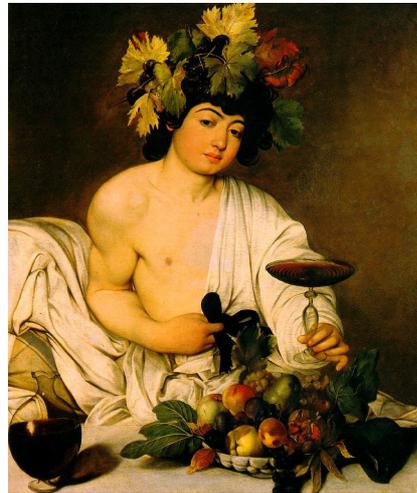


DON LEON

Edited by Peter Cochran

Byron was bisexual. He enjoyed going to bed with women, despite the fact that he didn't always like them – though his love for Teresa Guiccioli was at first almost suicidal in its intensity. But he enjoyed still more the idea of being the leader of a group of admiring young male lovers. His days in the Capuchin convent at Athens during 1810-11 were the happiest of his life, and he spent the rest of his days trying without success to recapture their youth and playfulness:

I am most auspiciously settled in the Convent, which is more commodious than any tenement I have yet occupied, with room for my suite, and it is by no means solitary, seeing there is riot only “il Padre Abbate” but his “schuola” consisting of six “Regatzi” all my most particular allies. – These Gentlemen being almost (saving Fauvel and Lusieri) my only associates it is but proper their character religion and morals should be described. – Of this goodly company three are Catholics and three are Greeks, which Schismatics I have already set a boxing to the great amusement of the Father who rejoices to see the Catholics conquer. – Their names are, Barthelemi, Giuseppe, Nicolo, Yani, and two anonymous at least in my memory. – Of these Barthelemi is a “simplice Fanciullo” according to the account of the Father, whose favourite is Guiseppe who sleeps in the lantern of Demosthenes. – We have nothing but riot from Noon till night. The first time I mingled with these Sylphs, after about two minutes reconnoitering, the amiable Signor Barthelemi without any previous notice seated himself by me, and after observing by way of compliment, that my “Signoria” was the “pieu bello” of his English acquaintances saluted me on the left cheek, for which freedom being reproved by Giuseppe, who very properly informed him that I was “μεγαλος” [megalos: *a great lord*] he told him I was his “φιλος” [filos: *beloved*] and “by his beard,” he would do so again, adding in reply to the question of “διατι ασπασετε?” [diati aspasētē? *why do you kiss him?*] you see he laughs, as in good truth I did very heartily. – But my friend as you may easily imagine is Nicolo, who by the bye, is my Italian master, and we are already very philosophical. – I am his “Padrone” and his “amico” and the Lord knows what besides, it is about two hours since that after informing me he was most desirous to follow *him* (that is me) over the world, he concluded by telling me it was proper for us not only to live but “morire insieme” [*to die together*]. – The latter I hope to avoid, as much of the former as he pleases. – I am awakened in the morning by these imps shouting “venite abasso” [*come down*] and the friar gravely observes it is “bisogno bastonare” [*necessary to beat*] every body before the studies can possibly commence. – Besides these lads, my suite, to which I have added a Tartar and a youth to look after my two new saddle horses, my suite I say, are very obstreperous and drink skinfuls of Zean wine at 8 paras the oke daily. – Then we have several Albanian women washing in the “giardino” whose hours of relaxation are spent in running pins into Fletcher’s backside. – *Damnata di mi if I have seen such a spectaculo in my way from Viterbo.* – In short what with the *women*, and the *boys*, and the *suite*, we are very disorderly. – But I am vastly happy and childish, and shall have a world of anecdotes for you and the “Citoyen” ...¹



I am grateful to Dan Kehayes for his advice and help. I have not transcribed all of 1866's notes, which are learned and ingenious, but concern various deviations, by no means always relating to Byron. BLJ: *Byron's Letters and Journals*, ed. Leslie A. Marchand, 13 vols (John Murray 1973-94).

1: BLJ I 11-13.

He could imply homoerotic scenes in letters – this is to Hobhouse, on August 23rd 1810, only a few weeks after they parted. But he could never write about them in his poems and plays.

Shakespeare abounds in gay subtexts. Mercutio is gay for Romeo, Antonio is gay for either Bassanio or Sebastian depending on the play, Achilles and Patroclus are definitely an item, Jacques is gay for both Ganymede and Orlando, Don John is gay for Claudio, something's going on between Leontes and Polixenes (and between the other Sebastian and the other Antonio), I'm terribly worried about Iago and Othello, Cassius is gay for Brutus, and Coriolanus for Aufidius. Antony's probably tried it with Eros, and Hamlet is the strangest person going. Orsino thinks he's gay for Cesario, but Cesario is a woman. Lear is by now *hors de concours*, but was probably hetero. Only Macbeth is above suspicion: and there is a striking lack of homoeroticism both in the history plays and in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

In Byron's published poems ... nothing. There may be weird stuff going on between Conrad and his young shipmate Gonsalvo, and still weirder stuff between Lara and Kaled: but you have to fish for it. Sardanapalus should obviously have a young male lover, to balance Myrrha: but (a) neither Murray nor anyone else would have published the play (b) Byron would never have the nerve and (c) the play was written beneath the gaze of Teresa Guiccioli, and for Byron to confess bisexuality to her would have given her a fit. Supposing, now, the idea for the play had occurred two years later, when he was bored by her – there would have been an original, creative way of severing their relationship: change Myrrha to Myrrhon ... but even then ...

No – even in 2006, the myth of Byron as a hetero poet / hero has to be kept up.

For Byron's unpublished poems about his loves, see below.

Don Leon.

This famous but hard-to-obtain piece, affecting to be Byron's gay confessions, was first published (twice) by William Dugdale in 1866, three years before the death of John Cam Hobhouse. It may have been published abroad before 1853.² It was reprinted in 1934 by the Fortune Press, prosecuted with success, and all copies were condemned to destruction. The 1934 edition was reprinted in facsimile by the Arno Press in 1975, using a copy saved from the censor's flames in one of the copyright libraries.

For the idea that *Don Leon* was written and published secretly by Hobhouse, I have no evidence, any more than I have for the idea that he published his and Byron's translation of Silvio Pellico's *Francesca da Rimini* in Dublin in 1851 (having visited Dublin in 1850).



My suspicion about the possibility of his authorship was first alerted on reading, in Louis Crompton's *Byron and Greek Love*,³ that whoever had written *Leon*, "one is struck by his minute knowledge of details pertaining to the House of Commons". And again, "he [the *Leon* poet] had a clever wit, a talent for writing forceful couplets, and a remarkable knowledge of Byron's life (on

²: See N&Q, 15 January 1853.

