

Don Juan Canto Thirteenth

edited by Peter Cochran

Original M.S.S.

D.J.

Cantos 13th.

/ Feb^{ry}. 1823.

/NB/

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1.

I mean now to be serious – it is time,
 Since Laughter, nowadays , is deemed too serious;
 A jest at Vice by Virtue’s called a Crime,
 And critically held as deleterious;
 Besides – the Sad’s a Source of the Sublime, 5
 Although, when long, a little apt to weary us;
 And therefore shall my lay soar high and solemn
 As an old temple dwindled to a Column. –

2.

The Lady Adeline Amundeville¹
 (’Tis an old Norman Name, and to be found 10
 In pedigrees by those who wander still
 Along the last fields of that Gothic ground)
 Was highborn – wealthy by her father’s will –
 And Beauteous – even where Beauties most abound –
 In Britain – which of course true patriots find 15
 The goodliest soil of Body or of Mind. –

3.

I’ll not gainsay them – it is not my Cue –
 I leave them to their taste – no doubt the best;²
 An eye’s an eye, and whether black or blue
 Is no great matter, so ’tis in request; 20
 ’Tis nonsense to dispute about a hue;
 The kindest may be taken on a test;
 The fair Sex should always be fair, and no man –
 Till thirty – should perceive there’s a plain woman.

1: *The Lady Adeline Amundeville*: if it is given an article, her name make an iambic pentameter, like that of *Caius Marcius Coriolanus*. Models for the character are Lady Blessington, who was in B.’s company between March and June 1823, and Lady Melbourne, who wrote about herself to B. thus: ... *people call me pleasant because I am always inclined in conversation to enter into y^e Subjects that seem most adapted to the taste of those with whom I happen to be* (Gross 119): compare below, XVI 820 and n.

2: *I’ll not gainsay them – it is not my Cue – / I leave them to their taste – no doubt the best*: the sub-text here seems to lie in B.’s covert disagreement with the *true patriots*’ assertion at ll.15-16 that English women are the wisest and most beautiful.

4.

And after that serene and somewhat dull 25
 Epoch, that awkward Corner turned for days
 More quiet, when our Moon's no more at full,
 We may presume to criticise or praise,
 Because Indifference begins to lull
 Our passions, and we walk in Wisdom's ways; 30
 Also because the figure and the face
 Hint, that 'tis time to give the younger place. –

5.

I know that some would fain postpone this Era –
 Reluctant, as all placemen, to resign
 Their part – but theirs is merely a Chimera, 35
 For they have passed Life's Equinoctial line;
 But don't they have their Claret and Madeira
 To irrigate the dryness of decline?
 And County Meetings, and the Parliament?
 And Debt, and what not, for their solace sent? 40

6.

And is there not Religion – and Reform –
 Peace – War – the taxes – and what's called “the Nation” – ?³
 The Struggle to be pilots in a Storm?⁴
 The landed and the monied Speculation?
 The joys of mutual Hate to keep them warm 45
 Instead of Love – that mere hallucination?
 Now Hatred is by far the longest pleasure –
 Men love in haste, but they can hate at leisure.

3: ... *what's called “the Nation” – ?*: implies the phrase to be a canting one. Compare Dr Johnson (soon to be openly quoted): *Patriotism is the last refuge of a Scoundrel* (Boswell's *Life*, I 583).

4: *The Struggle to be pilots in a Storm*: to see one's nation safely through times of crisis. All editors see an allusion to Canning's verses on Pitt, *The Pilot that weathered the Storm*, first sung at a dinner in Pitt's honour on May 28 1802. Compare *AoB*, 1.540: *And “pilots who have weathered every storm” ...* However, this and all the other feats possible after the crossing of *Life's Equinoctial line* (1.34) are nothing, B. implies, compared with the delights of youth.

7.

Rough Johnson, the great Moralist, professed
 Right honestly, “He liked an honest hater” – * 50
 The only truth that yet has been confest
 Within these latest thousand years or later;
 Perhaps the fine old fellow spoke in jest –
 For my part, I am but a mere Spectator,
 And gaze where’er the palace or the hovel is, 55
 Much in the mode of Goethe’s Mephistophilis;⁵ –

* “Sir – I like a good hater” see the Life of Dr. Johnson. &^c. &^c. &^c.⁶

8.

But neither love nor hate in much excess,
 Though ’twas not once so; if I sneer sometimes,
 It is because I cannot well do less,
 And now and then it also suits my rhymes; 60
 I should be very willing to express
 Men’s wrongs, and rather check than punish Crimes,
 Had not Cervantes, in that too true tale
 Of Quixote,⁷ shown how all such efforts fail. –

9.

Of all tales ’tis the saddest, and more sad 65
 Because it makes us smile; his hero’s right,
 And still pursues the right; to curb the bad
 His only object, and ’gainst all odds to fight
 His guerdon; ’tis his Virtue makes him mad!
 But his adventures form a sorry sight – 70
 A sorrier still is the great moral taught
 By that real Epic unto all who’ve thought.

5: *I am but a mere Spectator, / And gaze where’er the palace or the hovel is, / Much in the mode of Goethe’s Mephistophilis:* though Mephistopheles is a witty and charismatic fiend, the lines do concede the diabolical inspiration of *Don Juan*. The reference to Goethe here and to Cervantes at 1.64 below show in what good company B. places himself. Goethe and he never met, but Goethe admired him, and he dedicated *Sardanapalus* to Goethe as ... *the first of existing masters*.

6: *Rough Johnson, the great Moralist, professed / Right honestly, “He liked an honest hater”:* this famous statement has its origin, not in Boswell’s *Life*, but in a note appended to it by John Wilson Croker, in turn quoting what Johnson said to Mrs Piozzi, to the effect that “*Bathurst was a man to my very heart’s content; he hated a fool, he hated a rogue, and he hated a whig – he was a very good hater!*” The *jest* (see 1.53) implies the *targets* of Bathurst’s hatred to have been well-chosen, not the *quality* of his hatred itself.

7: *Cervantes, in that too true tale / Of Quixote:* Miguel de Saavedra Cervanted published *Don Quixote* in 1605. ... *too true* leads on to the thought, in the next three stanzas, that the effects even of the greatest satire can be regrettable. Compare above, VII 1.24.

10. –

Redressing injury, revenging wrong,
 To aid the damsel and destroy the Caitiff,
 Opposing singly the united Strong, 75
 From foreign yoke to free the helpless native⁸ –
 Alas! must noblest views, like an old Song,
 Be for mere Fancy's sport a theme creative? –
 A jest, a riddle Fame through thin and thick sought?
 And Socrates himself but Wisdom's Quixote?⁹ 80

11.

Cervantes smiled Spain's Chivalry away;
 A single Laugh demolished the right arm
 Of his own Country – seldom since that Day
 Has Spain had Heroes; while Romance could charm,
 The World gave ground before her bright array, 85
 And therefore have his volumes done such harm,
 That all their Glory as a Composition
 Was dearly purchased by his land's perdition.¹⁰

12.

I'm "at my old lunes"¹¹ – digression – and forget
 The Lady Adeline Amundeville – 90
 The fair most fatal Juan ever met,
 Although she was not evil, nor meant ill;
 But Destiny and Passion spread the net
 (Fate is a good Excuse for our own Will)
 And caught them; what do they *not* catch, methinks?
 But I'm not *Œdipus*, and Life's a Sphinx.¹² 96

8: *Opposing singly the united Strong, / From foreign yoke to free the helpless native:* more the ideals and aims of B. than of Quixote. B. places Cervantes on his juvenile reading list (CMP 1).

9: *Socrates himself but Wisdom's Quixote?:* the idea of *Don Quixote* as a bomb planted under the works of Plato is interesting. If Plato had had more of a sense of humour, more would read him – but then he would cease to be Plato. Notice the provincial English pronunciation which B.'s rhyme forces on us.

10: ... *all their Glory as a Composition / Was dearly purchased by his land's perdition:* but rampant inflation, courtly corruption and military and naval incompetence – together with the burgeoning power of France and England – were the main factors in Spain's imperialist decline, not too many people reading *Don Quixote*.

11: *I'm "at my old lunes:* the line is Mrs Page describing the paranoid wrath of Master Ford at *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, IV ii 16: *Why, woman, your husband's at his old lunes again.* Compare above, I sts.136-187n.

12: *But I'm not Œdipus, and Life's a Sphinx:* *Davus sum, non Œdipus* is a line from Terence, *Andria* (*The Lady of Andros, or The Girl from Andros*). B. has already quoted from the play above, at I 1.237. See also the reference to *Dorus* above at XI 1.460. Davos (sic) is a cunning slave anxious to help the love-life of his young master Pamphilus; he is here speaking to Pamphilus' father, Simo, whom it is his intention to trick – the disavowal of understanding, in other words, is disingenuous.

13.

I tell the tale as it is told – nor dare
 To venture a solution; “Davus Sum!”¹³
 And now I will proceed upon the pair:
 Sweet Adeline amid the gay World’s hum 100
 Was the Queen-Bee, the Glass of all that’s fair,¹⁴
 Whose Charms made all men speak, and Women dumb;
 The last’s a Miracle, and such was reckoned,
 And since that time there has not been a second.¹⁵ –

14.

Chaste was She to Detraction’s desperation¹⁶ – 105
 And wedded unto one she had loved well,
 A man known in the Councils of the Nation –
 Cool, and quite English, imperturbable,
 Though apt to act with fire upon occasion¹⁷ –
 Proud of himself and her – the World could tell 110
 Nought against either, and both seemed secure –
 She in her virtue, he in his hauteur. –

15.

It chanced some diplomatical relations,
 Arising out of business, often brought
 Himself and Juan in their mutual stations 115
 Into close contact; though reserved, nor caught
 By specious seeming, Juan’s youth, and patience,
 And talent, on his haughty Spirit wrought,
 And formed a basis of Esteem, which ends
 In making men what Courtesy calls friends. – 120

13: see above, this canto, l.96n.

14: ... *the Glass of all that’s fair*: compare Ophelia upon Hamlet, III I 153: *The Glass of fashion and the mould of form*.

15: ... *since that time there has not been a second*: compare Camillo to Perdita at *The Winter’s Tale*, IV iv 370-1: *There shall not at your father’s house these seven years / Be born another such*; also Antony’ words to the mob at *Julius Caesar*, III iii 253: *Here was a Caesar! When comes such another?*

16: *Chaste was She to Detraction’s desperation*: contrast the lines about Donna Inez, above, I 535-6: *And if she could not (who can?) silence scandal, / At least she left it a more slender handle*.

17: *A man known in the Councils of the Nation*: suggested models for Lord Henry Amundeville include Lord Holland and George Eden, the rejected suitor to Annabella Milbanke. However, ll.108-9, *Cool, and quite English, imperturbable, / Though apt to act with fire upon occasion* might suggest B.’s best friend John Cam Hobhouse, who was by now (1823) a well-known Parliamentarian – albeit unmarried.

16.

And thus Lord Henry, who was cautious as
 Reserve and Pride could make him, and full slow
 In judging man – when once his Judgement was
 Determined, right or wrong, on friend or foe,
 Had all the pertinacity Pride has, 125
 Which knows no ebb to its imperious flow,
 And loves or hates, disdainingly to be guided,
 Because its own good Pleasure hath decided.¹⁸ –

17.

His friendship therefore – and no less, aversions,
 Though oft well founded – which confirmed but more 130
 His prepossessions – like the Laws of Persians
 And Medes¹⁹ – would ne'er revoke what went before;
 His feelings had not those strange fits, like tertians,²⁰
 Of common likings, which make some deplore
 What they should laugh at – the mere Ague still 135
 Of Man's regard, the Fever or the Chill. –

18.

“’Tis not in mortals to command Success –
 But do you more Sempronius – don't deserve it;”²¹
 And take my word, you won't have any less;
 Be wary – watch the time and always serve it – 140
 Give gently way when there's too great a press²² –
 And for your Conscience – only learn to nerve it,
 For like a racer or a boxer training,
 ’Twill make, if proved, vast efforts without paining. –

18: ... *loves or hates, disdainingly to be guided, / Because its own good Pleasure hath decided*: would link Amundeville to the “good haters” admired by Dr. Johnson (see above, this canto, ll.49-50n).

