



He returned to the theme at some time early in August 1821, and, while writing *Cain*, wrote *The Blues*. He sent it to Murray with a characteristic warning:

Dear Sir / – I send you a thing – which I scratched off lately – a mere buffoonery – to quiz “The Blues” in two literary eclogues. – If published it must be *anonymously* – but it is too short for a separate publication – and *you* have no miscellany that I know of – for the reception of such things. – You may send me a proof if you think it worth the trouble – but don’t let *my* name out – for the present – or I shall have all the old women in London about my ears – since it sneers at the solace of their antient Spinsterstry. – Acknowledge this – & the various packets lately sent – yrs [Scrawl]<sup>1</sup>

Less than two months later he dispatched an equally characteristic self-contradiction:

You need not send “the Blues” which is a mere buffoonery not intended for publication ...<sup>2</sup>

If he hadn’t intended it for publication, why had he sent it? By now Murray must have seen his game – send the work, then deny wanting it published, so that if and when it was published, he could deny all responsibility, and Murray would get all the blame. In the face of this attitude from his author, Murray may be forgiven for having done nothing with the text at all. However, in 1822 he had to hand over all his unpublished Byron manuscripts to John Hunt, a publisher less fearful of offending people, but also less familiar with Byron’s wily ways. Byron affected caution over *The Blues* with this his new publisher, too:

I should think that ye. Pulci translation had better be preferred for the immediate number, as *The Blues* will only tend further to indispose a portion of your readers ...<sup>3</sup>

You will probably have to regret publishing “The Blues” which will merely beget more enemies to the Journal.<sup>4</sup>

Hunt placed *The Blues* in the third number of *The Liberal*, on pp.1-21. In the absence of any manuscripts or proofs, this remains the only text. What *The Vision of Judgement* was to *The Liberal* N<sup>o</sup> 1, and *Heaven and Earth* was to *The Liberal* N<sup>o</sup> 2, *The Blues* is to *The Liberal* N<sup>o</sup> 3 (their equivalent in N<sup>o</sup> 4 is the *Morgante Maggiore*). *The Blues* received no reviews, and, being anonymous, it may be guessed that few if any readers realised that it was by Byron. Byron either did not realise, or was unable to face the fact that, his new readership, and the old sort of readership he is satirising in *The Blues*, overlapped hardly at all.

*The Blues* is one of Byron’s most neglected texts. I find no published essays or papers on it anywhere. Yet it shows – what none of his other plays do – a good farcical touch (though less expert than that shown in Sheridan’s *The Critic*, of which it is a descendant), and an ease in handling shared pentameters which Byron seldom shows elsewhere:

LADY BLUEBOTTLE: Never mind our friend Inkel; we all know, my dear,

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1: BLJ VIII 172 (letter of August 7th 1821).

2: BLJ VIII 216 (letter of September 20th 1821).

3: BLJ X 122 (letter of March 17th 1823).

4: BLJ X 151; April 14th 1823).

'Tis his way.  
 SIR RICHARD: But this place –  
 INKEL: Is perhaps like friend Scamp's,  
 A lecturer's.  
 LADY BLUEBOTTLE: Excuse me – 'tis one in "the Stamps:"  
 He is made a Collector.  
 TRACY: Collector!  
 SIR RICHARD: How?  
 MISS LILAC: What? 60  
 INKEL: I shall think of him oft when I buy a new hat;  
 There his works will appear –  
 LADY BLUEMOUNT: Sir, they reach to the Ganges.  
 INKEL: I shan't go so far – I can have them at Grange's.

That it is sexist we cannot deny: whether female society "intellectuals" were as stupid and hysterical as this in the Regency, or whether distance had by 1821 lent still more disenchantment to Byron's view of them, is a matter that needs research.

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The first known performance of *The Blues* was in the Riverside Carvery, Nottinghamshire County Hall, on Friday May 11th 2007, after a dinner given by the Newstead Byron Society for the Irish Byron Society and for assorted guests from Russia, Poland, Italy, the Czech Republic, and Germany. The cast was

Inkel	Bernard Beatty
Tracy	Allan Gregory
Lady Bluebottle	Shona Allen
Sir Richard Bluebottle	Pat McCormack
Botherby	David Green
Scamp	Keri Davies
Lady Bluemount	Georgina Lock
Miss Lilac	Cristina Ceron
Miss Mazarine	Mirka Horova

The unrehearsed event had been partly directed through e-mails by Peter Cochran, whose stage-directions (placed in the actors' texts to assist the instant acting), are found in red in the text below.