³: See Louis B. Crompton, *Byron and Greek Love*, (Faber 1985), p.360.

its homosexual side) and of British parliamentary affairs in the decade following his death” (p.345). It seemed odd that Crompton didn’t at once add this circumstantial two-and-two together. Crompton suggests as author William Bankes, and Bankes is a better candidate than G.Wilson Knight’s George Colman the Younger,⁴ or Doris Langley Moore’s Richard (“Byronicus”) Paternoster⁵ – whoever he may have been. Neither of these were MPs. However, although Bankes did sit in the Commons, he wrote no poetry, whereas Hobhouse, also a parliamentarian for many years, did – specialising, moreover, in the antique heroic couplet form in which *Leon* is written. Here is an example, from his prologue to Maturin’s *Bertram*, premiered, with Kean in the lead, at Drury Lane on May 9th 1816. Hobhouse reports in his diary that it “did famously”:

This night a Bard, who yet, alas! has known
Of conscious merit but the pangs alone;
Through dark misfortune’s gleam condemned to cope
With baffled effort and with blighted hope,
Still dares to think one friendly voice shall cheer
His sinking soul, and thinks to hail it – here!
Fanned by the breath of praise, his spark of fame
Still, still may glow, and burst into a flame.

It has the compactness and rude vigour that we find in much of *Don Leon*.

Hobhouse was in love with Byron despite being heterosexual – thus getting the worst of both worlds. He spent most of his public life, post-1824, trying to live down the fact that he had been the best friend of a man notorious in rumour for his immorality and free opinions. Still to be associated with this mythical Byron would have done his own image no good. True, he was in parliament as a radical Whig, but even radical Whigs needed respectability, and Hobhouse achieved his – rather as Teresa Guiccioli achieved hers – by whitewashing Byron’s memory and thus his own reputation. The destruction of Byron’s memoirs was the first, and most wicked, move he made in this direction: if he had held out against their burning, done with such vulgar haste so soon after the news of Byron’s death reached London, they would not have been burnt. As did Guiccioli, he wanted posterity to know him as best friend to a cleaned-up Byron: the “romantic” Byron of *Childe Harold*, not the jocular Byron of *Don Juan*. Hence his lengthy campaign to have the poet interred in Westminster Abbey, of all places, and his championing of the Thorvaldsen statue.

The first book Hobhouse wrote after his political career was over, *Travels in Albania and other Provinces of Turkey* in 1809 and 1810 (1855), was a new version, fractionally less dull, of his 1813 volumes *A Journey through Albania, and other Provinces of Turkey in Europe and Asia, to Constantinople, during the years 1809 and 1810*, and revealed nothing new either about Byron or about himself. Neither was *Italy: Remarks made in several visits from the year 1816 to 1854* (1859) any more surprising. But if my thesis is correct, Hobhouse – whose relationship with Byron made him, as I have argued before, into something of a Joseph Surface⁶ – was all the time preparing quite a different memorial. We know little or nothing of what transpired at Tepellene in Albania when Byron and Hobhouse visited Ali Pacha there in October 1809. They had already learned that Ali “had a *scintum perimeum* from making like Phaedo for the most of his youth”, and Ali was attended by handsome young men, a fact celebrated by the following, from Hobhouse’s diary at the time of the Tepellene sojourn:

Translation of an Italian stanza

4: See G.Wilson Knight, *Lord Byron’s Marriage: The Evidence of Asterisks* (Routledge 1957), pp.159-201.

5: See Doris Langley Moore, *The Late Lord Byron* (John Murray 1961, rpt. 1976), pp.vii-viii. Mrs Langley Moore left her *Don Leon* notes on a bus. See also Langley Moore, *Lord Byron Accounts Rendered* (John Murray, 1974), p.452.

6: See Cochran, *O Did I Ever No I Never*, in Bachinger, Katrina (ed.) *Byronic Negotiations*, Berlin, 2002.

written in the window of a Turkish Harem

Dear Youth, whose form and face unite
 To lead my sinful soul astray;
 Whose wanton willing looks invite
 To every bliss, and teach the way,

Ah spare thyself, thyself and me,
 Withold the too-distracting joy;
 Ah cease so fair and fond to be,
 And look less lovely, or more coy.

Hobhouse's diary is very discreet indeed about the irregularities of Byron's erotic life – evidence of how quiet you had to be at a time when the least of the penalties for being found in bed with another man (for being a “molly”), was to be taken to Soho, pilloried, and pelted with pieces of dead cat by female prostitutes recruited by the Bow Street Runners.⁷ When Byron and Hobhouse meet at Sittingbourne on July 17th 1811 and spend together their first three days since they parted in July of the previous year, all Hobhouse records of relevance to the subject is: “none female nor under ten nor Turk”; which probably says all we need to know.

Byron is accompanied on his return by Demetrios Zografos and Spiro Saraci; Demetrios is to be of ambivalent help to Hobhouse in writing the Albanian language sections of *Journey. Don Leon's* 1866 note to line 673 goes:

The stories which were current up the Archipelago about Lord Byron's amours, seem to have originated in reports spread by his Greek servants, who, finding how eagerly every tale respecting his lordship was listened to by travellers and naval officers, may possibly have added to this number. Two of the servants were named *Demetrius* and *Basilius*, and the latter afterwards set up as a watchmaker at Cyprus. One of Basilius' stories was that Lord B. consulted an English doctor who was passing through Athens at the time of his lordship's sojourn there, touching a relaxation in the *sphincter ani* with which the boy Giraud was troubled. The disease of a ragged fundament, arising from the frequent distension of the podex in antiphysical concubinage, was frequent among the ancient Greek and Roman *cinædi*, and the city of Clazomenæ, in Ionia, notorious for this species of debauchery, became a synonymous expression with it.

May 14th, 1815, when in Paris witnessing the Hundred Days, Hobhouse records:

I dined next to Bruce at Very's, then walked about the Tuileries with him – went to his rooms – heard some strange stories of a friend of mine's imprudent behaviour at a certain distant country, and told a most determined falsehood to save him.⁸

From this I deduce that the hetero Michael Bruce (though for *his* love for Byron, see BLJ II 49-50; also IV 215) told Hobhouse stories of Byron's homosexual activities in Athens, and that Hobhouse, knowing them to be true, refuted them. Bruce's companion in the Levant had been the Marquis of Sligo. Sligo had written to his mother on September 15th 1810:

Lord Byron is not here now; but he is no loss: *His* Character is completely done up even the Pacha has been speaking about it tho himself he participates in *crimes* of the same *nature*. I have detected him in many dirty meanesses and lies in order to conceal his conduct.⁹

7: See Louis B. Crompton, op.cit., especially pp.31-2.

8: Broughton Holograph Diaries, Vol. 3, Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

9: Yale Beinecke, OSB MSS 74 Box 1, Folder 2.