19: *His prepossessions – like the Laws of Persians / And Medes*: see Daniel 6,8: ... *according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which alters not*. By the end of the chapter (in which Daniel is cast into the lions' den) they have altered.

20: ... *those strange fits, like tertians*: it is a tertian fever which kills Don José above, at I l.271.

21: “’Tis not in mortals to command Success – / But do you more Sempronius – don't deserve it”: parodies Addison's tragedy *Cato* (1713) I ii 77: *'Tis not in mortals to command success; / But we'll do more, Sempronius – we'll deserve it*. Where Addison's hero asserts faith in a just destiny, B. parades cynicism about those who deserve fame and those who achieve it.

22: *Be wary – watch the time and always serve it – / Give gently way when there's too great a press*: the lines seem to counsel a kind of tactical mobility (see above, l.9n, and below, XVI l.820 and n).

19.

Lord Henry liked to be superior, 145
 As most men do, the little or the great;
 The very lowest find out an inferior,
 At least they think so, to exert their state
 Upon – for there are very few things wearier
 Than solitary Pride’s oppressive weight, 150
 Which Mortals generously would divide
 By bidding others carry – while they ride.

20.

In birth, in rank, in fortune, likewise equal,
 O’er Juan he could no distinction claim –
 In years he had the advantage of Time’s sequel – 155
 And, as he thought, in country much the same –
 Because bold Britons have a tongue and free quill,
 At which all modern Nations vainly aim –
 And the Lord Henry was a great debater,
 So that few Members kept the House up later.²³ 160

21.

These were advantages, and then he thought –
 It was his foible – but by no means sinister –
 That few, or none, more than himself had caught
 Court mysteries, having been himself a minister;
 He liked to teach that which he had been taught, 165
 And greatly shone wherever there’d been a stir,
 And reconciled all qualities which grace man
 Always a Patriot – and sometimes a Place-man.²⁴

23: ... *bold Britons have a tongue and free quill* / ... *Lord Henry was a great debater*, / *So that few Members kept the House up later*: compare *Beppo*, ll.373-6:

I like the freedom of the press and quill,
I like the Habeas Corpus (when we’ve got it)
I like a Parliamentary debate,
Particularly when ’tis not too late ...

The second line reminds us that not all Britons had a *free quill* in B.’s time, whatever may have been the case in Juan’s (the early 1790s).

24: *Always a Patriot – and sometimes a Place-man*: a Place-man was one who held office, not from merit, but through sycophancy. The line raises, but does not answer, the question, is Patriotism compatible with Place-manship? See Dr Johnson, quoted above, this canto, l.42n.

22.

He liked the gentle Spaniard for his gravity –
 He almost honoured him for his docility – 170
 Because, though young, he acquiesced with Suavity,
 Or contradicted but with proud humility;
 He knew the World, and would not see depravity
 In faults which sometimes show the Soil's fertility,
 If that the Weeds o'erlive not the first Crop – 175
 For then they are very difficult to stop.

23.

And then he talked with him about Madrid,²⁵
 Constantinople, and such distant places,
 Where people always did as they were bid –
 Or did what they should not with foreign graces; 180
 Of Coursers also spake they²⁶ – Henry rid
 Well like most Englishmen, and loved the Races –
 And Juan, like a true-born Andalusian,
 Could back a horse as Despots ride a Russian.

24.

And thus acquaintance grew, at noble routs, 185
 And diplomatic dinners, or at other;
 And Juan stood well both with Ins and Outs,
 As in Freemasonry a higher brother;²⁷
 Upon his talent Henry had no doubts –
 His manner showed him sprung from a high Mother – 190
 And all men like to show their Hospitality
 To him whose breeding marches with his Quality.

25: ... *he talked with him about Madrid*: where Juan does not seem to have been; but the line refers to Spanish politics.

26: *Of Coursers also spake they*: that is, of horse-racing.

27: *Juan stood well both with Ins and Outs, / As in Freemasonry a higher brother*: compares entrance into English society with the ritual induction into Masonic lodges. In Italy, the Carbonari (to whom B. was attached) were grouped in a similar way, and may even have been Masonic.

25.

In Blank-Blank Square – for we will break no Squares
 By naming Streets,²⁸ since Men are so censorious,
 And apt to sow an Author's wheat with tares,²⁹ 195
 Reaping allusions private and inglorious
 Where none were dreamt of – unto Love's affairs,
 Which were – or are – or are to be notorious –
 That therefore do I previously declare
 Lord Henry's Mansion was in Blank-Blank Square. 200

26.

Also there bin another pious reason³⁰ *
 For making Squares and Streets anonymous –
 Which is that there is scarce a single season
 Which doth not shake some very splendid house
 With some slight heart-quake of domestic treason – 205
 A topic Scandal doth delight to rouse –
 Such I might stumble Over unawares,
 Unless I knew the very chastest Squares. –

* “With every thing that pretty *bin*,
 My lady sweet arise.” — SHAKESPEARE.³¹

28: ... *we will break no Squares / By naming Streets*: a *square* is in this context a military formation, and to *break* one is to introduce dangerous disorder where strict discipline is needed. DJV quotes the OED's reference to Sterne, *Tristram Shandy* II v, where Corporal Trim's propensity for giving non-stop advice *broke no squares with 'em*; but see also Smollett, *Humphry Clinker* (ed. Ross, p.105): *Eastgate understood the hint; and told him that one day should break no squares ...* As B. *breaks squares* throughout his ottava rima work, the gesture is disingenuous.

29: *sow an Author's wheat with tares*: echoes the Parable of the Sower, *Matthew* 13, 24-30.

30: *Also there bin another pious reason*: the archaic usage is not called for by the scansion: *Also there is another pious reason* would do just as well. Perhaps B. anticipated editorial contraction of the auxiliary, and prevented it with the uncontractable *bin*. See next n.

31: The line is from *Hark, hark, the lark* at *Cymbeline* II iii 25. The Folio has *With everything that pretty is*, which doesn't rhyme – except that in the Folio the words *begin* and *is* are in mid-line and do not need to rhyme. The change to *bin* was made by Warburton (1738) and Hamner (1743-1744); most modern editions have *is*.

27.

'Tis true, I might have chosen Piccadilly,
 A place where Peccadilloes are unknown;³² 210
 But I have motives, whether wise or silly,
 For letting that pure Sanctuary alone;³³
 Therefore I name not Square – Street – place – until I
 Find one where nothing naughty can be shown –
 A Vestal Shrine of Innocence of Heart – 215
 Such there are – but – I've lost the London Chart.

28.

At Henry's mansion, then, in Blank-Blank Square,
 Was Juan a *recherché*, welcome Guest,³⁴
 As many other Noble Scions were, 220
 And some who had but talent for their Crest,
 Or wealth, which is a passport everywhere –
 Or even mere Fashion – which indeed's the best
 Recommendation – and to be well-drest
 Will very often supersede the rest.³⁵

32: *Piccadilly ... Peccadilloes*: an attractive etymological theory, but Piccadilly was so nicknamed, at the start of the seventeenth century, from the word *piccadill* or *pickadill*, signifying a kind of stiff “vandyked” collar in vogue at the court of James I. A tailor named Robert Baker made a fortune from the manufacture of such decorations, which he invested in real estate there.

33: *I have motives, whether wise or silly, / For letting that pure Sanctuary alone*: Piccadilly was never a *pure Sanctuary*, as B. knew, for he had lived there in the Albany (unmarried) from March 28 1814, and (married) at 13, Piccadilly Terrace between March 29 1815 and April 23 1816 – although he seems in the latter case not to have paid the rent. See BLJ V 270-271 (letter of 3 November 1817) for B.'s apology to the Duchess of Devonshire for the still-outstanding debt.

34: *... a recherché, welcome Guest: recherché* would imply “Carefully sought out; hence, extremely choice or rare” (O.E.D.)

35: *... talent ... Or wealth ... Or even mere Fashion ... and to be well-drest / Will very often supersede the rest*: a careful dive into bathos, implying that whatever the appearance of social quality, anyone can get into London society if they brazen their way through its pretentiousness.

29.

But since “there’s Safety in a multitude
Of Counsellors,” as Solomon has said, 225
Or Someone for him, in some sage grave mood
Indeed, we see the daily proof displayed
In Senates – or the Bar – in wordy feud –
Where’er Collective Wisdom can parade; 230
Which is the only cause, that we can guess
Of Britain’s present Wealth and Happiness.³⁶

30.

But as “There’s safety ingrafted in the Number
Of Counsellors”³⁷ for men – thus for the Sex
A large Acquaintance lets not Virtue slumber; 235
Or should it shake, the Choice will more perplex –
Variety itself will more encumber;
’Midst many rocks we guard more against wrecks;
And thus, with Women, howsoe’er it shocks Some’s
Self-love, there’s safety in a Crowd of Coxcombs. – 240

36: ... *the only cause, that we can guess / Of Britain’s present Wealth and Happiness*: by 1823 the terror of revolution, prevalent in upper-class English circles during the post-Waterloo years, was starting to dim; but most Englishmen possessed neither *Wealth* nor *Happiness*; so the *Collective Wisdom* (l.230) had failed somewhere.

37: “*there’s Safety in a multitude / Of Counsellors,*” as Solomon has said / “*There’s safety ingrafted in the Number / Of Counsellors*”: Proverbs 11, 14 has *Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety*. Proverbs 24, 6 has *For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety*. B.’s knowledge of, and misuse of, the Bible, is seen in the implication in these two Stanzas, that many counsellors are bringing England to disaster; and that the more foolish men a woman is surrounded with (as she will be in London society) the less likely she will be to fall.

31.

But Adeline had not the least occasion
 For such a shield, which leaves but little merit
 To Virtue proper, or good Education;
 Her chief resource was in her own high Spirit,
 Which judged mankind at their due estimation; 245
 And for Coquetry, she disdained to wear it,
 Secure of admiration; its impression
 Was faint – as of an everyday possession. –

32.

To all She was polite without parade;
 To some she showed attention of that kind 250
 Which flatters – but is Flattery conveyed
 In such a sort as cannot leave behind
 A trace unworthy either wife or maid –
 A gentle, genial courtesy of mind
 To those who were, or passed for, meritorious – 255
 Just to console sad Glory for being glorious,

33.

Which is in all respects – save now and then –
 A chill and desolate appendage; Gaze
 Upon the Shades of those distinguished men
 Who were, or are, the Puppet-shows of Praise³⁸ – 260
 The Praise of Persecution; Gaze again
 On the most favoured – and amidst the Blaze
 Of Sunset halos o'er the laurel-browed,
 What can ye recognize? a gilded Cloud. –

38: ... *the Shades of those distinguished men / Who were, or are, the Puppet-shows of Praise*: the more famous one becomes, the less real one gets. B. speaks from experience.

34.

There also was of course in Adeline 265
 That calm Patrician Polish – in the address
 Which ne'er can pass the Equinoctial line³⁹
 Of any thing which Nature would express;
 Just as a Mandarin finds nothing fine –
 At least his manner suffers not to guess 270
 That any thing he views can greatly please –
 Perhaps we borrowed this from the Chinese.⁴⁰ –

35.

Perhaps from Horace – his *Nil admirari*⁴¹
 Was what he'd called the Art of Happiness,
 An Art on which the Artists greatly vary, 275
 And have not yet attained to much success;
 However, 'tis expedient to be wary;
 Indifference, *certes*, don't produce distress,
 And rash Enthusiasm in good Society
 Were nothing but a moral Inebriety.⁴² 280

39: ... *the Equinoctial line*: B. echoes his own l.36 above rather quickly, there being no relation between the two passages.