The following Stanislavsky-style notes may be found helpful:

Inkel's superobjective is to get out of all this, but the barrier to realising his superobjective is that he has nowhere else to go.

Tracy's superobjective is to get into bed with Miss Lilac, and his immediate objective is to persuade Inkel to write him the poem which he thinks will enable him to do so.

Lady Bluebottle's superobjective is to take all her clothes off in public, but the barrier to realising her superobjective is that she knows that she will never have the nerve to do so; thus everything she says and does is displacement-activity.

Botherby's superobjective is to go to bed with every woman in the room; but the barrier to realising his superobjective is that he knows that if his superobjective is attained he will never be received in polite society again. Thus everything he says and does is displacement-activity as well.

**THE BLUES,  
A LITERARY ECLOGUE.**

“*Nimium ne crede colori*” -VIRGIL.<sup>5</sup>

O trust not, ye beautiful creatures, to hue,  
Though your *hair* were as *red* as your *stockings* are *blue*.

**ECLOGUE FIRST.**

LONDON. *Before the Door of a Lecture Room.*

*(A dinner-table prepared, two chairs before it, six behind it, one at each end)  
(Applause and female sighs off.)*

*Enter TRACY<sup>6</sup> (DSOP), meeting INKEL,<sup>7</sup> (who is sitting in front of the table.)*

INKEL:           You're too late.  
TRACY:                           Is it over?<sup>8</sup>  
INKEL:                           Nor will be this hour.  
                  But the benches are crammed, like a garden in flower,  
                  With the pride of our Belles, who have made it the fashion;  
                  So instead of “beaux arts,” we may say “la *belle* passion”  
                  For learning, which lately has taken the lead in                           5  
                  The world, and set all the fine gentlemen reading.  
TRACY:           I know it too well, and have worn out my patience  
                  With studying to study your new publications.  
                  There's Vamp,<sup>9</sup> Scamp, and Mouthey,<sup>10</sup> and Wordswords<sup>11</sup> and Co.  
                  With their damnable –  
INKEL:           *(ironically:)*           Hold, my good friend, do you know           10  
                  Whom you speak to?  
TRACY:           *(takes him seriously:)* Right well, boy, and so does “the Row.”<sup>12</sup>  
                  You're an author – a poet –  
INKEL:                           And think you that I  
                  Can stand tamely in silence, to hear you decry  
                  The Muses?  
TRACY:                           Excuse me; I meant no offence  
                  To the Nine; though the number who make some pretence           15  
                  To their favours is such – but the subject to drop,  
                  I am just piping hot from a publisher's shop  
*(aside to audience):* (Next door to the pastry-cook's; so that when I  
                  Cannot find the new volume I wanted to buy  
                  On the bibliopole's shelves, it is only two paces,                           20  
                  As one finds every author in one of those places)<sup>13</sup>  
*(to Inkel):*           Where I just had been skimming a charming critique,  
                  So studded with wit, and so sprinkled with Greek!

**5:** Eclogue II, 17. The whole line goes, “o formose puer, nimium ne crede colori” – “O lovely boy, trust not too much to your bloom!”

**6:** Tracy is normally seen as Thomas Moore; but he doesn't write poetry (see l.89).

**7:** Inkel is a version of Byron.

**8:** He refers to a lecture being given inside by Scamp, who is either S.T.Coleridge, or William Hazlitt, or both.

**9:** Vamp unidentified; the name is from Peacock's *Melincourt*.

**10:** Mouthey is Robert Southey: see *Don Juan* I, 205, 4.

**11:** Wordswords (see *Hamlet* II ii 191), is William Wordsworth.

**12:** The “Row” is Paternoster Row, where many publishers had their offices.

**13:** The fate of unsold books was, according to the myth, to furnish either wrapping for pies, stuffing for hat-boxes, or toilet paper.