For the Pacha, see *Don Leon*, lines 707-28.

The original version of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* Cantos I and II were much franker about the homosexuality "Harold" had witnessed in the east, if not of the activity in which he had participated. The stanzas describing Ali Pacha in his palace were quite explicit: but John Murray was the last publisher to countenance such stuff in his catalogue, and it was all edited away – as it seems, with Byron's consent and assistance. But the manuscripts are still with us. First, here is the received version of Canto II stanza 61, describing Ali at Tepellene:

Here woman's voice is never heard: apart,
And scarce permitted, guarded, veiled, to move,
She yields to one her person and her heart,
Tamed to her cage, nor feels a wish to rove:
For, not unhappy in her master's love, 545
And joyful in a mother's gentlest cares,
Blest cares! all other feelings far above!
Herself more sweetly rears the babe she bears,
Who never quits the breast, no meaner passion shares.

This had originally been:

Here woman's voice is never heard – apart,
And scarce permitted guarded, veiled to rove,
She yields to one her person & her heart,
Tamed to her cage, nor feels a wish to move;
For boyish minions of unhallowed love
The shameless torch of wild desire is lit,
Caressed, preferred even woman's self above,
Whose forms for Nature's gentler errors fit
All frailties mote excuse save that which they commit.

62.

In marble-paved pavilion, where a spring 550
Of living water from the centre rose,
Whose bubbling did a genial freshness fling,
And soft voluptuous couches breathed repose,
ALI reclined, a man of war and woes;
Yet in his lineaments ye cannot trace, 555
While Gentleness her milder radiance throws
Along that aged venerable face,
The deeds that lurk beneath, and stain him with disgrace.

63.

It is not that yon hoary lengthening beard 560
Ill suits the passions which belong to youth ...

(These lines had originally read

"It is not that yon hoary lengthening beard
Delights to mingle with the lip of youth ...")

... Love conquers age – so Hafiz hath averred,
So sings the Teian, and he sings in sooth –
But crimes that scorn the tender voice of Ruth,
Beseeming all men ill, but most the man

In years, have marked him with a tyger's tooth; 565
 Blood follows blood, and through their mortal span,
 In bloodier acts conclude those who with blood began.

Here is stanza 64 as printed:

'Mid many things most new to ear and eye
 The pilgrim rested here his weary feet,
 And gazed around on Moslem luxury, 570
 Till quickly wearied with that spacious seat
 Of Wealth and Wantonness, the choice retreat
 Of sated Grandeur from the city's noise:
 And were it humbler it in sooth were sweet;
 But Peace abhorreth artificial joys, 575
 And Pleasure, leagued with Pomp, the zest of both destroys.

But the manuscript read:

Childe Harold with that chief held colloquy,
 Yet what they spake, it boots not to repeat,
 Converse may little charm strange ear, or eye; –
 Four days he rested in that spacious seat
 Of Moslem luxury, the choice retreat
 Of sated Grandeur from the city's noise,
 And were it humbler, it in sooth were sweet;
 But Peace abhorreth artificial joys,
 And Pleasure, leagued with Pomp, the zest of both destroys. –

The records and negotiations are blank about how the gay material in *Childe Harold II* was edited out (including the startling “spacious seat of Moslem luxury”), but we may guess that Hobhouse would have given it his nod.

For the material in question, see the edition of *Childe Harold I and II* on this website, where I have put it all back.

Not himself gay (despite what Louis B. Crompton and Cecil Y. Lang write:¹⁰ though his heterosexuality was furtive),¹¹ and not very sympathetic to gays, Hobhouse was strongly against the barbaric way nineteenth-century English law treated them: though to think so was one thing and to say it quite another. While a prisoner in Newgate in late 1819, he recorded the following in his diary:

A man was hanged this morning for an unnatural crime – I had my windows fastened up, but could not sleep – they begun putting up the scaffold at four o'clock – the tolling of the bell at eight was frightful – I heard the crash of the drop falling and a woman screech violently at the same moment – instantly afterwards the sound of the pye-man crying “all hot all hot” – 'Tis dreadful hanging a man for this nastiness. There are two, a man and boy, now in jail who were caught *in flagrante delictu* – and yet only sentenced to two years imprisonment. The poor wretch was half dead so they told me before he was hanged –¹²

10: For Lang, see *Narcissus Jilted: Byron, Don Juan, and the Biographical Imperative*, printed in *Historical Studies and Literary Criticism*, ed. McGann, Madison 1985, pp. 143-79.

11: “Do not look for method”, writes S.B.Davies to Hobhouse on December 7th 1816, meaning by “method”, “Methodism”, that is, homoerotic affection. “Hobhouse further hopes to indemnify himself in Turkey for a life of exemplary chastity at home by letting out his ‘fair bodye’ to the whole Divan” writes Byron to Drury (BLJ II 208). These seem undergraduate jokes. I have copied out Hobhouse’s diary up to June 1824, and there’s not a hint of homosexual love or lust anywhere.

12: BL.Add.Mss.56541.

It is a sentiment well in keeping with much to be found in *Don Leon*.

The interest in all kinds of sexual deviations which the 1866 notes show would also be evidence of Hobhouse's authorship. His own sexual encounters appear, from the diary, to have been remarkable above all for speed; but he had a voyeur's interest in what other people did:

Friday May 19th 1815: He told a story in today's *Journal de l'Empire* of a Captain Saint-Claire of the line, member of the Legion of Honour, who stabbed himself before a council of war upon having sentence pronounced upon him for murdering a girl – Keric Macker, called "La Belle Hollandaise". The judge said "St Claire, vous avez manqué de l'honneur". The young man jumped from the bench and said, "Jamais!" – then stabbed himself – he took off his Cross of the Legion of Honour himself, and was carried away dying to the Abbaye. His counsel, in pleading, said a report had gone abroad that his client had murdered the girl upon the principles which had entered into the head of that monster who had finished his disgraceful existence amongst the madmen of Charenton. This is the famous de Sade, author of *Justine*. I have little doubt of St Claire being a disciple of de Sade's, and the advocate, mentioning the matter, shows how far the thing has gone in France. de Sade gave Courthande to a whole party at a ball, and then debauched his sister-in-law. In the Fauxbourg St Antoine there was a club à la *Justine*, which was discovered, but for the honour of the nation all the details were concealed, and except de Sade, who I believe was then sent to Charenton, nobody punished.¹³

Thursday September 21st 1820: ... Wilbraham said that the Duchess of Devonshire and Lady Elizabeth Forster used to *tribadize* – he knew it, he said – he heard the Duke of Devonshire once say that he had *ratéd* at more women than any man in England – but then he went to a bawdy house every night of his life ... yet this is called a good man!¹⁴

See also my addition to the 1866 note to line 1229.