40: ... *a Mandarin finds nothing fine – / At least his manner suffers not to guess / That any thing he views can greatly please – / Perhaps we borrowed this from the Chinese*: B. knows exactly where we borrowed it from, and it is not from the Chinese: see above, V l.800: “Nil Admirari” – Hor. Epis. I, vi, 1-2.

41: *Horace – his Nil admirari*: see previous n.

42: ... *rash Enthusiasm in good Society / Were nothing but a moral Inebriety*: irony.

36.

But Adeline was not indifferent, for,
 (Now for a commonplace!) beneath the Snow,
 As a Volcano holds the lava more,
 Within – *et cætera* – shall I go on? No! –
 I hate to hunt down a tired Metaphor – 285
 So let the often-used Volcano go;
 Poor thing! how frequently by me and others
 It hath been stirred up,⁴³ till its Smoke quite smothers.

37.

I'll have another figure in a trice⁴⁴ –
 What say you to a bottle of Champagne? 290
 Frozen into a very vinous ice,
 Which leaves few drops of that immortal rain,
 Yet in the very Centre – past all price⁴⁵ –
 About a liquid Glass-full will remain;
 And this is stronger than the strongest Grape 295
 Could e'er express in its expanded shape. –

43: *So let the often-used Volcano go; / Poor thing! how frequently by me and others / It hath been stirred up:* for by me, see *The Giaour*, ll.1099-1102:

*“The cold in clime are cold in blood,
 Their love can scarce deserve the name;
 But mine is like the lava flood
 That boils in Ætna’s breast of flame.*

Or above, II ll.1486-7:

*... the blood’s lava, and the Pulse a blaze,
 Each kiss a Heart-quake ...*

Other uses are at *On the Star of the Legion of Honour*, ll.11-14, at *Childe Harold IV*, 51, 8; at *The Prophecy of Dante*, III ll.186-193; at *AoB* ll.179-80, and at *The Island III* ll.139-40.

44: *I’ll have another figure in a trice:* B. borrows the “frozen champagne” simile from Sir Walter Scott’s review of *CHP IV* in the *Quarterly* for April 1818, p.220: *There was a strain of poetry ... glowing like the intense and concentrated alcohol, which remains one single but burning drop in the centre of the ice which its more watery particles have formed.* Scott’s “alcohol” renders the idea dull and prosaic. Compare above, XII, ll.575-6, in which English women are described as ... *our pure Pearls of price – / Those Polar Summers, all Sun and some Ice.* See also below, XV, 7, 1-2.

45: *... past all price... beyond all price:* recalls Jesus’s description of the soul as *a pearl of great price* at Matthew 13, 45-6. The line also echoes above, XII l.575.

38.

'Tis the whole Spirit brought to a quintessence,
 And thus the chilliest Aspects may concentrate –
 A hidden Nectar under a cold presence;
 And such are many – though I merely meant her 300
 From whom I now deduce these moral lessons
 On Which the Muse has always sought to enter;⁴⁶
 And your cold people are beyond all price –
 When once you have broken their confounded Ice.

39.

But after all, they are a North-West Passage 305
 Unto the glowing India of the Soul⁴⁷ –
 And as the good Ships sent upon that message
 Have not exactly ascertained the Pole
 (Though Parry's efforts look a lucky presage);
 Thus Gentlemen may run upon a Shoal, 310
 For if the Pole's not open, but all frost,
 (A chance still) 'tis a voyage or vessel lost.

40.

And young beginners may as well commence
 With quiet cruizing o'er the Ocean, Woman –
 While those who are not beginners should have sense 315
 Enough to make for Port, e'er Time shall summon
 With his grey Signal flag and the past tense,
 The dreary "*Fuimus*" of all things human,⁴⁸
 Must be declined, while Life's thin thread's spun out
 Between the gaping heir and gnawing Gout. 320

46: *these moral lessons / On Which the Muse has always sought to enter:* echoes (with, as CPW points out, "a double entendre") the words of Wellington to Castlereagh upon the restoration of the works of art plundered by the French; see above, Cantos VI-VIII, Preface, n11.

47: *... a North-West Passage / Unto the glowing India ...:* by B.'s time hopes of getting to India via the northern coasts of Canada were in fact wearing thin, despite (1.309) *Parry's efforts*. Compare above, XII ll.654-5n, and *TVOJ*, ll.215-16.

48: *The dreary "Fuimus" of all things human:* "Fuimus" means "we have been". CPW draws attention to Aeneid II 325[-6]: *fuimus Troes, fuit Ilium et ingens / gloria Teucrorum:* (We Trojans are no longer, neither is Troy nor the great glory of the Teucres).

41.

But Heaven must be diverted; its diversion
 Is sometimes truculent – but never mind –
 The World upon the whole is worth the Assertion
 (If but for comfort) that all things are kind
 And that same devilish Doctrine of the Persian – 325
 Of the two principles⁴⁹ – but leaves behind
 As many doubts as any other Doctrine
 Has ever puzzled Faith withal, or yoke'd her in. –

42.

The English Winter ending in July,
 To recommence in August, now was done; 330
 'Tis the Postillion's paradise; Wheels fly!
 On Roads – East – South – North – West there is a run –
 But for post horses who finds Sympathy?
 Man's pity's for himself, or for his Son;
 Always premising that said Son at College 335
 Has not contracted much more debt than Knowledge.⁵⁰ –

43.

The London winter's ended in July⁵¹ –
 Sometimes a little later; I don't err
 In this; whatever other blunders lie
 Upon my shoulders, here I must aver 340
 My Muse a Glass in Weatherology,
 For Parliament is our barometer;
 Let radicals its other acts attack –
 Its Sessions form our only Almanack.⁵² –

49: ... *that same devilish Doctrine of the Persian* – / *Of the two principles* ...: these lines terminate a courtship with Zoroastrianism going back to 1814, when B. first read about the religion in detail in Sir John Malcolm's *History of Persia* (BLJ IV 147-8 and nn; also CMP 243). The two works most influenced by it are *Manfred* and *Cain*; but large traces are to be found still in *Sardanapalus* and *The Deformed Transformed* (which last B. finished work on in January 1823, a month before writing this canto). B. probably learned more about Zoroastrianism during his studies at the Armenian monastery on San Lazzaro.

50: *Always premising that said Son at College* / *Has not contracted much more debt than Knowledge*: the case with B. himself on coming down from Trinity. For the *College* / *Knowledge* rhyme, see above, I ll.415-16.

51: *The London winter's ended in July*: the emptiness of London out of season was proverbial. *The Last Man in Town* (1830) makes amusing use of both this idea and of the vogue for eschatological fantasy in general, by telling the story of a gentleman condemned to remain in Town long after the Season has ended.

52: *Parliament is our barometer*; / *Let radicals its other acts attack* – / *Its Sessions form our only Almanack*: facetious at the expense of Society, which, he asserts, only sees and Open Parliament as a reason for not going to their country houses.

44.

When its Quicksilver's down at zero, lo! 345
 Coach – Chariot – luggage – baggage – equipage!
 Wheels whirl from Carlton palace to Soho,⁵³
 And happiest they who horses can engage;
 The turnpikes glow with dust, and Rotten Row⁵⁴
 Sleeps from the Chivalry of this bright Age, 350
 And tradesmen with long bills, and longer faces,⁵⁵
 Sigh as the Postboys fasten on the traces. –

45.

They – and their bills – “Arcadians both”⁵⁶ – are left *
 To the Greek Kalends of another Session;⁵⁷
 Alas! to them of ready Cash bereft 355
 What hope remains? – of *Hope* the full possession,
 Or generous draft, conceded as a Gift,⁵⁸
 At a long date – till they can get a fresh one
 Hawked about at a discount small as large;
 Also the Solace of an Overcharge.⁵⁹ – 360

* “Arcades Ambo”.

53: ... *from Carlton palace to Soho*: Carlton House, home of the Prince Regent (by 1823, George IV) was in Pall Mall; Soho, then as now to the north and east, was rather less up-market.

54: *Rotten Row*: from the *route du roi*, formed as a bridle-way in Hyde Park by William III by hanging three hundred lamps between Kensington Palace and St. James's.

55: ... *tradesmen with long bills, and longer faces*: B. had himself been responsible for more than a few of such. Compare above, X 1.552: *Thy long, long bills – whence nothing is deducted*.

56: “*Arcadians both*”: see above, IV 1.744n.

57: ... *the Greek Kalends of another Session*: the Kalends was the first day of the Roman calendar; it had no part in the Greek. The phrase “Greek Kalends” thus means “never”.

58: ... *of Hope the full possession, / Or generous draft, conceded as a Gift*: the nobleman writes a promissory note “guaranteeing” future payment; but ll.358-9: ... *a fresh one / Hawked about at a discount small as large*: he may be unable to pay even this, so writes a second promissory note, which the creditor then attempts to sell at a discount to a moneylender – a desperate expedient. B. writes from experience. His most outrageous debt was to Baxter and Co, who built him his ostentatious replica of Napoleon's carriage in 1816. Late in 1818 he had paid £1,333 15s 6d of a £2,082 4s overall debt to them, and still owed £991. 13s when he died. It is not known if they ever recovered the balance.

59: ... *the Solace of an Overcharge*: if he does finally get paid, the tradesman will have the satisfaction of knowing that he charged too much in the first place.

46.

But these are trifles; downward flies my Lord,
 Nodding beside my Lady in his Carriage;
 Away! away! "Fresh horses!" are the Word,⁶⁰
 And changed as quickly as hearts after marriage;
 The obsequious landlord hath the change restored, 365
 The Postboys have no reason to disparage
 Their fee; but e'er the watered wheels⁶¹ may hiss hence,
 The Ostler pleads for a small reminiscence.⁶²

47.

'Tis granted, and the Valet mounts the Dickey,⁶³
 That Gentleman of Lords, and Gentlemen – 370
 Also my Lady's Gentlewoman – tricky,
 And tricked out more more than poet's pen
 Can paint – "*Cosi Viaggino i Ricchi!*"⁶⁴
 (Excuse a foreign Slipslop now and then –
 If but to show I've travelled, – and what's travel 375
 Unless it teaches one to quote and cavil?)

48.

The London Winter, and the Country Summer
 Were well nigh over – 'tis perhaps a pity,
 When Nature wears the Gown which doth become her,
 To lose those best months in a sweaty City, 380
 And not until the Nightingale grows dumber,
 Listening debates not very wise nor witty,⁶⁵
 Ere Patriots their own *Country* can remember;⁶⁶
 But there's no Shooting (save Grouse) till September.⁶⁷ –

60: *Away! away! "Fresh horses!" are the Word:* compare *The Winter's Tale*, III i, 21-2: *Go; fresh horses, / And gracious be the issue!*

61: ... *the watered wheels:* the wheels' spokes and rims of the wheels would be doused with water to keep them tight and prevent rattling. The image implies stealth and hypocrisy.

62: *The Ostler pleads for a small reminiscence:* but will he get one?

63: *the Valet mounts the Dickey:* Fletcher would have the seat at the back of the carriage, outside.

64: "*Cosi Viaggino i Ricchi!*": "Thus the Rich travel!"

65: ... *debates not very wise nor witty:* echoes above, XI l.356.

66: *Ere Patriots their own Country can remember:* echoes above, this canto, l.15.

67: ... *there's no Shooting (save Grouse) till September:* grouse can be shot from August 12.

49.

I've done with my tirade. The World was gone; 385
 The twice two thousand, for whom Earth was made⁶⁸
 Were vanished to be what they call alone –
 That is, with thirty servants for parade;
 As many guests or more, before whom groan
 As many Covers duly daily laid; 390
 Let none accuse Old England's Hospitality –
 Its Quantity is but condensed to Quality. –

50.

Lord Henry, and the Lady Adeline,
 Departed like the rest of their compeers
 The peerage, to a Mansion very fine, 395
 The Gothic Babel of a thousand years;
 None than themselves could boast a longer line,
 Where Time through heroes, and through beauties steers;
 And Oaks, as often as their Pedigree,
 Told of their Sires – a tomb in every tree. – 400

51.

