that sad affair of the late Queen<sup>238</sup> –  
I've seen crowns worn instead of a fool's-cap –  
I've seen a Congress doing all that's mean<sup>239</sup> – 670  
I've seen some nations like o'erloaded asses  
Kick off their burthens – meaning the high classes.<sup>240</sup>

85.

I've seen small poets, and great prozers,<sup>241</sup> and  
Interminable – *not eternal* – speakers<sup>242</sup> –  
I've seen the Funds at war with house and land<sup>243</sup> – 675  
I've seen the Country Gentlemen turn squeakers<sup>244</sup> –  
I've seen the people ridden o'er like sand  
By slaves on horseback<sup>245</sup> – I have seen malt liquors  
Exchanged for "thin potations" by John Bull<sup>246</sup> –  
I've seen John half detect himself a fool. – 680

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**234:** As DJP argues (706; see also CPW V 751-2) the repeated *I haves* in sts.84 and 85 often give the line a foot too many, and contracting apostrophes seem called for (this does not apply to 658, 666 or 678). The first edition concedes the point at 676 and 677; I have conceded it throughout this edition.

**235:** *I've seen the landholders without a rap*: echoes this canto, l.614.

**236:** ... *Johanna Southcote*: Devonian prophetess (c.1750-1814) with a following of thousands. She claimed to be pregnant with Shiloh, the Prince of Peace; but it was the dropsy of which she died. See above, III 852, and *TVOJ*, 224.

**237:** *The House of Commons turned to a tax-trap*: to pay off the war-debt.

**238:** ... *that sad affair of the late Queen*: echoes this canto, l.613.

**239:** ... *a Congress doing all that's mean*: refers either to the 1816 Congress of Vienna, or the 1822 Congress of Verona, at which ultra-reactionary policies were put into effect. See *AoB*, passim.

**240:** *Kick off their burthens – meaning the high classes*: no European country had effected a permanent revolution in B.'s period, but several Latin American countries had thrown off European rule; see above, II 5, 4.

**241:** ... *small poets, and great prozers*: Southey's prose, for example the *Life of Nelson*, has always been more highly thought-of than his verse. But a *proser* is also a droning bore.

**242:** *Interminable – not eternal – speakers*: Castlereagh had a poor public speaking style.

**243:** ... *the Funds at war with house and land*: echoes this canto, l.614.

**244:** ... *squeakers*: loud complainers.

**245:** ... *the people ridden o'er like sand / By slaves on horseback*: perhaps a reference to the Peterloo Massacre, to which B. would have alluded at deleted stanza 75 above, ll.3-5.

**246:** ... *malt liquors / Exchanged for "thin potations" by John Bull*: see the words of Falstaff at *Henry IV II*, IV iii 122. Brewers adulterated their beer to avoid taxes.

86.

But “Carpe diem,” Juan, “Carpe, Carpe!”<sup>247</sup>  
 Tomorrow sees another race as gay  
 And transient, and devoured by the same Harpy;  
 “Life’s a poor player” – then “play out the play,  
 “Ye Villains!”<sup>248</sup> – and above all keep a sharp eye 685  
 Much less on what you do, than what you say –  
 Be hypocritical – be cautious – be  
 Not what you *seem* – but always what you *see*.

87.

But how shall I relate, in other Cantos,  
 Of what befell our hero, in the land 690  
 Which ’tis the common cry and lie to vaunt as  
 A Moral country? But I hold my hand –  
 For I disdain to write an Atalantis<sup>249</sup> –  
 But ’tis as well at once to understand  
 You are *not* a moral people, and you know it 695  
 Without the aid of too sincere a poet.

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247: “Carpe diem”: Horace, *Odes*, I ii 8:

*dum loquimur, fugerit invida  
 aetas: carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero.*

(“Time flies even as we speak. Reap today’s harvest, and put as little hope as may be in tomorrow”).

248: “Life’s a poor player” - then “play out the play / “Ye Villains!”: two of B.’s favourite Shakespeare heroes speak here – Macbeth from V v, 24: *Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player ...* and Falstaff from *Henry IV I*, II iv 467: *Out, ye rogue! Play out the play; I have much to say in the behalf of that Falstaff*. The comic and the tragic voices are heard simultaneously.

249: ... *I disdain to write an Atalantis*: B.’s reference is to the 1709 scandalous work *Secret Memoirs and Manners of Several Persons of Quality, Of Both Sexes. From the New Atalantis* by Mrs May de la Rivière Manley (1663-1724), friend of Swift and Steele. See Pope, *Rape of the Lock*, III 165-6:

*As long as Atalantis shall be read,  
 Or the small Pillow grace a Lady’s Bed.*

B., although he has glanced at contemporaries, has not revealed any of their intimate secrets, as did Mrs Manley, or as did Caroline Lamb in *Glenarvon* (see above, II 201, 8). His own Memoirs seem not to have been especially offensive in this respect either – in so far as one can tell.

88.

What Juan saw and underwent shall be  
 My topic – with of course the due restriction  
 Which is required by proper courtesy;  
 And recollect the work is only fiction, 700  
 And that I sing of neither mine nor me;<sup>250</sup>  
 Though every scribe, in some slight turn of diction,  
 Will hunt allusions never *meant*; ne'er doubt  
*This*, when I speak – I *don't hint*, but *speak out*. –

89.

Whether he married with the third or fourth 705  
 Offspring of some sage husband-hunting Countess,  
 Or whether with some virgin of more worth<sup>251</sup>  
 (I mean in Fortune's matrimonial bounties)  
 He took to regularly peopling Earth,  
 Of which your lawful awful wedlock fount is – 710  
 Or whether he was taken in for damages,  
 For being too excursive in his homages,<sup>252</sup>

90.

Is yet within the unread events of Time.  
 Thus far, go forth, thou Lay!<sup>253</sup> which I will back  
 Against the same given quantity of rhyme, 715  
 For being as much the subject of Attack  
 As ever yet was any work sublime,  
 By those who love to say that white is black;  
 So much the better! I may stand alone,  
 But would not change my free thoughts for a throne. 720

/  
 /NB/ O<sup>ctr</sup> 17<sup>th</sup>. 1822. –  
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250: *And that I sing of neither mine nor me*: few will believe B. here; he is perhaps contradicted by XIV 22, 7-8:

*My music has some mystic diapasons;  
 And there is much which could not be appreciated  
 In any manner by the uninitiated.*

251: ... *some virgin of more worth*: anticipates Aurora Raby.

252: *Or whether he was taken in for damages*, / *For being too excursive in his homages*: he would be carrying on a tradition well founded if he did. Compare I 33, 5; or I 188, 7-8.

253: *Thus far, go forth, thou Lay!*: recollects the appropriation of Southey's *Lay of the Laureate* in the last stanza of Canto I.