One 1866 *Leon* note (to line 761), is about coitus interruptus in Geneva, a place Hobhouse knew well; another (to line 856), about Italian pederasty, bears his mark too. There is much evidence of sensational classical reading, in Caullus, Ausonius, Martial, Juvenal, and other authors: another Hobhousean clue.

Byron's "homosocial proclivities" (as our modern canters would call them), started at Harrow, when he was famous for protecting smaller and more vulnerable boys from bullying. Principal among them was William Harness, himself a cripple, like Byron. But the Harrovian for whom his feelings seem to have lasted longest was the Earl of Clare, of whom he wrote in *Detached Thought* 91 (October – November 1821):

My School friendships were with *me passions* (for I was always violent) but I do not know that there is one which has endured (to be sure some have been cut short by death) till now – that with Lord Clare began one of the earliest and lasted longest – being only interrupted by distance – that I know of. – I never hear the word "*Clare*" without a beating of the heart – even *now*, & I write it – with the feelings of 1803-4-5 – ad infinitum. –¹⁵

His passion for Clare, and the nostalgia for Harrow that accompanied it, caught up with him, albeit very briefly. In *Detached Thought* 113 he returns to the subject:

[In] article 91, of this collection of scattered things – I had alluded to my friend Lord Clare in terms such as my feelings suggested. – About a week or two afterwards, I met him on the road between Imola and Bologna – after not having met for seven or eight years. – He was abroad in 1814 – and came home just as I set out in 1816. – – This meeting annihilated for a moment all the years between the present

13: Berg Collection Volume 3: Broughton Holograph Diaries, Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

14: BL.Add.Mss.56541.

15: BLJ IX 44.

time and the days of *Harrow*. – It was a new and inexplicable feeling like rising from the grave to me. – Clare too was much agitated – more – in *appearance* – than even myself – for I could feel his heart beat to his fingers’ ends – unless indeed – it was the pulse of my own which made me think so. – He told me that I should find a note from him left at Bologna. – I did. – We were obliged to part for our different journeys – he for Rome – I for Pisa – but with the promise to meet again in Spring. – We were but five minutes together – and in the public road – but I hardly recollect an hour of my existence which could be weighed against them. – He had heard that I was coming on – & had left his letter for me at B[ologna] because the people with whom he was travelling could not wait longer. – Of all I have ever known – he has always been the least altered in every thing from the excellent qualities and kind affections which attached me to him so strongly at School. – I should hardly have thought it possible for Society – (or the World as it is called) to leave a being with so little of the leaven of bad passions. – I do not speak from personal experience only – but from all I have ever heard of him from others during absence and distance. –¹⁶

To Moore he wrote, on March 1st 1822:

My greatest friend, Lord Clare, is at Rome: we met on the road, and our meeting was quite sentimental – really pathetic on both sides. I have always loved him better than any male thing in the world.¹⁷

Clare is a shadowy figure, and we cannot tell whether or not distance had led enchantment to Byron’s view of him: but the feelings he records in 1821-2 are intense, and convincing.

Don Leon names three of Byron’s other lovers. The first is Robert Rushton (line 173), the servant from Newstead who accompanied him on his first voyage as far as Spain and was sent home thence because, as Byron wrote to his mother, “you *know boys* are not *safe* amongst the Turks”.¹⁸ Rushton may be the second figure in the seafaring portrait of Byron by George Sanders.

Previously there had been John Edleston (line 212), the Trinity choirboy, Byron’s love for whom seems to have been platonic. He was sufficiently unselfconscious about his relationship with Edleston to write about it in the following way to Elizabeth Pigot on July 5th 1807 (seemingly unselfconscious too, however, about the fact that Pigot was probably in love with him, as Hobhouse was – hence her interest in his “protégé”):

I have just parted from “my *Corneilan*” who spent the evening with me; as it was our last Interview, I postponed my engagements to devote the hours of the *Sabbath* to friendship, Edleston & I have separated for the present, & my mind is a *Chaos* of *hope & Sorrow*. Tomorrow I set out for London, you will address your answer to “*Gordon’s Hotel*” *Albemarle Street*, where I *sojourn*, during my visit to the *Metropolis*. – I rejoice to hear you are interested in my “protégé”, he has been my *almost constant* associate since October 1805, when I entered Trinity College; his *voice* first attracted my notice, his *countenance* fixed it, & his *manners* attached me to him forever, he departs for a *mercantile house* in *Town*, in October, & we shall probably not meet, till the expiration of my minority, when I shall leave to his *decision*, either *entering* as a *Partner* through my Interest, or residing with me altogether. Of course he *would* in his present *frame* of mind prefer the *latter*, but he may alter his opinion previous to that period, however he shall have his choice, I certainly *love* him more than any human being, & neither *time* or *Distance* have had the least effect on my (in general) changeable Disposition. – In short, We shall put *Lady E. Butler*, & *Miss Ponsonby* to the *Blush*, *Pylades* & *Orestes* out of countenance, & want nothing but a *Catastrophe* like *Nisus & Euryalus*, to give *Jonathan & David* the “*go by*”. – He certainly is perhaps more *attached* to *me*, than even I am in *return*, during the whole of my residence at *Cambridge*, we met every day summer & Winter, without passing *one tiresome moment*, & separated *each time* with increasing Reluctance. I hope you will *one day* see us together, he is the only *being* I *esteem*, though I *like* many.¹⁹

16: BLJ IX 49-50.

17: BLJ IX 117-18.

18: BLJ II 221-2.

19: BLJ I 124-5.

Byron had translated the Nisus and Euryalus episode from the *Aenied*, in *Hours of Idleness*.

Niccolò Giraud (line 675 and nn) was nephew to Lord Elgin's draughtsman Lusieri. Byron refers to him in the letter to Hobhouse from the Capuchin Convent, printed above. Both Rushton and Giraud drop out of Byron's life and affections quickly (Edelstone died). Perhaps they ceased to be loveable upon attaining adulthood, as David Hemmings ceased to be an object of Benjamin Britten's affections the moment his voice broke. However, Niccolò is a beneficiary of Byron's 1811 will:

To Nicolo Giraud of Athens, subject of France, but born in Greece, the sum of seven thousand pounds sterling, to be paid from the sale of such parts of Rochdale, Newstead, or elsewhere, as may enable the said Nicolo Giraud (resident of Athens and Malta in the year 1810) to receive the above sum on his attaining the age of twenty-one years.²⁰

Newstead was not sold for another seven years, and Rochdale, not in Byron's lifetime, so Nicolo is unlikely to have benefited from the will – if, indeed, he ever reached twenty-one. Records of him cease at this point.

Unlike Benjamin Britten, Byron had no stable gay relationship with an adult to keep his life on an even keel. Supposing he felt in need of such a thing, it would of course have been very hard to maintain at that time: but in any case, his does not seem to have been an erotic urge directed at men of his own generation.