Where your friend – you know who – has just got such a threshing  
That it is, as the phrase goes, extremely “*refreshing*”.<sup>14</sup> 25  
What a beautiful word! (*sits and sighs, thinking of Miss Lilac*)

INKEL: Very true; ’tis so soft  
And so cooling – they use it a little too oft;  
And the papers have got it at last – but no matter.  
So they’ve cut up our friend then?<sup>15</sup>

TRACY: Not left him a tatter –  
Not a rag of his present or past reputation, 30  
Which they call a disgrace to the age and the nation.

INKEL: I’m sorry to hear this; for friendship, you know –  
Our poor friend! – but I thought it would terminate so.  
Our friendship is such, I’ll read nothing to shock it.  
You don’t happen to have the Review in your pocket? 35

TRACY: No; I left a round dozen of authors and others  
(Very sorry, no doubt, since the cause is a brother’s)  
All scrambling and jostling, like so many imps,  
And on fire with impatience to get the next glimpse.

INKEL: Let us join them. (*gets up and moves to go*)

TRACY: (*stays seated*) What, won’t you return to the lecture? 40

INKEL (*turns:*) Why, the place is so crammed, there’s not room for a spectre.  
Besides, our friend Scamp is to-day so absurd –

TRACY: How can you know that till you hear him?

INKEL: I heard  
Quite enough; and to tell you the truth, my retreat  
Was from his vile nonsense, no less than the heat. 45

TRACY: I have had no great loss then?

INKEL: Loss! – such a palaver! (*sits again*)  
I’d inoculate sooner my wife with the slaver  
Of a dog when gone rabid, than listen two hours  
To the torrent of trash which around him he pours,  
Pumped up with such effort, disgorged with such labour, 50  
That – come – do not make me speak ill of one’s neighbour.

TRACY: I make you!

INKEL: Yes, you! I said nothing until  
You compelled me, by speaking the truth –

TRACY: *To speak ill?*  
Is that your deduction?

INKEL: When speaking of Scamp ill,  
I certainly *follow, not set* an example. 55  
The fellow’s a fool, an imposter, a zany.

TRACY: And the crowd of to-day shows that one fool makes many.  
But we two will be wise.

INKEL: Pray, then, let us retire.

TRACY: I would, but – (*looks coy*)

INKEL: There must be attraction much higher  
Than Scamp, or the Jew’s-harp he nicknames his lyre,<sup>16</sup> 60  
To call you to this hot-bed.

TRACY (*smirks:*) I own it – ’tis true –  
A fair lady –

14: Compare *Don Juan* VIII, 90, 1-4: *one good action in the midst of Crimes / Is “quite refreshing,” in the affected phrase / Of these ambrosial, Pharisaic times, / With all their pretty milk and water ways ...*

15: The text does not identify the “friend” who has been “cut up”.

16: B. was in reality an admirer of Coleridge’s verse, if not of his prose.

INKEL: A spinster?  
 TRACY: Miss Lilac!<sup>17</sup>  
 INKEL: The Blue!  
 The heiress?  
 TRACY: The angel!  
 INKEL: The devil! why, man!  
 Pray, get out of this hobble as fast as you can.  
 You wed with Miss Lilac! 'twould be your perdition: 65  
 She's a poet, a chemist, a mathematician.  
 TRACY: I say she's an angel.  
 INKEL: Say rather an *angle*.  
 If you and she marry, you'll certainly wrangle.  
 I say she's a Blue, man, as blue as the ether.  
 TRACY: And is that any cause for not coming together? 70  
 INKEL: Humph! I can't say I know any happy alliance  
 Which has lately sprung up from a wedlock with science.  
 She's so learned in all things, and fond of concerning  
 Herself in all matters connected with learning,  
 That –  
 TRACY: What?  
 INKEL: I perhaps may as well hold my tongue; 75  
 But there's five hundred people can tell you you're wrong.  
 TRACY: You forget Lady Lilac's<sup>18</sup> as rich as a Jew.  
 INKEL: Is it Miss, or the cash of mamma, you pursue?  
 TRACY: Why, Jack,<sup>19</sup> I'll be frank with you – something of both.  
 The girl's a fine girl.  
 INKEL: And you feel nothing loth 80  
 To her good lady mother's reversion;<sup>20</sup> and yet  
 Her life is as good as your own, I will bet.  
 TRACY: Let her live, and, as long as she likes; I demand  
 Nothing more than the heart of her daughter and hand.  
 INKEL: Why, that heart's in the inkstand – that hand on the pen. 85  
 TRACY: *(moves chair forward; confidentially):*  
 Apropos – Will you write me a song now and then?  
 INKEL: To what purpose?  
 TRACY: You know, my dear friend, that in prose  
 My talent is decent, as far as it goes;  
 But in rhyme –<sup>21</sup>  
 INKEL: You're a terrible stick, to be sure.  
 TRACY: I own it; and yet, in these times, there's no lure 90  
 For the heart of the fair like a stanza or two;  
 And so, as I can't, will you furnish a few?  
 INKEL: In your name?  
 TRACY: In my name. I will copy them out,  
 To slip into her hand at the very next rout.  
 INKEL: Are you so far advanced as to hazard this?  
 TRACY: Why, 95  
 Do you think me subdued by a Blue-stockings' eye,  
 So far as to tremble to tell her in rhyme