A paragraph in every paper told
 Of their departure – such is modern fame;⁶⁹
 'Tis Pity that it takes no further hold
 Than an advertisement, or much the same,
 Where the ink be dry, the Sound grows cold; 405
 The *Morning Post*⁷⁰ was foremost to proclaim –
 “Departure for his Country Seat to-day –
 “Lord H. Amundeville and Lady A.”

52.

“We understand the splendid host intends
 “To entertain this autumn a select 410
 “And numerous party of his noble friends,
 “Midst whom we have heard – from sources quite correct –
 “The Duke of D— the shooting season spends,
 “With many more by rank and fashion decked;
 “Also a foreigner of high Condition – 415
 “The Envoy of the recent Russian Mission.” –

68: *The twice two thousand, for whom Earth was made*: echoes above, XI 1.355.

69: *A paragraph in every paper told / Of their departure – such is modern fame*: B.'s satire on gazettes and newspapers, and the unreal image they give the world of itself, has never ceased since I, 3.

70: *The Morning Post*: see above, XI 1.636. Coleridge wrote for the paper.

53.

And thus we see – who doubts the *Morning Post*?
 (Whose articles are like the “Thirty Nine”,
 Which those most swear to who believe them most);⁷¹
 Our young Russ-Spaniard was ordained to shine, 420
 Decked by the rays reflected from his host,
 With those who Pope says “greatly daring dine”;⁷²
 ’Tis odd, but true – last war, the News abounded
 More with these diners than the killed and wounded.

54.

As thus – “On Thursday there was a grand dinner; 425
 “Present, Lords A, B, C ...” – Earls, Dukes, by name
 Announced with less pomp than Victory’s winner;
 Then underneath, and in the very same
 Column, “Date – Falmouth. There has lately been here
 “The Slap-Dash Regiment, so well known to Fame, 430
 “Whose loss in the late action we regret;
 “The vacancies are filled up – See Gazette.” –

71: (Whose articles are like the “Thirty Nine”, / Which those most swear to who believe them most): the reference is to the Thirty-Nine Articles sworn to by Anglican priests – “insincerely”, is B.’s implication.

72: ... those who Pope says “greatly daring dine”: at *Dunciad*, IV 318, except that there it is in the past tense. The context makes it clear how insulting the line is:

*The Stews and Palace equally explor’d,
 Intrigu’d with glory, and with spirit whor’d;
 Try’d all hors-d’œuvres, all liqueurs defin’d,
 Judicious drank, and greatly-daring din’d ...*

(Pope’s note): *It being indeed no small risque to eat thro’ those extraordinary compositions, whose disguis’d ingredients are generally unknown to the guests, and highly inflammatory and unwholesome.*

55.⁷³

To Norman Abbey⁷⁴ whirled the noble pair –
 An old, old Monastery once, and now
 Still older mansion, of a rich and rare 435
 Mixed Gothic, such as Artists all allow
 Few Specimens yet left us can compare;
 Withal, it lies perhaps a little low,
 Because the Monks preferred a hill behind –
 To shelter their devotion from the Wind.⁷⁵ 440

56.

It stood embosomed in a happy valley,
 Crowned by high Woodlands where the Druid Oak⁷⁶
 Stood like Caractacus in act to rally
 His host, with broad Arms 'gainst the Thunder-Stroke;⁷⁷
 And from beneath his boughs were seen to sally 445
 The dappled foresters as Day awoke⁷⁸ –
 The branching Stag swept down with all his herd,
 To quaff a Brook which murmured like a Bird.

73: *can ... lies ... preferred ... stood ... Stood:* the uncertainty in tense shuffles ancient past, *Don Juan* past, and B.'s present, so that all three time-perspectives finally mix, confusing nostalgia with actuality.

74: *Norman Abbey:* what now follows is a description of Newstead Abbey, not as it was, but as B. would wish it to have been. His birthright, which he had to sell in November 1818 to pay his debts.

75: *... the Monks preferred a hill behind – / To shelter their devotion from the Wind:* perhaps indecent. Compare *CHP I*, 7:

*... It was a vast and venerable pile;
 So old, it seemed only not to fall,
 Yet strength was pillar'd in each massy aisle.
 Monastic dome! condemn'd to uses vile!
 Where Superstition once had made her den
 Now Paphian girls were known to sing and smile;
 And monks might deem their time was come agen,
 If ancient tales say true, nor wrong those holy men.*

76: *the Druid Oak:* relates the Abbey to a still more remote, pre-Roman, pre-Christian past. B.'s great-uncle the Wicked Lord had felled most of the oaks at Newstead; this one remained, by local subscription.

77: *... like Caractacus in act to rally / His host, with broad Arms 'gainst the Thunder-Stroke:* Caractacus, an Ancient British King, withstood the Romans for nine years, but was defeated. An idealised Byronic self-image of heroism fighting historical inevitability.

78: *dappled foresters:* compare *As You Like It*, II i 22. Reformation England and Pre-Roman England now have added to them both Shakespearean England and Robin Hood's "Golden World" as part of the Abbey's history.

57.

Before the Mansion lay a lucid lake,⁷⁹
 Broad as transparent, deep, and freshly fed 450
 By a river which its softened way did take
 In currents through the calmer water spread
 Around; the wild fowl nestled in the brake,⁸⁰
 And sedges brooding in their liquid bed;
 The Woods sloped downwards to its brink, and stood 455
 With their green faces fixed upon the flood.

58.

Its outlet dashed into a steep Cascade,⁸¹
 Sparkling with foam, until again subsiding
 Its shriller Echoes, like an infant made
 Quiet,⁸² sank into the softer ripples, gliding 460
 Into a rivulet – and, thus allayed,
 Pursued its course, now gleaming, and now hiding
 Its windings through the woods – now clear, now blue,
 According as the Skies their shadows threw.

59.

A glorious remnant of the Gothic Pile 465
 (While yet the Church was Rome's)⁸³ stood half-apart
 In a grand Arch which once screened many an aisle,⁸⁴
 These last had disappeared – a loss to Art;
 The first yet frowned superbly o'er the Soil,
 And kindled feelings in the roughest heart 470
 Which mourned the power of Time's or Tempest's march,
 In gazing on that venerable Arch. –

79: *a lucid lake*: all the features here notated are still (2007) to be found at Newstead Abbey. There are three lakes, created by the Augustinians (see below, L.466n) by damming the river Leen. See *Epistle to Augusta*, 73-6:

*I did remind thee of our own dear Lake
 By the old Hall, which may be mine no more –
 Leman's is fair – but think not I forsake
 The sweet remembrance of a dearer shore ...*

80: *the wild fowl nestled in the brake*: see previous note.

81: *Its outlet dashed into a steep Cascade*: see this canto, l.449n.

82: *Its shriller Echoes, like an infant made / Quiet*: brings in an Oedipal note, in preparation for st.61.

83: *While yet the Church was Rome's*: Newstead had been founded, by Henry II in approximately 1170, as part, it is said, of his penance for the death of Becket, for a chapter of Black Augustinian Canons. Henry VIII sold it to Sir John Byron in 1540.

84: *a grand Arch which once screened many an aisle*: the most famous architectural feature of the Abbey is the west front of the Priory Church, with its huge window empty of glass and tracery: all that is left of the building; compare *Elegy on Newstead Abbey*, 138: *Thy yawning arch betokens slow decay ...*

60.

Within a niche, nigh to its pinnacle,
 Twelve Saints had once stood sanctified in Stone⁸⁵ –
 But these had fallen – not when the Friars fell, 475
 But in the war which struck Charles from his throne⁸⁶ –
 When each house was a fortalice,⁸⁷ as tell
 The annals of full many a line undone –
 The Gallant Cavaliers⁸⁸ – who fought in vain
 For those who knew not to resign, or reign.⁸⁹ 480

61.

But in a higher niche, alone, but crowned,
 The Virgin Mother of the God-born child,⁹⁰
 With her Son in her blessed arms, looked round,
 Spared by some chance when all beside was spoiled;
 She made the Earth below seem holy ground; 485
 This may be Superstition weak or wild,
 But even the faintest relic of a Shrine
 Of any worship wakes some thoughts divine.⁹¹

85: *Within a niche, nigh to its pinnacle, / Twelve Saints had once stood sanctified in Stone:* there is no such niche: there are six different-sized lancet windows above the large one.

86: *... these had fallen – not when the Friars fell, / But in the war which struck Charles from his throne:* that is, during the English Civil War.

87: *a fortalice:* a small fort; compare *Elegy, 57: An abbey once, a regal fortress now ...* B. exaggerates Newstead Abbey's importance during the Civil War, as he has since his juvenile volumes.

88: *The Gallant Cavaliers:* it was because of their service to the King during the Civil War that the Byrons were ennobled. Sir John Byron, a Royalist general, was created Baron Byron of Rochdale in 1643. He went abroad with Charles II, and his wife, Eleanor, was rumoured by Pepys and others to have been the Merry Monarch's seventeenth mistress. Compare *On Leaving Newstead Abbey*, fifth verse:

*On Marston, with Rupert, 'gainst traitors contending,
 Four brothers enrich'd, with their blood, the bleak field,
 For the rights of a monarch, their country defending,
 Till death their attachment to royalty seal'd.*

89: *For those who knew not to resign, or reign:* with perhaps a glance at George IV, who should have resigned, couldn't reign, and would have had few prepared to fight for him in the unlikely event of a Civil War.

90: *The Virgin Mother of the God-born child:* the crowned Virgin is still to be seen as described here, in a niche above the huge empty window, although she is rather remote and high up in the wall to inspire the emotions portrayed. During the Civil War it seems the Parliamentary muskets had not been able to destroy her, owing to her distance from the ground.

91: *... even the faintest relic of a Shrine / Of any worship wakes some thoughts divine:* compare above, the description of Haidee at III ll.590-2: *Too pure even for the purest human ties; / Her overpowering presence made you feel / It would not be Idolatry to kneel.*

62.

A mighty Window, hollow in the centre,
 Shorn of its Glass of thousand Colourings,⁹² 490
 Through which the deepened Glories once would enter,
 Streaming from off the Sun like Seraph's wings,⁹³
 Now yawns all desolate; now loud, now fainter,
 The Gale sweeps through its fretwork, and oft sings
 The Owl his Anthem where the silenced Quire⁹⁴ 495
 Lie with their Halleluiahs quenched like Fire;

63.

But in the Noontide of the Moon, and when
 The Wind is winged from one point of Heaven,
 There moans a strange unearthly Sound,⁹⁵ which then
 Is musical – a dying accent driven 500
 Through the huge Arch, which soars, and sinks again;
 Some deem it but the distant Echo given
 Back to the Nightwind by the Waterfall,
 And harmonized by the old Choral wall. –

64.

Others, that some original shape or form, 505
 Shaped perchance by Decay, hath given the Power
 (Though less than that of Memnon's Statue, warm
 In Ægypt's rays, to harp at a fixed hour)⁹⁶
 To this gray Ruin with a voice to charm;
 Sad but serene, it sweeps o'er tree or tower; 510
 The Cause I know not, nor can solve, but such
 The fact; I've heard it – once perhaps too much.⁹⁷ –

92: *A mighty Window, hollow in the centre, / Shorn of its Glass of thousand Colourings:* see above, this canto, l.467n.

93: *the deepened Glories once would enter, / Streaming from off the Sun like Seraph's wings:* compare the entry of St Michael at *TVOJ*, ll.218-20:

*A beautiful and mighty thing of light –
 Radiant with glory – like a banner streaming
 Victorious from some World-o'erthrowing fight ...*

94: ... *oft sings / The Owl his Anthem where the silenced Quire / Lie:* compare Shakespeare, Sonnet 73, 4: *Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang ...* and *Elegy on Newstead Abbey*, ll.99-100: *Shrieking their dirge, ill-omen'd birds resort, / To flit their vigils, in the hoary fane.*

95: *a strange unearthly Sound:* E.H.Coleridge (1904, VI 500) maintains that this “may still be heard at rare intervals”. No subsequent editor says so; nor does anyone currently (2007) resident at Newstead.