Byron marked John Edleston's death with a number of poems addressed *To Thyrsa*. "Thyrza" was needless to say assumed to be female, and "her" presumed death was a Byronic mystery and a source of romantic speculation for many decades. Here is the opening of one of the Thyrsa poems:

To Thyrsa

Without a stone to mark the spot,
 And say, what Truth might well have said,
 By all, save one, perchance forgot,
 Ah, wherefore art thou lowly laid?
 By many a shore and many a sea
 Divided, yet belov'd in vain;
 The past, the future fled to thee
 To bid us meet – no – ne'er again!
 Could this have been – a word – a look
 That softly said, "We part in peace",
 Had taught my bosom how to brook,
 With fainter sighs, thy soul's release.
 And didst thou not, since Death for thee
 Prepar'd a light and pangless dart,
 Once long for him thou ne'er shalt see,
 Who held, and holds thee in his heart?
 Oh! who like him had watch'd thee here?
 Or sadly mark'd thy glazing eye,
 In that dread hour ere death appear,
 When silent Sorrow fears to sigh,
 Till all was past? But when no more
 'Twas thine to ruck of human woe,
 Affection's heart-drops, gushing o'er,
 Had flow'd as fast – as now they flow.

20: BLJ II 71.

There be None of Beauty's Daughters is also addressed to Edelston, who, with the opening of the poem just quoted, joins the ranks of Byronic protagonists – Astarte chief among them – who have no grave.

The anonymous Greek boy, Byron's affair with whom is described at lines 563-630, seems imaginary, but we can't tell. I know of no other evidence for his existence.

Not referred to in *Don Leon* is the most important love of all, Loukas Chalandritsanos, whose indifference to the poet in Greece in 1823-4 may have been a major cause in the acute depression which lowered his resistance and led to his death. There is no reason why Hobhouse, my theoretical author, would have known about Chalandritsanos: neither of the two most important books about Byron's death in Greece – by Pietro Gamba and William Parry – refer to him, and Gamba, whom Hobhouse met in London (whose book indeed, he helped Francis Cohen translate), is unlikely to have mentioned him in conversation. But when, in his famous verses *On this day I Complete my Thirty-Sixth Year*, Byron writes

'Tis time this heart should be unmoved,
 Since others it hath ceased to move –
 Yet though I cannot be beloved
 Still let me love!

—
 Tread those reviving passions down,
 Unworthy Manhood; – unto thee
 In different should the smile or frown
 Of Beauty be.

30

... Chalandritsanos is his subject. In another Missolonghi poem, *I Watched thee when the Foe was at Our Side*, he is franker still:

Thus much and more – and yet thou lov'st me not,
 And never will – Love dwells not in our will –
 Nor can I blame thee – though it be my lot –
 To strongly – wrongly – vainly – love thee still. –

This passion was more violent than his earlier three, for being unrequited: Chalandritsanos is a shadowy figure, but he seems to have been, though beautiful, too dull to know what was going on. He's portrayed in the dreadful Graeco / Russian movie *Byron: Ballad of a Demon* (his only screen appearance), as being hostile to Byron's love: modern Hellenic homophobia may be at work there. The Greeks, like Guiccioli and Hobhouse, have an ideal Byron, whom factual evidence sullies.

Apart perhaps from the passage at 1047-1122, retailing "Leon's" bedroom experimentations with Annabella, there are few details in the poem to shock us in 2006: both its eloquent plea for the legalisation of homosexuality, and its condemnation of the hypocrisy which drove gays underground, are now embedded not only in the law, but in the rhetoric of political correctness. Our astonishment is better reserved for the horrifying culture which condemned it. Pornographic it certainly isn't.

Copytext here is the 1866 edition, for which the printer (perhaps a French printer), did his work rapidly. I have indicated all new substantive readings in the notes; but have made free with accidentals. I have included some but not all of the 1866 annotations, prefacing them with (1866).

DON LEON;
A POEM
BY THE LATE LORD BYRON
AUTHOR OF CHILDE HAROLD, DON JUAN, &C., &C.
AND FORMING PART OF THE PRIVATE JOURNAL
OF HIS LORDSHIP, SUPPOSED TO HAVE
BEEN ENTIRELY DESTROYED BY
THOS. MOORE

“Pardon, dear Tom, these thoughts on days gone by;
Me men revile, and thou must justify.
Yet in my bosom apprehensions rise,
(For brother poets have their jealousies)
Lest under false pretences thou shouldst turn
A faithless friend, and these confessions burn.”²¹

21: These form lines 1265-70 below. The epigraph is unfair. Had Moore had his way, Byron’s Memoirs would not have been burnt (the actual incineration was done by Wilmot Horton and Colonel Doyle, the agents of Annabella and, supposedly, Augusta). Moore died in 1852.

DON LEON

Thou ermined judge, pull off that sable cap!²²
 What! Can'st thou lie, and take thy morning nap?
 Peep through the casement; see the gallows there:
 Thy work hangs on it; could not mercy spare?²³
 What had he done? Ask crippled Talleyrand, 5
 Ask Beckford, Courtenay, all the motley band²⁴
 Of priest and laymen, who have shared his guilt
 (If guilt it be) then slumber if thou wilt;
 What bonds had he of social safety broke?
 Found'st thou the dagger hid beneath his cloak? 10
 He stopped no lonely traveller on the road;
 He burst no lock, he plundered no abode;
 He never wrong'd the orphan of his own;
 He stifled not the ravish'd maiden's groan.
 His secret haunts were hid from every soul, 15
 Till thou did'st send thy myrmidons to prowl,
 And watch the prickings of his morbid lust,
 To wring his neck and call thy doings just.
 And shall the Muse, whilst pen and paper lie
 Upon the table, hear the victim's cry, 20
 Nor boldly lay her cauterising hand
 Upon a wound that cankers half the land?
 No! were the bays that flourish round my head
 Destined to wither, when these lines are read:
 Could all the scourges canting priests invent 25
 To prop their legendary lies, torment
 My soul in death or rack my body here,

22 (1866): Note 1, line 1. "Thou ermined judge, pull off that sable cap!" In reading the opening of this poem, it would almost seem that the author of it had in his eye Mr. Justice Park, were it not that the supposed date of the poem would imply an anachronism. In the *Courier*, of August 1833, and the *Chronicle* of the same month and year, we read "Captain Henry Nicholas Nicholls, who was one of the unnatural gang to which the late Captain Beauclerk belonged, (and which latter gentleman put an end to his existence), was convicted on the clearest evidence at Croydon, on Saturday last, of the capital offence of Sodomy; the prisoner was perfectly calm and unmoved throughout the trial, and even when sentence of death was passed upon him. In performing the duty of passing sentence of death upon the prisoner, Mr. Justice Park told him that it would be inconsistent with that duty if he held out the slightest hope that the law would not be allowed to take its severest course. At 9 o'clock in the morning the sentence was carried into effect. The culprit, who was fifty years of age, was a fine looking man, and had served in the Peninsular war. He was connected with a highly respectable family; but, since his apprehension not a single member of it visited him."