17: Miss Lilac is a version of Annabella Milbanke, Lady Byron.

18: Lady Lilac (who doesn't appear in the play) is B.'s mother-in-law Lady Noel, whom he detested.

19: The only time Inkel's Christian name is used.

20: *reversion* – legacy.

21: Tracy (unlike the hyper-fluent Moore), does not write poetry.

- What I've told her in prose, at the least, as sublime?
- INKEL (*stands, angry at the implication that he writes "sublime" poetry*):  
As sublime! If it be so, no need of my Muse.
- TRACY: But consider, dear Inkel, she's one of the "Blues." 100
- INKEL: As sublime! – Mr. Tracy – I've nothing to say.  
Stick to prose – As sublime!! – but I wish you good day. (*makes to go*)
- TRACY (*stands, apologetic*): Nay, stay, my dear fellow – consider – I'm wrong;  
I own it; but, prithee, compose me the song.
- INKEL: As sublime!!
- TRACY: I but used the expression in haste. 105
- INKEL: That may be, Mr. Tracy, but shows damned bad taste.
- TRACY: I own it – I know it – acknowledge it – what  
Can I say to you more?
- INKEL: I see what you'd be at:  
You disparage my parts with insidious abuse,  
Till you think you can turn them best to your own use. 110
- TRACY: And is that not a sign I respect them?
- INKEL: Why that  
To be sure makes a difference.
- TRACY: I know what is what:  
And you, who're a man of the gay world, no less  
Than a poet of t'other, may easily guess  
That I never could mean, by a word, to offend 115  
A genius like you, and moreover my friend.<sup>22</sup>
- INKEL: No doubt; you by this time should know what is due  
To a man of – but come – let us shake hands. (*they shake hands*)
- TRACY: You knew,  
And you *know*, my dear fellow, how heartily I,  
Whatever you publish, am ready to buy. 120
- INKEL: That's my bookseller's business; I care not for sale;  
Indeed the best poems at first rather fail. (*sits again*)  
There were Renegade's epics,<sup>23</sup> and Botherby's plays,<sup>24</sup>  
And my own grand romance –
- TRACY: (*sits too*) Had its full share of praise.  
I myself saw it puffed in the "Old Girl's Review."<sup>25</sup> 125
- INKEL: What Review?
- TRACY: 'Tis the English "Journal de Trévoux;"<sup>26</sup>  
A clerical work of our Jesuits at home.  
Have you never yet seen it?
- INKEL: That pleasure's to come.
- TRACY: Make haste then.
- INKEL: Why so?
- TRACY: I have heard people say,  
That it threatened to give up the *ghost* t'other day. 130
- INKEL: Well, that is a sign of same *spirit*.
- TRACY: No doubt.  
Shall you be at the Countess of Fiddlecome's<sup>27</sup> rout?
- INKEL: I've a card, and shall go; but at present, as soon

22: Echoes Dangle's recurrent "... though he is my friend" from Act I of Sheridan's *The Critic*.