96: *Memnon's Statue, warm / In Ægypt's rays:* Tacitus (*Annals*, II 61) refers to the statue of Memnon at Thebes, seen by Germanicus, which gave out an eerie noise when the sun's rays touched it. See the darker of the two twin pages at *The Deformed Transformed*, I i 531-2: *He shall be Memnon, from the Ethiop king / Whose statue turns a harper once a day.* Compare also *On Leaving Newstead Abbey*, l.1: *Thro' thy battlements, Newstead, the hollow winds whistle ...*

97: *I've heard it – once perhaps too much:* despite his cryptic erased note, no-one knows to what sound or incident B. is referring here, any more than they do above, at V, ll.287-8, where he makes a similar claim: *It was a moment of that awful kind – / I have seen such – but must not call to Mind.*

65.

Amidst the Court a Gothic fountain played⁹⁸
 Symmetrical, but decked with carvings – quaint
 Strange faces, like to Men in Masquerade; 515
 And here perhaps a Monster, there a Saint;⁹⁹
 The Spring gushed through grim mouths of Granite made,
 And sparkled into basins, where it spent
 Its little torrent in a thousand bubbles
 Like Man’s vain Glory, and his vainer troubles. 520

66.

The Mansion’s Self was vast and venerable,¹⁰⁰
 With more of the Monastic than has been
 Elsewhere preserved; the Cloisters still were stable,
 The Cells too and refectory, I ween;
 An exquisite small Chapel¹⁰¹ had been able, 525
 Still unimpaired, to decorate the scene;
 The rest had been reformed, replaced, or sunk,¹⁰²
 And spoke more of the Baron than the Monk.

67.

Huge walls, long Galleries,¹⁰³ spacious chambers, joined
 By no quite lawful marriage of the Arts, 530
 Might shock a Connoisseur, but when combined,
 Formed a whole which, irregular in parts,
 Yet left a grand impression on the Mind,
 At least of those whose eyes are in their hearts;
 We gaze on a Giant for his Stature, 535
 Nor judge at first if all be true to Nature.

98: *Amidst the Court a Gothic fountain played:* the hexagonal fountain was moved by Major Wildman, who bought Newstead from B., from the courtyard outside to the cloister inside, where it had stood originally. B. incorporates Wildman’s change into the poem.

99: *Strange faces, like to Men in Masquerade; / And here perhaps a Monster, there a Saint:* the fountain is decorated with a double row of gargoyles.

100: *The Mansion’s Self was vast and venerable:* no-one has ever described the real Newstead Abbey as “vast”.

101: *The ... exquisite small Chapel:* it is twenty-four feet square. When B. took the Abbey over it was a hay-barn. He restored it to its original purpose.

102: *The rest had been reformed, replaced, or sunk:* including one room which had been converted by B. into a sunken bath.

103: *long Galleries:* for previous uses of this potent phrase, see above, V, 58, 7, and VI 26, 5; or below, XVI, 17, 2-3. See also *Lara 136-7*, and the setting for *Manfred*, I i.

68.

Steel Barons,¹⁰⁴ molten the next generation
 To silken rows of gay and gartered Earls,
 Glanced from the walls in goodly presentation,
 And Lady Marys blooming into girls 540
 With fair long locks, had also kept their station;
 And Countesses mature in ropes and pearls;¹⁰⁵
 Also some beauties of Sir Peter Lely,¹⁰⁶
 Whose Drapery hints we may admire them freely. –

69.

Judges in very formidable ermine 545
 Were there, with brows that did not much invite
 The accused to think their lordships would determine
 His cause by leaning much from Might to Right;
 Bishops, who had not left a single Sermon;
 Attornies-General awful to the sight, 550
 As hinting more (unless our judgements warp us)
 Of the Star Chamber than of Habeas Corpus.¹⁰⁷

104: *Steel Barons*: not blast-furnace owners, but medieval armoured warriors. Compare *On Leaving Newstead Abbey*, ll.5-6: ... *the mail-cover'd Barons, who proudly to battle, / Led their vassals from Europe to Palestine's plain* ...

105: ... *gartered Earls* ... *Lady Marys* ... *Countesses*: the Byrons of Newstead could boast of few if any such. As he goes from exterior to interior, B. starts idealising or embroidering his old home (and family) more overtly: compare Lara's picture gallery (*Lara* I, 11, opening):

*He turned within his solitary hall,
 And his high shadow shot along the wall;
 There were the painted forms of other times,
 'Twas all they left of virtues or of crimes,
 Save vague tradition; and the gloomy vaults
 That hid their dust, their foibles, and their faults;
 And half a column of the pompous page,
 That speeds the specious tale from age to age;
 Where history's pen its praise or blame supplies,
 And lies like truth, and still most truly lies.*

106: ... *some beauties of Sir Peter Lely*: (1618-80) Lely was a Dutch painter who worked for Charles I, Cromwell, and Charles II. His "Beauties" are collected at Hampton Court. Newstead has four of his portraits, one of a seventeenth-century Lady Byron.

107: *hinting more ... / Of the Star Chamber than of Habeas Corpus*: more of internal police repression than of correct legal procedure. Habeas Corpus, the guarantee against unjust arrest, was suspended when B. wrote this Canto. See *Beppo* l.374 (quoted above, this canto, ll.157-60n) and *TVOJ*, l.568.

70.

Generals, some in armour of the old
 And iron time, ere Lead had ta'en the lead;¹⁰⁸
 Others in wigs of Marlborough's martial fold, 555
 Huger than twelve of our degenerate breed;¹⁰⁹
 Lordlings with staves of white, or keys of Gold;¹¹⁰
 Nimrods, whose canvas scarce contained their steed,¹¹¹
 And here and there some stern high Patriot stood
 Who could not get the place for which he sued.¹¹² 560

71.¹¹³

But ever and anon to soothe your Vision,
 Fatigued with these hereditary glories,
 There rose a Carlo Dolce or a Titian,¹¹⁴
 Or wilder groupe of savage Salvatore's;¹¹⁵
 Here danced Albano's Boys,¹¹⁶ and here the Sea shone 565
 On Vernet's Ocean lights,¹¹⁷ and there the stories
 Of Martyrs awed, as Spagnoletto¹¹⁸ tainted
 His brush with all the blood of all the Sainted.

<* Salvator Rosa; "the wicked necessity of rhyming" obliges me to adapt the name to the verse.>¹¹⁹

108: *ere Lead had ta'en the lead:* before firearms had made armour obsolete.

109: ... *in wigs of Marlborough's martial fold, / Huger than twelve of our degenerate breed:* the Duke of Marlborough beat the French in four sensational battles during the War of the Spanish Succession. No Byrons distinguished themselves in it. B. carefully fails to distinguish between the size of the wig (much bigger in Marlborough's day) and the greatness of the general.

110: *staves of white, or keys of Gold:* emblems respectively of state treasurers and of the Lord Chamberlain. See *TVOJ*, II.425-8:

*They are proud of this – as very well they may –
 It being a sort of knighthood – or gilt key
 Stuck in their loins – or like to an "Entré"
 Up the back stairs, or such Free Masonry ...*

111: *Nimrods, whose canvas scarce contained their steed:* noblemen depicted hunting on horses so large there was scarcely room for them on the canvas.

112: ... *some stern high Patriot ... Who could not get the place for which he sued:* echoes above, this canto, l.168. Lord Henry is following the family tradition.

113: Sts.71 and 72 terminate the "alternative Newstead of the imagination", which B. is creating, with an imaginary catalogue of Old Masters.

114: *Carlo Dolce or a Titian:* Carlo Dolci (sic: 1618-86) Titian (Ticiano Vecelli: 1477-1576). For Titian, see below, XVI, 56, 2.

115: ... *savage Salvatore's:* Salvator Rosa (1617-73) was a verse satirist as well as painter, making many enemies.

116: *Albano's Boys:* Francesco Albani (sic) 1578-1660.

117: *Vernet's Ocean lights:* Joseph Vernet (1712-89) French marine landscape painter.

118: *Spagnoletto:* (1588-1652) was a student of Caravaggio.

119: For the second time in the epic (see above, XII st.70, erased note in rough) B. is tempted to apologise for his rhyming, and to appeal to the example of Gifford to excuse himself: but, for the second time, he refrains.

72.

Here sweetly spread a landscape of Lorraine¹²⁰ –
 There Rembrandt¹²¹ made his Darkness equal Light – 570
 Or gloomy Caravaggio's gloomier Stain
 Bronzed o'er some lean and Stoic Anchorite;¹²²
 But lo! a Teniers woos¹²³ – and not in vain –
 Your eyes to revel in a livelier sight –
 His bell-mouthed Goblet makes me feel quite Danish * 575
 Or Dutch, with thirst – what ho! a flask of Rhenish!

* If I err not – “your Dane” is one of Iago's Catalogue of nations “exquisite in their drinking.”¹²⁴ – –

73.

Oh reader! if that thou can'st read¹²⁵ – and know!
 'Tis not enough to spell, or even to read;
 To constitute a reader there must go
 Virtues of which both you and I have need; 580
 Firstly, Begin with the beginning (though
 That Clause is hard) and, secondly, proceed;
 Thirdly, commence not with the end – or sinning
 In this sort – End at least with the beginning.

120: Claude *Lorraine* (1600-82) French landscape artist, famous for *Et In Arcadia Ego*, the image of Paradise Compromised which idea B. has somewhere at the back of his mind during the writing of this section.

121: *Rembrandt van Rijn* (1606-69).

122: ... *gloomy Caravaggio's gloomier Stain / Bronzed o'er some lean and Stoic Anchorite*: B. probably has in mind the altarpiece *St Matthew and the Angel* of Caravaggio (1565-1609) which he may have seen at Rome early in 1817. See BLJ VIII 240 for B.'s other important reference to this artist.

123: *But lo! a Teniers woos*: there were two Teniers – David the Elder (1582-1649) and his son David the Younger (1610-90) Flemish genre painters.

124: *Danish ... Rhenish*: for the Iago line, see two references to Danes drinking, though not to excess, at *Othello* II iii 71-4. B. is desperate for a rhyme, and not for the first time in this canto (see l.201 and his n) stretches a Shakespearean point to obtain one. *If I err not* is disingenuous, for he had rehearsed the part of Iago in February of the previous year, for an abortive attempt at private theatricals at the Casa Lanfranchi in Pisa.

125: *Oh reader! if that thou can'st read – and know!*: echoes Gray's *Elegy*, 115: “Approach and read (for thou can'st read) ...

74.

But, reader! thou hast patient been of late, 585
 While, I without remorse of rhyme or fear,
 Have built, and laid out ground at such a rate,
 Dan Phoebus takes me for an Auctioneer;
 That poets were so from their earliest date
 By Homer's "Catalogue of Ships"¹²⁶ is clear, 590
 But a mere modern must be moderate –
 I spare you then the Furniture and Plate.

75.

The mellow Autumn came, and with it came
 The promised party; to enjoy its sweets
 The Corn is cut, the Manor full of game, 595
 The pointer ranges, and the Sportsman beats
 In russet Jacket; Lynx-like is his aim,
 Full grows his bag, and wonderful his feats –
 Ah nutbrown Partridges! Ah brilliant Pheasants!
 And ah! ye Poachers – 'tis no sport for Peasants. – 600

76.

The English Autumn, though it hath no vines
 Blushing with Bacchant Coronals, along
 The paths o'er which the far festoon entwines
 The red grape in the sunny lands of Song,¹²⁷
 Hath yet purchased choice of choicest wines – 605
 The Claret light, and the Madeira strong;
 If Britain mourn her bleakness, we can tell her
 The very best of Vineyards is the Cellar.

126: Homer's "Catalogue of Ships": see *Iliad*, II 484-762, where Homer spares no detail from his description of the Greek fleet anchored off Troy. To sell them is only his *poetical* intention, however.

127: *Bacchant Coronals, along / The paths o'er which the far festoon entwines / The red grape in the sunny lands of Song*: compare *Beppo*, ll.324-5:

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

77.