Mr Justice Park might not have remained long enough at Croydon to see the poor man hanged, but, if he did, his peep out of the window at the gallows would have been any thing but agreeable. "O'er their *quietus* where fat judges doze, / And lull their cough and conscience to repose." *Garth's Dispensary, Cant. 1*. It is observed once for all that in quoting Byron's *Life*, by T. Moore, the Edition quoted is that of Galignani, Paris.

23: On Wednesday December 29th 1819, while in Newgate, Hobhouse records in his diary: "A man was hanged this morning for an unnatural crime. I had my windows fastened up, but could not sleep. They begun putting up the scaffold at four o'clock – the tolling of the bell at eight was frightful. I heard the crash of the drop falling, and a woman screech violently at the same moment: instantly afterwards the sound of the pieman crying '*All hot, all hot!*' – 'Tis dreadful hanging a man for this nastiness. There are two, a man and boy, now in jail who were caught *in flagrante delictu* – and yet only sentenced to two years imprisonment. The poor wretch was half dead, so they told me, before he was hanged" (B.L.Add.Mss. 56540 ff. 128v.-9r).

24: *Talleyrand ... Beckford ... Courtenay*: Charles Maurice de Talleyrand, Napoleon's treacherous and sexually voracious French Foreign Minister; Willam Beckford, author of *Vathek*, Byron's favourite novel; William, Lord Courtenay, Beckford's sixteen-year-old lover.

My voice I'd raise, insensible to fear.
 When greedy placemen drain a sinking state,
 When virtue starves, and villains dine off plate; 30
 When lords and senators, untouched by shame,
 For schemes of basest fraud can lend their name,
 When elders, charged to guard the pauper's trust,
 Feast on the funds, and leave the poor a crust;
 When knaves like these escape the hangman's noose, 35
 Who e'en to Clogher a pardon would refuse?²⁵
 Who would not up and lend a hand to save
 A venial culprit from a felon's grave?
 Sheer indignation quickens into rhyme,
 And silence now were tantamount to crime. 40
 I know not in what friendly breast to pour
 My swelling rage, save into thine, dear Moore.
 For thou, methinks, some sympathy will own,
 Since, love, no matter in what guise 'tis shown,
 Must ever find an echo from that lyre, 45
 Which erst hath glowed with old Anacreon's fire.²⁶
 Death levels all; and, deaf to mortal cries,
 At his decree the prince or beggar dies.
 So, when I'm gone, as gone I soon may be,
 Be thou, dear Tom, an honest, firm trustee; 50
 And, not for filthy lucre, nor to dine
 At Holland House, erase one single line.
 To titled critics pay no servile court;
 But print my thoughts through good or ill report.
 And if these musings serve but to dispense 55
 One little dose of useful common sense,
 I fain would hope they greater good had done
 Than all the pious tracts of Rivington.²⁷
 Can it be justice in a land like ours,
 Where every vice in full luxuriance flowers – 60
 Where schoolboys' eyes can recognise afar
 Soho's green blinds and Lisle-street doors ajar –²⁸
 Where bold-faced harlots impudently spurn
 The modest virgin's blush at every turn,
 Where every pavement hears their ribald laugh, 65
 Spite of the Bow-street gang and watchman's staff,
 That one propensity, which always hides
 Its sport obscene, and into darkness glides,
 Which none so brazened e'er presume to own,
 Which, left unheeded, would remain unknown, 70
 Should be the game their worships will pursue
 With keenest ardour all the country through?

25: Percy Jocelyn, Bishop of Clogher, was caught *in flagrante* with a private soldier in a pub off the Haymarket on July 19th 1822, jumped bail, and fled the country. Byron jokes about the business at *Don Juan* VIII, 76, 2. Notice that the scansion here would make the name monosyllabic – “Clo'er”.

26: *Anacreon*: Greek poet of love and drink. At *Don Juan* I 104, 5 Byron refers to Moore as “Anacreon Moore”.

27: *Rivington*: Publishing family specializing in sermons and tracts. They founded *The British Critic*.

28: *Soho ... Lisle-street*: Lisle Street is south of Soho. Both famous as centres of commercialised carnality.

No parson of the quorum feels a blush
 To claim the honours of the stinking brush:
 Whilst at the scent unkennelled curs give tongue, 75
 Until the poor misogynist is hung.
 Yet naught can satisfy the foul-mouthed crew;
 Laid in his grave their victim they pursue;
 And base Smellfunguses insult his ghost²⁹
 With sainted columns in the *Morning Post*. 80
 I grant that casuists the Bible quote,
 And tell us how God's hardy vengeance smote
 Lot's native town with brimstone from the sky,
 To punish his impure delinquency,
 Unmindful that the drunkard's kiss defiled 85
 (Whilst yet the embers smoked), his virgin child.³⁰
 But reason doubts the Jewish prophet's tale.
 Does history then no other place bewail?
 Descend the Nile, and steer your bark along
 The shores recorded in Homeric song. 90
 Where's centi-portalled Thebes? The crumbling stone
 Marks well its site, but sandy mounds have grown
 O'er granite fanes that line the public way,
 And seem to bid defiance to decay.
 Why seek we Priam's palaces in vain? 95
 Why howls the blast o'er Lacedæmon's plain?
 Where's Memphis? Wherefore in Persepolis
 Do jackals scream, and venom'd serpents hiss?
 What! were thy ramparts, Babylon, so thick;
 And hast thou left us not a single brick? 100
 But where's thy house, Zenobia? Thou wast Queen³¹
 Of Tadmor once; and now the *Bedoween*
 Erects his tent, and scares the fleet gazelle,
 That comes to drink at thy sulphureous well.
 Where's Cæsarea now, or Antioch? Where? 105
 And yet their domes deserved God's special care,
 There Paul was honoured; there our faith proclaimed;
 There true believers first were Christians named.
 Who has not seen how Mother Church can press
 Each vain tradition to her purposes, 110
 And from the cradle to the grave supply
 Proofs sacred of infallibility?
 Would you be damned? a text conveys her curse;
 Or rise again? you have it in a verse.
 Her rites as means of revenue are prized; 115
 For Mammon's sake our infants are baptized.
 With golden offerings marriages are made;
 Woe to the union where no fee is paid.

29: *Smellfunguses*: "Smellfungus" is Sterne's portrait of Smollett in *A Sentimental Journey*. The word implies "obsessive and uncharitable faultfinder".

30: *Lot*: see *Genesis* 19. The argument is although that Sodom and Gomorrah are not the only cities lost without trace, they are the only ones credited in legend as centres of unnatural lust.