23: *Renegade's epics*: Southey's long poems: *Thalaba*, *Madoc*, *Kehama*, *Roderick* and so on.

24: *Botherby's plays*: the tragedies of William Sotheby: *Death of Darnley*, *Ivan*, *Orestes*.

25: *The Old Girl's Review*: *The British Critic*. See *Don Juan* I, 209, 8, where it's called *My Grandmother's Review*.

26: *The Journal de Trévoux* ran from 1701 to 1767 and was the most influential French literary periodical.

27: *The Countess of Fiddlecombe*: unidentified. Her name is indecent: compare *Beppo*, 31, 2.

As friend Scamp shall be pleased to step down from the moon  
 (Where he seems to be soaring in search of his wits) 135  
 And an interval grants from his lecturing fits,  
 I'm engaged to the Lady Bluebottle's<sup>28</sup> collation,  
 To partake of a luncheon and learn'd conversation:  
 'Tis a sort of re-union for Scamp, on the days  
 Of his lecture, to treat him with cold tongue and praise. 140  
 And I own, for my own part, that 'tis not unpleasant. (*stands to go*)  
 Will you go? There's Miss Lilac will also be present.  
 TRACY: That "metal's attractive."<sup>29</sup> (*stands too*)  
 INKEL: No doubt – to the pocket.  
 TRACY: You should rather encourage my passion than shock it.  
 But let us proceed; for I think, by the hum – 145  
 INKEL: Very true; let us go, then, before they can come,  
 Or else we'll be kept here an hour at their levy,  
 On the rack of cross questions, by all the blue bevy. (*A huge sigh is  
 heard off*)  
 Hark! Zounds, they'll be on us; I know by the drone  
 Of old Botherby's spouting, ex-cathedrâ tone. 150  
 Aye! there he is at it. Poor Scamp! better join  
 Your friends, or he'll pay you back in your own coin.  
 TRACY: All fair; 'tis but lecture for lecture.  
 INKEL: That's clear.  
 But for God's sake let's go, or the bore will be here.  
 Come, come: nay, I'm off.

*Exit INKEL (DSP)*

TRACY: You are right, and I'll follow; 155  
 (*to himself:*) 'Tis high time for a "*Sic me servavit Apollo.*"<sup>30</sup>  
 (*to audience:*) And yet we shall have the whole crew on our kibes,<sup>31</sup>  
 Blues, dandies, and dowagers, and second-hand scribes,  
 All flocking to moisten their exquisite throttles  
 With a glass of Madeira at Lady Bluebottle's. 160

*Exit TRACY DSP: End of Eclogue First.*

**28:** *Lady Bluebottle* may be Lady Holland (see below, II, first note). She is a friend of Botherby and patron of Scamp. See *Beppo*, 74, 4.

**29:** *Hamlet*, III ii 106.

**30:** Hor. Sat. I ix 78: "Thus I was saved by Apollo".

**31:** *kibes* – the word means chilblains; see *Hamlet* V i 137; used here incorrectly for "heels".



*They all sit (at the table, Lady Bluebottle centre, Scamp and Botherby on either side of her, Lady Bluemount and Misses Lilac, Mazarine on either side of them, Inkel and Tracy at each end. All the ladies fan themselves, excited.)*

BOTHERBY: Oh, my dear Lady,  
I obey.

LADY BLUEBOTTLE: Mr. Inkel, I ought to upbraid ye;  
You were not at the lecture.

INKEL: Excuse me, I was;  
But the heat forced me out in the best part – alas! 35  
And when –

LADY BLUEBOTTLE: To be sure it was broiling; but then  
You have lost such a lecture!

BOTHERBY: The best of the ten.

TRACY: How can you know that? there are two more.

BOTHERBY: Because  
I defy him to beat this day's wondrous applause.  
The very walls shook.

INKEL: Oh, if that be the test, 40  
I allow our friend Scamp has this day done his best.  
Miss Lilac, permit me to help you? – a wing?

MISS LILAC: No more, Sir, I thank you. Who lectures next Spring?

BOTHERBY: Dick Dunder.<sup>35</sup>

INKEL: That is, if he lives.

MISS LILAC: And why not?

INKEL: No reason whatever, save that he's a sot. 45  
Lady Bluemount! a glass of Madeira?