Then, if she hath not that serene decline
 Which makes the Southern Autumn's day appear 610
 As if 'twould to a second Spring resign
 The Season, rather than to Winter drear,
 Of indoor comforts still she hath a mine,
 And Sea-Coal fires,¹²⁸ the earliest of the year;¹²⁹
 Without door, too, she may compete in mellow, 615
 And what is lost in green is gained in yellow. –

78.

And for the effeminate *Villegiatura*,¹³⁰
 Rife with more horns than hounds, She hath the chace,
 So animated that it might allure a
 Saint from his beads to join the jocund race; 620
 Even Nimrod's Self might leave the plains of Dura *
 And wear the Melton jacket¹³¹ for a space;
 If She hath no wild boars – she hath a tame
 Preserve of Bores, who ought to be made Game. –

* In Assyria.¹³² –

128: *Sea-Coal fires, the earliest of the year*: coal mined under the sea in Northumberland. See Mistress Quickly at *Henry IV ii*, II ii 86.

129: Wright has “the earliest of the year” at 614, seeing a quotation from Gray's *Elegy*, rejected stanza:

*Here scatter'd oft, the earliest of the year,
 By hands unseen, are showers of violets found;
 The redbreast loves to build and warble here,
 And little footsteps lightly print the ground.*

Wright then adduces B.'s favourable journal comment on the stanza (see BLJ VIII 50-1). For another echo of the *Elegy*, see above, this canto, 1.577n.

130: *The effeminate Villegiatura*: degenerate country sojourn.

131: *the Melton jacket*: Melton Mowbray in Leicestershire was the headquarters of English hunting. Wright refers to the *Quarterly Review* (xlvii, p.216) for more details.

132: *Even Nimrod's Self might leave the plains of Dura*: B. is bluffing in the interest of his fifth-line rhyme. There is no reference in the Bible to Nimrod the Mighty Hunter (referred to above, this canto, 1.558) either on the plain of Dura or in Assyria. See *Daniel*, 3 1: *Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon*. The second refernce to the *Book of Daniel* in the canto so far: see above, ll.131-2n; except there the reference is apt.

79.

The noble guests assembled at the Abbey¹³³ 625
 Consisted of – we give the Sex the *pas*¹³⁴ –
 The Dutchess of Fitz-Fulke, the Countess Squabbey,¹³⁵
 The Ladies Scilly, Busey, Miss Eclat,
 Miss Bombazeen, Miss Mackstay, Miss O’Tabbey,¹³⁶
 And M^{rs}. Rabbi – the rich Banker’s Squaw¹³⁷ – 630
 Also the honourable Mrs. Sleep,
 Who looked a white lamb, yet was a black Sheep: –

80.

With other Countesses of Blank, but rank,
 At once the “Lie” and the “Elite” of Crowds,¹³⁸
 Who pass, like Water filtered in a tank, 635
 All purged and pious, from their native Clouds;
 Or paper turned to Money by the Bank,
 No matter how or why, the passport shrouds
 The “*passée*” and the past; for good Society
 Is no less famed for tolerance than piety. 640

133: *The noble guests assembled at the Abbey*: the guest-list which now follows is an unscrupulous mixture of those who are identifiable, those who are only provisionally identifiable, and those whose names merely give opportunities for satirical wordplay.

134: *we give the Sex the pas*: we give the ladies first place.

135: *The Dutchess of Fitz-Fulke, the Countess Squabbey*: *Fitz-Fulke* speaks for itself (or herself) although DJV casts in this role the beautiful second Duchess of Devonshire (formerly Elizabeth Foster Cavendish, second wife of the fifth Duke, and lover to his first wife. Rumour reported her to have born the sixth Duke, by the fifth Duke, before the first Duchess – her girlfriend – died). B. rented number 13 Piccadilly Terrace from her, and then failed to pay the rent (see BLJ V 270-1, referred to above, 211-12n). The fact that Juan and Fitz-Fulke engage carnally at the end of Canto XVI might militate against this interpretation. *Squabbey* would imply the capacity to squash a person flat.

136: *Miss O’Tabbey*: would imply a gossipy Irishwoman; see above, IX, 14.

137: *And M^{rs}. Rabbi – the rich Banker’s Squaw*: the evident Jewishness of this lady (which might make her a Rothschild) has not prevented editors from identifying her with Harriet Mellon, actress, and second wife of Thomas Coutts, the famous banker.

138: “*Lie*” and the “*Elite*” of *Crowds*: “Lie” reads “Lee”, thus making an internal rhyme with “ELite” and, with its meaning of “scummy remnant”, forming an antithesis to it.

81.

That is up to a certain point, which point
 Forms the most difficult in punctuation¹³⁹ –
 Appearances appear to form the joint
 On which it hinges in a higher station –
 And so that no Explosion cry “Aroint 645
 “Thee Witch!” or – each Medea to her Jason¹⁴⁰ –
 Or (to the point with Horace and with Pulci)
 “Omne tulit punctum – *quæ* miscuit utile dulci.”¹⁴¹

82.

I can't exactly trace their rule of right,
 Which hath a little leaning to a Lottery; 650
 I've seen a Virtuous woman put down quite
 By the mere combination of a Coterie –
 Also – a So-So Matron boldly fight
 Her way back to the World by dint of plottery,
 And shine the very Siria of the Spheres¹⁴² – 655
 Escaping with a few slight, scarless, sneers.

139: ... up to a certain point, which point / Forms the most difficult in punctuation: a point is a punctuation-mark. In the image, it is hard to know where to draw the line (place the comma or full stop) between society's *piety* and its *tolerance* (ll.639-40 above).

140: “Aroint / Thee Witch!” or – each Medea to her Jason: an uneasy mixture of Shakespeare and Euripides, prompted in part by B.'s desperation for his fifth-line rhyme. *Aroint thee, witch!* is an instruction to a witch to *leave*, either from *Macbeth* (I iii 6) or from *King Lear* (III iv 122: the more precise echo here); see also above, VIII 931. The witch Medea, on the hand, was *left by* her husband Jason, and in revenge killed their children. A husband can therefore rid himself of a wife, and/or a wife can revenge herself on a husband. Divorce was easier for husbands than for wives.

141: (... to the point with Horace and with Pulci) / “Omne tulit punctum – *quæ* miscuit utile dulci”: the line from Horace (*Art of Poetry*, l.343) means “he has gained all votes who has mixed pleasure with profit” (*quæ* should read *qui* – B. changes the gender to underline what he's saying about women). The whole passage translates, *He gets every vote who combines the useful with the pleasant, and who, at the same time he pleases the reader, also instructs him. That book will earn money for the Sosii, this one will cross the sea and extend immeasurably the life of a famous writer.* No-one has succeeded in tracing the Pulci reference, which may be a bluff to facilitate B.'s rhyme. Pulci's *Morgante* (see above, III st.45, B.'s n, and IV l.43) was written for pleasure – to entertain the court of Lorenzo the Magnificent – and gained him social profit, at least.

142: *the very Siria of the Spheres*: Sirius is the Dog-Star; B.'s imagined feminine equivalent would be the Bitch-Star. The second Duchess of Devonshire (see above, l.627n) might be one such *So-So Matron*.

83.

I have seen more than I'll say; but we will see
 How our *Villegiatura*¹⁴³ will get on;
 The party might consist of thirty-three,¹⁴⁴
 Of highest Caste – the Brahmins of the Ton;¹⁴⁵ 660
 I have named a few not foremost in degree –
 But, ta'en at hazard as the rhyme may run,
 By way of sprinkling scattered amongst these,
 There also were some Irish Absentees.¹⁴⁶ –

84.

There was Parolles, too, the legal bully¹⁴⁷ – 665
 Who limits all his battles to the bar
 And Senate, when invited elsewhere, truly
 He shows more appetite for words than war;
 There was the young Bard Rackrhyme, who had nearly
 Come out and glimmered as a six-weeks' Star – 670
 There was Lord Pyrrho too, the great free thinker,¹⁴⁸
 And Sir John Pottledeep, the mighty drinker.

143: *our Villegiatura*: see above, l.617 and n.

144: *The party might consist of thirty-three*: a meaninglessly mystical number.

145: *Of highest Caste – the Brahmins of the Ton*: Brahmins are members of the highest Hindu caste; no-one in England are more high-toned than the Amundeville's guests.

146: *some Irish Absentees*: aristocrats who owned estates in Ireland but never frequented them, merely lived off the rents from them.

147: *Parolles, too, the legal bully*: Parolles (the boastful coward from *All's Well That Ends Well*) is B.'s enemy Henry Brougham; see above, I, rejected sts.190-6, where he is referred to as *the double Bobadil*.

148: *Lord Pyrrho ... the great free thinker*: whoever he stands for, he is named after the Pyrrhonists of Ancient Greece, for whom, see above, IX l.138 and n.

85.

There was the Duke of Dash, who was a – duke –
 “Aye – every inch a” duke¹⁴⁹ – there were twelve peers
 Like Charlemagne’s,¹⁵⁰ and all such peers, in look 675
 And intellect, that neither eyes nor ears,
 For Commoners had never them mistook;¹⁵¹
 There were the six Miss Rawbolds – pretty dears!
 All Songs and Sentiment, whose hearts were set
 Less on a Convent than a Coronet. 680

86.

There were four honourable Misters – whose
 Honour was more before their names than after;
 There was the preux Chevalier de la Ruse,¹⁵²
 Whom France and Fortune lately deigned to waft here,
 Whose chiefly harmless talent was to amuse, 685
 But the Clubs found rather serious laughter,
 Because, such was his magic power to please,
 The Dice seemed charmed too with his repartees. –

87.

There was Dick Dubious the Metaphysician,¹⁵³
 Who loved Philosophy and a good dinner; 690
 Angle, the *soi-disant* Mathematician;
 Sir Henry Silvercup, the great race-winner;
 There was the Reverend Rodomont Precisian,
 Who did not hate so much the Sin as Sinner;¹⁵⁴
 And Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantaganet, 695
 Good at all things – but better at a bet.

149: “Aye – every inch a” duke: echoes Lear’s sarcastic self-description (“Aye, every inch a king”) at IV vi 107.

150: *twelve peers* / *Like Charlemagne’s*: Charlemagne’s twelve paladins occur in most medieval romances about him. They included Roland, or Orlando. See above, X, final line, n, and B.’s translation of Pulci’s *Morgante Maggiore*, 65-6:

*Twelve Paladins had Charles in court, of whom
 The wisest and most famous was Orlando ...*

151: ... *all such peers, in look* / *And intellect, that neither eyes nor ears,* / *For Commoners had never them mistook*: implies that they were so stupid to look at that no-one could be in any doubt as to their social rank.

152: *the preux Chevalier de la Ruse*: “the valiant Knight of Cunning”; by consensus this is Casimir, Comte de Montrond, friend of Talleyrand, who was exiled in London 1812-14, mixed with the nobility, and made much at the gaming tables. See below, XV, 77, 2.

153: *Dick Dubious the Metaphysician*: is the Whig politician and philosopher Sir James Mackintosh.

154: *the Reverend Rodomont Precisian,* / *Who did not hate so much the Sin as Sinner*: his name implies him to be a pompously-spoken and pedantic Pharisee, devoid of charity and humility. Compare TVOJ 1.840 (quoting Massinger’s *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*): “*the Devil turned Precisian*”.

88.

There was Jack Jargon the gigantic Guardsman,¹⁵⁵
 And General Fireface, famous in the field –
 A Great tactician, and no less a swordsman,
 Who ate, last war, more Yankees than he killed;¹⁵⁶ 700
 There was the waggish Welch Judge Jefferies Hardsman,¹⁵⁷
 In his grave office so completely skilled
 That when a Culprit came for condemnation
 He had his Judge's joke for consolation.

89.

Good Company's a Chessboard; there are Kings, 705
 Queens, bishops, knights, rooks, pawns; the World's a Game,
 Save that the Puppets pull at their own strings –
 Methinks gay Punch hath somewhat of the same;
 My Muse, the Butterfly, hath but her wings,
 Not stings, and flits through Ether without aim – 710
 Alighting rarely; were she but a Hornet,
 Perhaps there might be Vices which would mourn it. –

90.