31: *Zenobia*: Queen of Palmyra. Her city fell to the Romans in 272 A.D.

Who weds or fornicates, no matter which,
 Children begets, and makes the altar rich; 120
 But, where no offerings to the surplice fall,
 The taste forthwith is anti-physical.
 Hell-fire can hardly expiate the guilt
 Of that damned sin – the church’s rubric bilked.
 The tree we plant will, when its boughs are grown, 125
 Produce no other blossoms than its own;
 And thus in man some inborn passions reign
 Which, spite of careful pruning, sprout again.
 Then, say, was I or nature in the wrong,
 If, yet a boy, one inclination, strong 130
 In wayward fancies, domineered my soul,
 And bade complete defiance to control?
 What, though my youthful instincts, forced to brood
 Within my bosom, seemed a while subdued?
 What though, by early education taught, 135
 The charms of woman first my homage caught?
 What though my verse in Mary’s praises flowed?³²
 And flowers poetic round her footsteps strewed,
 Yet, when her ears would list not to my strain,
 And every sigh was answered with disdain, 140
 Pride turned, not stopped, the course of my desires,
 Extinguished these, and lighted other fires.
 And as the pimple which cosmetic art
 Repels from one, invades another part,
 My bubbling passions found another vent,³³ 145
 The object changed, but not the sentiment.³⁴
 And, e’er my years could task my reason why,
 Sex caused no qualms where beauty lured the eye.
 Such were my notions ere my teens began,
 And such their progress till I grew a man. 150
 With thee, dear Margaret, whose tender looks³⁵
 Made me forget my task, my play, my books.

32 (1866): Note 11, line 137. “What though my verse in Mary’s praises flowed.” Afterwards Mrs. Musters, Byron’s first love. [Biographers count at least three Marys among Byron’s early adolescent loves: an otherwise nameless Mary, Mary Duff, and (the one who had moved him most) Mary Chaworth. Poems addressed to them are at CPW I 2, 3, 50, and 132.]

33: echoes *Don Juan* VI, 32, 8: “Where all the passions have, alas! but one vent.”

34 (1866): Note 10, line 146. “The object changed, but not the sentiment;” It does not follow as a natural consequence that pæderasts are misogynists, or that a culpable indulgence in inclinations for the one sex argues an insensibility to the charms of the other. Theodore Beza, himself, in his youth and before he became a father of the church and one of the pillars of the protestant faith, addressed some lines to his beloved *Candia*, in which we find the following phrase – “*Amplector hunc et illam.*” In a dialogue to be found in Plutarch (*Morals*, vol. 8, edit. 1718), one of the disputants is made to say “Where beauty tempted him the sex was a matter of indifference to him, for there was no reason why a sensible man should be tied down to the parts only which distinguish the sex.” Here is a little *post mortem* scandal by way of revenge: – “As we were crossing the Apennines he told me that he had left an order in his will that Allegra, the child who soon after died, should never be taught the English language. You know that Allegra was buried at Harrow; but probably you have not heard that the body was sent over to England in two packages, that no one might suspect what it was.”

35 (1866): Note 12, Line 151. “With thee, dear Margaret, whose tender looks.” Margaret Parker is the young lady here meant. Lord Byron, in one part of his correspondence, (vol. 1. page 46. Moore’s Life,) says “I have reason to know she loved me.” [*Margaret* is Byron’s cousin Margaret Parker; see BLJ IX 40.]

Young though we were, our union soared above
 The frigid systems of Platonic love.
 Untutored how to kiss, how oft I hung 155
 Upon thy neck, whilst from my burning tongue
 Between thy lips the kindling glow was sent,
 And nature fanned the new-born sentiment!
 How oft, beneath the arbour's mystic shade,
 My boyish vows of constancy were made! 160
 There on the grass as we recumbent lay,
 Not coy wast thou, nor I averse to play;
 And in that hour thy virtue's sole defence
 Was not thy coldness, but my innocence.
 Among the yeomen's sons on my estate, 165
 A gentle boy would at my mansion wait:
 And now, that time has almost blanched my hair,
 And with the past the present I compare,
 Full well I know, though decency forbad
 The same caresses to a rustic lad; 170
 Love, love it was, that made my eyes delight
 To have his person ever in my sight.
 Yes, Rushton, though to unobserving eyes,³⁶
 My favours but as lordly gifts were prized;
 Yet something then would inwardly presage 175
 The predilections of my riper age.
 Why did I give thee gauds to deck thy form?
 Why for a menial did my entrails warm?
 Why? but from secret longings to pursue
 Those inspirations, which, if books speak true, 180
 Have led e'en priests and sages to embrace
 Those charms, which female blandishments efface.
 Thus passed my boyhood: and though proofs were none
 What path my future course of life would run
 Like sympathetic ink, if then unclear, 185
 The test applied soon made the trace appear.
 I bade adieu to schools and tyro's sports,
 And Cam received me in his gothic courts.
 Freed from the pedagogue's tyrannic sway,
 In mirth and revels I consumed the day. 190
 No more my truant muse her vigils kept;
 No more she soothed my slumbers as I slept;
 But, idling now, she oft recalled the time
 When to her reed I tuned my feeble rhyme.
 She knew how those 'midst song and mirth grow dull 195
 Whose tender bosoms soft emotions lull.
 As manhood came, my feelings, more intense,
 Sighed for some kindred mind, where confidence,
 Tuned in just unison, might meet return,

36: *Rushton*: Robert Rushton was Byron's young servant who was to have travelled with him to the Levant. He was sent back from Gibraltar. He also went with Byron to Switzerland. Attempts have been made to establish him as Byron's lover. See the maritime Byron portrait by George Sanders. **1866** adds, "There is also mention made by Moore of another cottage boy, near Newstead, for whom Lord B. had an early predilection. See Moore's *Life of Byron*."