LADY BLUEMOUNT: With pleasure.

INKEL: How does your friend Wordswords, that Windermere treasure?  
Does he stick to his lakes, like the leeches he sings,  
And their gatherers,<sup>36</sup> as Homer sung warriors and kings?

LADY BLUEBOTTLE: He has just got a place.

INKEL: As a footman?

LADY BLUEMOUNT: For shame! 50  
Nor profane with your sneers so poetic a name.

INKEL: Nay, I meant him no evil, but pitied his master;  
For the poet of pedlars<sup>37</sup> 'twere, sure, no disaster  
To wear a new livery; the more, as 'tis not  
The first time he has turned both his creed and his coat. 55

LADY BLUEMOUNT: For shame! I repeat. If Sir George could but hear –

LADY BLUEBOTTLE: Never mind our friend Inkel; we all know, my dear,  
'Tis his way.

SIR RICHARD: But this place –

INKEL: Is perhaps like friend Scamp's,  
A lecturer's.

LADY BLUEBOTTLE: Excuse me – 'tis one in "the Stamps:"  
He is made a Collector.<sup>38</sup>

**35:** Dick Dunder is Sir James Mackintosh. See *Don Juan* XIII, 87, 1, where he is "Dick Dubious, the Metaphysician".

**36:** Refers to the Leech-Gatherer in Wordsworth's *Resolution and Independence*.

**37:** *Pedlars*: compare *Don Juan* III, 100, 1-2: "*Pedlars,*" and "*boats,*" and "*Waggons!*" *Oh! Ye Shades / Of Pope and Dryden, are we come to this?*

**38:** To supplement the poor income he made from his poetry, Wordsworth was made, at the suggestion of Samuel Rogers, Collector of Stamps for Westmoreland. He thereby had a hand in levying the duties which made his own poetry too expensive for most readers.

TRACY: Collector!

SIR RICHARD: How?

MISS LILAC: What? 60

INKEL: I shall think of him oft when I buy a new hat;  
There his works will appear –

LADY BLUEMOUNT: Sir, they reach to the Ganges.

INKEL: I shan't go so far – I can have them at Grange's.<sup>39</sup>

LADY BLUEBOTTLE: Oh fie!

MISS LILAC: And for shame!

LADY BLUEMOUNT: You're too bad.

BOTHERBY: Very good!

LADY BLUEMOUNT: How good?

LADY BLUEBOTTLE: He means nought – 'tis his phrase.

LADY BLUEMOUNT: He grows rude. 65

LADY BLUEBOTTLE: He means nothing; nay, ask him.

LADY BLUEMOUNT: Pray, Sir! did you mean  
What you say?

INKEL: Never mind if he did; 'twill be seen  
That whatever he means won't alloy what he says.

BOTHERBY: Sir!

INKEL: Pray be content with your portion of praise;  
'Twas in your defence.

BOTHERBY: If you please, with submission, 70  
I can make out my own.

INKEL: It would be your perdition.  
While you live, my dear Botherby, never defend  
Yourself or your works; but leave both to a friend.  
Apropos – Is your play then accepted at last?<sup>40</sup>

BOTHERBY (*affronted*): At last?

INKEL (*embarrassed*): Why I thought – that's to say – there had past 75  
A few Green-room whispers, which hinted – you know  
That the taste of the actors at best is so-so.

BOTHERBY (*corrects him confidently*):  
Sir, the Green-room's in raptures, and so's the Committee.<sup>41</sup>

INKEL: Aye – yours are the plays for exciting our "pity  
And fear," as the Greek says: for "purging the mind,"<sup>42</sup> 80  
I doubt if you'll leave us an equal behind.

BOTHERBY: I have written the prologue, and meant to have prayed  
For a spice of your wit in an epilogue's aid.

INKEL: Well, time enough yet, when the play's to be played.  
Is it cast yet?

BOTHERBY (*smug*): The actors are fighting for parts, 85  
As is usual in that most litigious of arts.

LADY BLUEBOTTLE: We'll all make a party, and go the *first* night.

TRACY: And you promised the epilogue, Inkel.