I had forgotten – but must not forget –
 An Orator – the lastest of the Session,¹⁵⁸
 Who had delivered well a very set 715
 Smooth speech, his first and maidenly transgression
 Upon Debate – the papers echoed yet
 With this debût, which made a strong impression –
 And ranked with what is every day displayed –
 “The best first Speech that yet was ever made.” – 720

155: *Jack Jargon the gigantic Guardsman:* Sir James Macdonnell, who with Scots and Coldstream Guards occupied and defended Hougoumont at the Battle of Waterloo. He was of great stature.

156: ... *General Fireface / ... Who ate – last war – more Yankees than he killed:* an old-established joke distinguishing real valour from factitious. Fireface is Sir George Prevost, famous for his inertia during the War of 1812. See Beatrice at *Much Ado About Nothing*, I i 35-7: “How many hath he killed and eaten in these wars? But how many hath he killed? For indeed I promised to eat all of his killing.” Also Smollett, *Roderick Random*, XII: “Bless God, (said Weazel) bless the devil! for what? had he been a highwayman, I should have eat his blood, body and guts, before he had robbed me, or any one in this Diligence.” – “Ha, ha, ha! (cried miss Jenny) I believe you will eat all you kill indeed, captain.”

157: *the waggish Welch Judge Jefferies Hardsman:* his real name was George Hardinge, and he was famous for his flow of witty conversation – not, however, when on the bench.

158: *I had forgotten – but must not forget – / An Orator – the lastest of the Session:* in terms of his successful Westminster debut, but of nothing else, this character is B. himself, having given his own maiden speech (February 27 1812).

91.

Proud of his "Hear him!" – proud too of his vote,
 And lost Virginity of Oratory,
 Proud of his learning (just enough to quote)
 He revelled in his Ciceronian Glory;
 With memory excellent to get by rote, 725
 With wit to hatch a pun, or tell a story,
 Graced with some merit, and with more effrontery,
 "His Country's Pride" he came down to the Country. –

92.

There also were two Wits by acclamation –
 Longbow from Ireland, Strongbow from the Tweed,¹⁵⁹ 730
 Both Lawyers, and both men of education;
 But Strongbow's wit was of more polished breed –
 Longbow was rich in an imagination,
 As beautiful and bounding as a steed,
 But sometimes stumbling over a potato, 735
 While Strongbow's best things might have come from Cato.

159: *two Wits by acclamation – / Longbow from Ireland, Strongbow from the Tweed:* Coleridge says these are the Irish orator John Philpott Curran (Longbow) and the Scots advocate Thomas, Lord Erskine (Strongbow) both brilliant speakers. Curran (1750-1817) spent much energy defending Irish insurgents, opposing the Union, and propagating Catholic claims. Erskine (1750-1823) defended in many political cases in the 1790s, including those of Hardy and Horne Tooke; he also favoured Greek Independence. B. admired both men, Curran more than Erskine. Here he is on both, in *Detached Thoughts* (1821): "**Curran! – Curran's the Man who struck me most – such Imagination! There never was anything like it, that I ever saw or heard of ... I did not see a great deal of Curran – only in 1813 – but I met him at home (for he used to call on me) and in society – at MacIntosh's – Holland House – &c. &c. &c. And he was wonderful even to me – who had seen many remarkable men of the time. – –**" (BLJ IX 20). "**Erskine too! – Erskine – was there – good – but intolerable – he jested – he talked – he did everything admirably but then he would be applauded for the same thing twice over – he would read his own verses – his own paragraph – and tell his own story – again and again – and then 'the trial by Jury!!!' – I almost wished it abolished, for I sate next to him at dinner – – As I had read his published speeches – there was no occasion to repeat them to me.**" (BLJ IX 44). However, in *Byron's Longbow and Strongbow* (SEL 1972) Frederick L Beaty counterasserts Longbow to be Francis Rawdon-Hastings, second Earl of Moira (1754-1826) and Strongbow to be Sir James Mackintosh (see above, this canto, l.689n) who would fit the bill equally well; see below, this canto, l.737-8n.

93.

Strongbow was like a well-tuned Harpsichord,
 But Longbow wild as an Æolian Harp,¹⁶⁰
 With which the Winds of Heaven can claim accord,
 And make a Music, whether flat or sharp ; 740
 Of Strongbow's talk you would not change a word –
 At Longbow's phrases you might sometimes carp –
 Both Wits – one born so, and the other bred,
 This by his heart, his rival by his head.¹⁶¹

94.

If all these seem a heterogeneous mass 745
 To be assembled at a Country Seat,
 Yet think – a specimen of every class
 Is better than a humdrum *tête-à-tête*;
 The days of Comedy are gone Alas!¹⁶²
 When Congreve's fool could vie with Molière's *bête*;¹⁶³ 750
 Society is smoothed to that Excess –
 That Manners hardly differ more than Dress. –

95.

Our ridicules are kept in the background,
 Ridiculous enough, but also dull –
 Professions too are no more to be found 755
 Professional, and there is naught to cull
 Of Folly's fruit, for though your fools abound,
 They're barren, and not worth the pains to pull;
 Society is now one polished horde
 Formed of two mighty tribes, the *Bores* and *Bored*.¹⁶⁴ 760

160: *Strongbow was like a well-tuned Harpsichord, / But Longbow wild as an Æolian Harp*: Frederick L. Beaty (see above, ll.729-30n) takes these lines to indicate the classical eighteenth-century poise of Strongbow-Mackintosh and the fierce romantic naturalness of Longbow-Moira.

161: *This by his heart, his rival by his head*: presumably it is Longbow / Curran who possesses the talent by nature, and Strongbow / Erskine who has had to cultivate it.

162: *The days of Comedy are gone Alas!*: as CPW points out, B. is parodying Burke's lament in *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790): *But the age of chivalry is gone. – That of sophisters, æconomists, and calculators, has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever* (ed. O'Brien, p.170). He had already glanced doubtfully at Burke's words in the Addition to the Preface of *CHP* I and II. The fact of writing *Don Juan* does seem to invalidate his lament.

163: *When Congreve's fool could vie with Moliere's bête*: the characters are Sir Joseph Wittol in Congreve's *The Old Bachelor* (see *EBSR*, B.'s n to L.642) and Monsieur Jourdain in Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*.

164: Compare below, XIV, 18, 6.

96.

But from being Farmers we turn gleaners, gleanings
 The scanty but right-well-threshed ears of Truth –
 And, gentle reader! – when you gather meaning,
 You may be Boaz, and I modest Ruth;¹⁶⁵
 Further I'd quote, but, Scripture intervening 765
 Forbids;¹⁶⁶ a great impression in my Youth
 Was made by M^{rs}. Adams, where she cries
 "That Scriptures out of Church are Blasphemies." *

* Note – M^{rs}. Adams answered that "it was blasphemous to quote Scripture out of Church." – This dogma was broached to her husband. the best Christian in any book. – See Joseph Andrews in the latter Chapters.¹⁶⁷ –

97.

But what we can, we glean in this vile age
 Of Chaff, although our gleanings be not grist; 770
 I must not quite omit the talking Sage
 Kit-Cat, the famous Conversationist,¹⁶⁸
 Who in his common place-book had a page
 Prepared each morn for Evening's "List! Oh list!" –
 "Alas! poor Ghost!"¹⁶⁹ what unexpected woes 775
 Await those who have studied their *Bon mots!*¹⁷⁰

165: *gentle reader! – when you gather meaning, / You may be Boaz, and I modest Ruth:* this parallel makes B. female and the reader – irrespective of true gender – male. It also makes the reader *a mighty man of wealth* (Ruth, 2, 1) and B., contrary to the evidence, one well-disposed towards his mother-in-law; however, it also makes B. the writer into one who gleanes, and the reader into the owner of the field – which seems illogical, unless B. gleanes cash from our pockets in selling us *Don Juan*.

166: *Further I'd quote, but, Scripture intervening / Forbids:* Ruth enters the barn of Boaz by night, "uncovers his feet", and lays down with him; subsequently he goes in unto her, and she bears a son, which her mother-in-law Naomi nurses. Either B. is offering a sexual metaphor for his relationship with his readers of both sexes; or he gives up because the *Book of Ruth* will no longer support the analogy he wants – which never made sense anyway.

167: ... M^{rs}. Adams, where she cries / "That Scriptures out of Church are Blasphemies": see Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, IV 11: *Adams bid his wife prepare some food for their dinner; she said, "truly, she could not, she had something else to do." Adams rebuked her for disputing his commands, and quoted many texts of scripture to prove, that the husband is the head of the wife, and she is to submit and obey. The wife answered, "it was blasphemy to talk scripture out of church; that such things were very proper to be said in the pulpit; but that it was prophane to talk them in common discourse"*.

168: *the talking Sage / Kit-Cat, the famous Conversationist:* B. refers to Richard "Conversation" Sharp, Whig friend of, among others, Samuel Rogers, Thomas Moore, John Horne Tooke and John Adams; well-known in London society, he is described non-committally at BLJ VIII 19 as "**a very clever man.**" He also saw B. and Hobhouse at Geneva in 1816, and had given them a good route for touring the Alps, which, however, they did not take (BLJ 5 205). He was a prominent Whig, as indicated by his *nom de voyage* here, for the Kit-Cat Club was a London Whig club of the early eighteenth century whose members included Steele, Addison, Congreve, Vanburgh, and Walpole.

169: "List! Oh list!" – / "Alas! poor Ghost!": the words of the Ghost to Hamlet, and then the previous words of Hamlet to the Ghost, at I v, 22 and 4; the lines imply such conversationalists as Kit-Cat, Longbow and Strongbow to be unreal, and their offerings deadly.

170: *what unexpected woes / Await those who have studied their Bon mots!*: two extracts from Hobhouse's Geneva diary show how seriously wit was cultivated. On September 12 1816 he records, *She* [Madame de Staël] *said that she recognized several of her own phrases in Adolphe, where they were quite out of place – animation in dull heavy matter. “Glow worms on dead leaves, or dirty paths,” I might have said, “showing the parts of the surrounding soil”.* Next, on October 3, he records recollecting his previous thought, translating it into French, and giving it voice at last: *I told Madame de Staël that her phrases in Adolphe were “comme les vers luisans sur des feuilles mortes: dont la lumiere ne sert qu’a montrer la secheresse des alentours”.* *She turned to Bonstetten – “Charmant, n’est-ce pas?” – she was in high good humour.*

98.

Firstly, they must allure the Conversation,
 By many windings, to their clever clinch;
 And secondly, must let slip no occasion,
 Nor bate (abate) their hearers of an *inch* – 780
 But take an *Ell*,¹⁷¹ and make a great sensation,
 If possible; and thirdly, never flinch
 When some smart talker puts them to the test,
 But seize the last word, which no doubt's the best.¹⁷²

99.

Lord Henry and his Lady were the hosts, 785
 The party we have touched on were the guests;
 Their table was a board to tempt even Ghosts
 To pass the Styx for more substantial feasts;¹⁷³
 I will not dwell upon Ragouts¹⁷⁴ or Roasts,
 Albeit all human history attests 790
 That Happiness for Man, the hungry Sinner,
 Since Eve ate Apples, much depends on dinner.

171: *an Ell*: a unit of measurement. An English ell was 45 inches; a Scots, 37.2.

172: Compare Hope's Anastasius, at a Sicilian house-party: *I always bowed to necessity: but of the acquaintance I found I had little chance with men who all fancied to have rehearsed their parts before. Accordingly I hardly opened my lips: but Silva [his host], who fancied he had shone, returned home in raptures with his day. "Had you sufficient quickness," cried he, – "barbarian as you are – to observe the incessant circulation of the most ethereal wit? How at first a few light sparks began to flash at random from different points of the electric circle; each in turn eliciting fresh scintillations from the opposite quarter, until at last the whole table fired up into one single interrupted blaze of the most brilliant eloquence, repartee, and bon-mot. What preparation, what vigilance, what readiness such conversation requires! What triumphs and what mortifications it causes! – Depend upon it, the repose of half the party has been disturbed for a fortnight, by the good things the other half said this evening (Anastasius III, 376).*

173: ... *to tempt even Ghosts / To pass the Styx for more substantial feasts*: implies that one dines relatively well in the afterlife.