INKEL: Not quite.  
However, to save my friend, Botherby, trouble,  
I'll do what I can, though my pains must be double. 90

TRACY: Why so?

INKEL: To do justice to what goes before.

39: BYRON'S NOTE: Grange is or was a famous pastry-cook and fruiterer in Piccadilly.

40: Sotheby's tragedy *Ivan* was accepted at Drury Lane, but then turned down.

41: The Management Committee of Drury Lane, on which B. sat.

42: See discussion of catharsis in Aristotle, *Poetics*, VI *et seq.*



Oh, my dear Mr. Botherby! (*clutches him*) sympathise! – I  
 Now feel such a rapture, I'm ready to fly, 130  
 I feel so elastic, – “*so buoyant – so buoyant!*”<sup>49</sup>

(*She faints into Botherby's arms. The ladies cluster round fanning her. Sir  
 Richard hides his head in his hands.*)

INKEL: Tracy! open the window.

TRACY (*rises and mimes opening window*): I wish her much joy on't. (*sits*)

BOTHERBY (*holding her up*): For God's sake, my Lady Bluebottle, check not  
 This gentle emotion, so seldom our lot  
 Upon earth. Give it way; 'tis an impulse which lifts 135  
 Our spirits from earth; the sublimest of gifts;  
 For which poor Prometheus was chain'd to his mountain.  
 'Tis the source of all sentiment – feeling's true fountain:  
 'Tis the Vision of Heaven upon Earth: 'tis the gas  
 Of the soul: 'tis the seizing of shades as they pass, 140  
 And making them substance: 'tis something divine: –

INKEL: Shall I help you, my friend, to a little more wine?

BOTHERBY: I thank you. Not any more, Sir, till I dine.

(*Inkel and Tracy come forward together.*)

INKEL: Apropos! – Do you dine with Sir Humphrey to day?

TRACY: I should think with *Duke* Humphrey was more in your way.<sup>50</sup> 145

INKEL: It might be of yore; but we authors now look  
 To the knight, as a landlord, much more than the Duke.  
 The truth is – each writer now quite at his ease is,  
 And (except with his publisher) dines where he pleases.  
 But 'tis now nearly five, and I must to the Park. 150

TRACY: And I'll take a turn with you there till 'tis dark. (*turns*)  
 And you, Scamp –

SCAMP: Excuse me; I must to my notes,  
 For my lecture next week.

INKEL (*aside to audience*): He must mind whom he quotes  
 Out of “*Elegant Extracts*.”<sup>51</sup>

(*Tracy and Inkel stand before the table at each end.*)

LADY BLUEBOTTLE (*who has recovered*): Well, now we break up;  
 But remember Miss Diddle<sup>52</sup> invites us to sup. 155

INKEL (*stands on chair; to all*): Then at two hours past midnight we all meet again,  
 For the sciences, sandwiches, hock and champaigne!

TRACY (*stands on chair; to all*): And the sweet lobster sallad!<sup>53</sup>

BOTHERBY (*stands on chair; to all*): I honour that meal;  
 For 'tis then that our feelings most genuinely – feel.

(*The ladies all collapse on chairs, sighing and fanning themselves*)

INKEL: True; feeling is truest *then*, far beyond question; 160  
 I wish to the gods 'twas the same with digestion!

49: BYRON'S NOTE: Fact from life, with words.

50: *Sir Humphrey* is Sir Humphrey Davy; *to dine with Duke Humphrey* was to go without food altogether.

51: *Elegant Extracts* was the *Reader's Digest* of its day.

52: *Miss Diddle* unidentified; perhaps the Irish Bluestocking Lydia White (see BLJ III 214 & n, and VI 46).

53: ... *champaigne* ... *lobster sallad* ... compare *Don Juan*, I, 135, 8.

LADY BLUEBOTTLE: Pshaw! – never mind that; for one moment of feeling  
Is worth – God knows what.

INKEL: 'Tis at least worth concealing  
For itself, or what follows – But here comes your carriage.

*(All freeze. Sir Richard comes centre stage.)*

SIR RICHARD [*aside (to audience)*]:

I wish all these people were damned with *my* marriage! 165

*Exeunt.*

*(Curtain call.)*

*End of Eclogue the Second.*