174: *I will not dwell upon Ragouts*: B. seems to have associated the French dish with transgression. Compare *Beppo*, ll.68 ... 70: *And you ... would rather dine in sin on a ragout.* in Thomas Shadwell's *The Libertine* – an adaptation of Tirso de Molina's Don Juan play – the protagonist, threatened by the statue of the man he killed, and about to be dragged off to hell, says calmly *Here's excellent meat, taste of this ragout.* The line – which occurs in the Spanish original, too – is quoted by Coleridge in Chapter XXIII of *Biographia Literaria*, to which B. alludes slightly above, at Dedication ll.13-16. See also *The Devil's Drive* (1813) l.3, where Satan *dined on some homicides done in Ragoût*; above, V ll.251-2, below, XV ll.494-6, and Burns, *To a Haggis*, l.25.

100.

Witness the lands which “flowed with Milk and Honey”¹⁷⁵
 Held out unto the hungry Israelites;
 To this we have added since the love of Money, 795
 The only sort of pleasure which requites;¹⁷⁶
 Youth fades and leaves our days no longer sunny –
 We tire of Mistresses and Parasites –
 But! Oh Ambrosial Cash! – Ah! who would lose thee?
 When we no more can use, or even abuse thee? 800

101.¹⁷⁷

The Gentlemen got up betimes to shoot
 Or hunt, the young because they liked the sport –
 The first thing boys like after play and fruit;
 The middle aged – to make the day more short,
 For *Ennui* is a growth of English root¹⁷⁸ – 805
 Though nameless in our language, we retort
 The fact for words, and let the French translate
 That awful yawn, which Sleep cannot abate.

175: ... the lands which “flowed with Milk and Honey”: Exodus 3, 8: *a good land and a large, a land flowing with milk and honey*; or Leviticus 20, 24: *a land that floweth with milk and honey*.

176: the love of Money, / The only sort of pleasure which requites: in what way it requites is made clear, as CPW points out, at I Timothy 6, 10: *the love of money is the root of all evil*. See, however, above, XII ll.27 ... 29: *But Making Money, slowly first, then quicker ... beats love or liquor ...*

177: In this final section there are several echoes of *Paradise Lost*, II ll.521-628, in which the devils, just arrived in Hell, try to make the best of their new existence. For sts.101-2, compare *Paradise Lost*, II ll.521-32:

*Thence more at ease thir minds and somewhat rais'd
 By false presumptuous hope, the ranged Powers
 Disband, and wandring, each his several way
 Persues, as inclination or sad choice
 Leads him perplex, where he may likeliest find
 Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain
 The irksom hours, till his great Chief return.
 Part on the Plain, or in the Air sublime
 Upon the wing, or in swift race contend,
 As at th'Olympian Games or Pythian fields;
 Part curb thir fierie Steeds, or shun the Goal
 With rapid wheels, or fronted Brigads form.*

178: *Ennui is a growth of English root*: at the time he was writing this canto, B. was in the company of Lord and Lady Blessington and their “companion” Count d’Orsay, whose journal he read. Of it he wrote to Blessington: “**The most singular thing is – how he should have penetrated not the fact – but the mystery of the English Ennui at two and twenty**” (BLJ X 139).

102.

The Elderly, walked through the Library,
 And tumbled books, or criticized the pictures, 810
 Or sauntered through the Gardens piteously,
 And made upon the hothouse certain strictures –
 Or rode a nag which trotted not too high –
 Or on the Morning papers made their lectures –
 Or on the watch their longing eyes would fix, 815
 Longing at sixty for the hour of Six. –

103.

But none were “*gêné*,”¹⁷⁹ the great hour of Union
 Was rung by Dinner’s knell;¹⁸⁰ till then all were
 Masters of their own time,¹⁸¹ or in communion 820
 Or solitary, as they chose to bear
 The hours, which how to pass is but to few known;
 Each up rose at his own, and had to spare
 That time he chose for dress – and broke his fast
 When – where – and how he chose for that repast. –

104.

The ladies – some rouged, some a little pale – 825
 Met the Morn as they might; if fine, they rode,
 Or walked; if foul, they read, or told a tale,
 Sung, or rehearsed the last dance from abroad;
 Discussed the fashion which might next prevail,
 And settled bonnets by the newest Code, 830
 Or crammed twelve sheets into one little letter,
 To make each Correspondent a new debtor.

179: none were “*gêné*”: no-one was forced to do anything.

180: *Dinner’s knell*: should be *bell*; but B. wishes to imply dinner, in theory the most sociable part of the day, to be its death.

181: *Masters of their own time*: see Macbeth’s command to his new court, on the morning before he murders Banquo, who then “attends” his dinner (III I, 40-1):

*Let every man be master of his time
 Till seven at night; to make society
 The sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself
 Till supper-time alone.*

105.

For some had absent lovers, all had friends;
 The Earth has nothing like a She-epistle,¹⁸²
 And hardly Heaven, because it never ends; – 835
 I love the mystery of a female Missal,
 Which like a Creed, ne'er says all it intends,
 But full of wisdom like Ulysses' whistle,
 When he allured poor Dolon;¹⁸³ you had better
 Take care what you reply to such a letter. – 840

106.

Then there were billiards, cards too, but *no* dice;
 Save in the Clubs, no man of honour plays;
 Boats when 'twas water, skating when 'twas ice,
 And the hard frost destroyed the scenting days;
 And Angling too, that solitary Vice – 845
 Whatever Isaac Walton sings or says¹⁸⁴ –
 The Quaint, old, cruel Coxcomb in his gullet *
 Should have a hook, and small trout to pull it.

* It would have taught him humility at least. This sentimental savage, whom it is a mode to quote (amongst the novelists) to show their sympathy for innocent sports and old songs, teaches how to sow up frog's mouths and break their legs by way of experiment, besides the Art of Angling, the cruellest, the coldest, and the stupidest of pretended sports. They may talk about the beauties of Nature, but the Angler merely thinks of his dish of fish. He has no leisure to take his eyes from off the stream, and a single bite is worth to him more than all the Scenery around. Besides, some fish bite best on a rainy day. The Whale, the Shark, and the Tunny fishery have somewhat of noble and perilous in them – even Net-fishing – trawling &^c. – but Angling! No Angler can be a good man. – One of the best men I ever knew, as humane, delicate-minded, generous, and excellent a creature as any in the world, was an angler: true, he angled with painted flies, and would have been incapable of the extravagances of Isaac Walton.¹⁸⁵

182: *The Earth has nothing like a She-epistle:* DJV refers us to “George Paston,” (Emily M. Symonds) and Peter Quennell, *To Lord Byron: Feminine Profiles, based upon a Collection of Unpublished Letters 1807-1824* (John Murray 1939) as evidence of the number and quality of letters B. received from women.

183: *Ulysses' whistle, / When he allured poor Dolon:* see *Iliad* X 313 *et seq.*, in which Dolon, a Trojan volunteer, is terrified by Odysseus and Diomedes into giving away the identities of all the newly-arrived Thracians sleeping on the Trojan plain. He is killed by the two Greeks, and so are the Thracians. No “whistle” is referred to at this point (B. is desperate for a rhyme): but Dolon, like a man obediently answering a woman's letter (the point at issue here) walks right into the trap. The whistle occurs at X 1.502, when Odysseus signals to Diomedes to rejoin him, having rounded up the horses of the men he has slain.

184: *Whatever Isaac Walton sings or says:* Isaak Walton, *The Compleat Angler, or The Contemplative Man's Recreation* (1653, final version 1676) includes verse as well as prose.

185: *The Whale, the Shark, and the Tunny fishery have somewhat of noble and perilous in them:* it was in 1821, two years before this canto was written, that a great white whale in the South Pacific had demonstrated how perilous whaling was, by ramming a whaler and sinking her. But there is no evidence that B. knew the story, of which Herman Melville was to make use in *Moby-Dick* (1851). *TVOJ*, ll.15-16,

*Splitting some planet with its playful tail –
 As boats are sometimes by a wanton Whale.*

107.¹⁸⁶

With Evening came the banquet and the wine,
 The *Conversazione*, the duet, 850
 Attuned by voices more or less divine,
 (My heart or head aches with the memory yet);
 The four Miss Rawbolds in a glee would shine,
 But the two youngest loved more to be set
 Down to the Harp, because to Music's charms 855
 They added graceful necks, white hands, and arms. –

108.

Sometimes a daunce (though rarely on field days –
 For then the Gentlemen were rather tired)¹⁸⁷
 Displayed such sylphlike figures in its maze;
 Then there was small talk ready when required – 860
 Flirtation – but decorous – the mere praise
 Of charms that should or should not be admired;
 The Hunters fought their fox-hunt o'er again,
 And then retreated soberly at ten. –

has as its source Sir John Dalryell's *Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea*.

186: For st.107, compare *Paradise Lost*, II ll.546-55:

*Others more mild,
 Retreated in a silent valley, sing
 With notes Angelical to many a Harp
 Thir own Heroic deeds and hapless Fall
 By doom of Battel; and complain that Fate
 Free Vertue should entrall to Force or Chance.
 Thir Song was partial, but the harmony
 (What could it less when Spirits immortal sing?)
 Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment
 The thronging audience.*

187: *Sometimes a daunce (though rarely on field days – / For then the Gentlemen were rather tired):* see B.'s letter to Blessington (quoted in part above, l.805n): **“But he ought also to have been in the country during the hunting season with “a select party of distinguished guests” as the papers term it. – – He ought to have seen the Gentlemen after dinner – (on the hunting days) and the soirèe ensuing thereupon – and the women looking as if they have had [sic] hunted – or rather been hunted – too”** (BLJ X 139).

109.

The politicians, in a nook apart, 865
 Discussed the World, and settled all the Spheres;¹⁸⁸
 The Wits watched every loophole for their Art
 To introduce a *bon mot* head and ears;
 Small is the rest of those who would be smart –
 A moment's good thing may have cost them years 870
 Before they find an hour to introduce it,
 And then, e'en *then*, some Bore may make them lose it. –

110.

But all was gentle and Aristocratic
 In this our party, polished, smooth, and cold
 As Phidian forms cut out of marble Attic;¹⁸⁹ 875
 There are now no Squire Westerns as of old,
 And our Sophias are not so emphatic,
 But fair as then – or fairer to behold;
 We have no accomplished blackguards like Tom Jones,¹⁹⁰
 But Gentlemen in stays as stiff as stones. – 880

111.

They separated at an early hour,
 That is, ere Midnight – which is London's noon –
 But in the Country, ladies seek their bower
 A little earlier than the waning Moon –
 Peace to the Slumbers of each folded flower! – 885
 May the Rose call back its true colours soon;
 Good hours of fair cheeks are the fairest tinters,
 And lower the price of Rouge, at least some winters. –

/

/NB/ February 19th 1823.

/

188: *The politicians, in a nook apart, / Discussed the World, and settled all the Spheres:* recalls the philosophical debates in Hell at *Paradise Lost* II ll.555-61:

*In discourse more sweet
 (For Eloquence the Soul, Song charms the Sense,)
 Others apart sat on a Hill retir'd,
 In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high
 Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and Fate,
 Fixt Fate, free Will, Foreknowledge absolute,
 And found no end, in wandring mazes lost.*

189: *Phidian forms cut out of marble Attic:* Phidias (fifth century BC) in charge of public works at Athens under Pericles, supervised the building of the Parthenon, and is said personally to have carved the gold and ivory statue of Pallas Athene within it.

190: *There are now no Squire Westerns ... Sophias ... Tom Jones:* B. contrasts the artifice of his own age with the nostalgically-viewed simplicity and squalor of Fielding's day.