And whilst it warmed my breast, in his might burn. 200
 Oft, when the evening bell to vespers rung,
 When the full choir the solemn anthem sung,
 And lips, o'er which no youthful down had grown,
 Hymned their soft praises to Jehovah's throne,
 The pathos of the strain would soothe my soul, 205
 And call me willing from the drunkard's bowl.
 Who, that has heard the chapel's evening song,
 When peals divine the lengthened note prolong,
 But must have felt religious thoughts arise,
 And speed their way melodious to the skies? 210
 Among the choir a youth my notice won,
 Of pleasing lineaments named Eddlestone.³⁷
 With gifts well suited to a stripling's mood,
 His friendship and his tenderness I wooed.
 Oh! how I loved to press his cheek to mine; 215
 How fondly would my arms his waist entwine!
 Another feeling borrowed friendship's name,
 And took its mantle to conceal my shame.
 Another feeling! oh! 'tis hard to trace
 The line where love usurps tame friendship's place. 220
 Friendship's the chrysalis, which seems to die,
 But throws its coil to give love wings to fly.
 Both are the same, but in another state;
 This formed to soar, and that to vegetate.
 Of humble birth was he – patrician I, 225
 And yet this youth was my idolatry.
 Strong was my passion, past all inward cure,
 And could it be so violent, yet pure?
 'Twas like a philtre poured into my veins –
 And as the chemist, when some vase contains 230
 An unknown mixture, each component tries
 With proper tests, the draughts to analyze;
 So questioned I myself: "What lights this fire?
 Maids, and not boys, are wont to move desire;
 Else 'twere illicit love. Oh! sad mishap! 235
 But what prompts nature then to set the trap?³⁸
 Why night and day does his sweet image float
 Before my eyes? or wherefore do I doat
 On that dear face with ardour so intense?
 Why truckles reason to concupiscence? 240
 Though law cries 'hold!' yet passion onward draws:
 But nature gave us passions, man gave laws –
 Whence spring these inclinations, rank and strong?
 And, harming no one, wherefore call them wrong?
 What's virtue's touchstone? Unto others do, 245
 As you would wish that others did to you.

37: In fact *Eddlestone*. Byron's love for John Eddlestone, the Trinity College choirboy, did not become public knowledge till the twentieth century. Hobhouse, a Trinity man, would have known of it. Eddlestone is the object of the *Thyrza* poems.

38: 1866 has *But what prompts nature than ...*

Then tell me not of sex, if to one key
 The chords, when struck, vibrate in harmony.
 No virgin I deflower, nor, lurking, creep
 With steps adult'rous, on a husband's sleep. 250
 I plough no fields in other men's domain;
 And where I delve no seed shall spring again."
 Thus with myself I reasoned; then I read,
 And counsel asked from volumes of the dead.
 Oh! flowery path, thus hand in hand to walk 255
 With Plato and enjoy his honied talk.
 Beneath umbrageous plains to sit at ease,
 And drink with wisdom's cup with Socrates.³⁹
 Now stray with Bion through the shady grove;⁴⁰
 Midst deeds of glory, now with Plutarch rove.⁴¹ 260
 And oft I turned me to the Mantuan's page,⁴²
 To hold discourse with shepherds of his age;
 Or mixed with Horace in the gay delights
 Of courtly revels, theatres, and sights;
 And thou, whose soft seductive lines comprise⁴³ 265
 The code of love, thou hadst my sympathies;
 But still, where'er I turned, in verse or prose,
 Whate'er I read, some fresh dilemma rose,
 And reason, that should pilot me along,
 Belied her name, or else she did me wrong. 270
 I love a youth; but Horace did the same;⁴⁴
 If he's absolved, say, why am I to blame?
 When young Alexis claimed a Virgil's sigh,⁴⁵
 He told the world his choice; and may not I?
 Shall every schoolman's pen his verse extol, 275
 And, sin in me, in him a weakness call?
 Then why was Socrates surnamed the sage,
 Not only in his own, but every age,
 If lips, whose accents strewed the path of truth,
 Could print their kisses on some favoured youth? 280
 Or why should Plato, in his Commonwealth
 Score tenets up which I must note by stealth?
 Say, why, when great Epaminondas died,
 Was Cephidorus buried by his side?⁴⁶
 Or why should Plutarch with eugoliums cite 285
 That chieftain's love for his young catamite,
 And we be forced his doctrine to decry,
 Or drink the bitter cup of infamy?

39: A reference to Plato's *Symposium*.

40: *Bion*: Greek pastoral poet of the second century BC.

41: Three-quarters of the Greek heroes written about by Plutarch are depicted by him as having homoerotic inclinations.

42: *the Mantuan*: Virgil. See *Don Juan* I 42, 7-8 for a reference to his homoerotic Second Eclogue, the *Brokeback Mountain* of its day.

43: *thou*: Ovid.

44: *Horace did the same*: see *Don Juan* I 216, Byron's note to 1-6.

45: It is not Virgil, but Corydon, who sighs for Alexis: see VIR. ECL. 2.

46: (1866): Note 21, line 284). Vid. Plut. in vit. Epam.

But these, thought I, are samples musty grown;
 Turn we from early ages to our own. 290
 No heathen's lust is matter of surprise;
 He only aped his Pagan deities;
 But when a Saviour had redeemed the world,
 And all false idols from Olympus hurled,
 A purer code the Christian law revealed, 295
 And what was venial once as guilt was sealed.
 With zeal unwearied I resumed again
 My search, and read whate'er the layman's pen
 In annals grave our chronicles had writ;
 But can I own with any benefit? 300
 'Tis true, mankind had cast the pagan skin,
 But all the carnal part remained within
 Unchanged, and nature, breaking through the fence,
 Still vindicated her omnipotence.
 Look, how infected with this rank disease 305
 Were those, who held St. Peter's holy keys,
 And pious men to whom the people bowed,
 And kings, who churches to the saints endowed;
 All these were Christians of the highest stamp –
 How many scholars, wasting o'er their lamp, 310
 How many jurists, versed in legal rules,
 How many poets, honoured in the schools,
 How many captains, famed for deeds of arms,
 Have found their solace in a minion's arms!
 Nay, e'en our bard, Dame Nature's darling child,⁴⁷ 315
 Felt the strange impulse, and his hours beguiled
 In penning sonnets to a stripling's praise,
 Such as would damn a poet now-a-days.
 To this conclusion we must come at last:
 Wise men have lived in generations past, 320
 Whose deeds and saying history records,
 To whom the palm of virtue she awards,
 Who, tempted, ate of that forbidden tree,
 Which prejudice denies to you and me.
 Then be consistent; and, at once confess, 325
 If man's pursuit through life is happiness,
 The great, the wise, the pious, and the good,
 Have what they sought not rightly understood;
 Or deem not else that aberration crime,
 Which reigns in every caste and every clime. 330
 Harassed by doubts, I threw my books aside.
 "Oh! false-named beacons of mankind," I cried,
 "Perdition's in your light! The gleam you show
 Guides to a haven where no bark should go.
 'Tis you that foster an illicit trade, 335

47 (1866): Note 24, line 315. "Nay, e'en our bard, Dame nature's darling child." Anyone who has read Shakespeare's Sonnets attentively, cannot but wonder how he can pen such tender things to boys. Again, is it not extraordinary that Milton should have chosen for the poetical name of his friend, whose untimely end he so beautifully laments, the appellation of one of Horace's minions, Lycidas?

And warp us where a strict embargo's laid.
 'Twere just as well to let the vessel glide
 Resistless down the current, as confide
 In charts, that lead the mariner astray,
 And never marks the breakers in his way." 340
 But tell us, casuists, were statutes meant
 To scourge the wicked or the innocent,
 What! if the husbandman, among the seeds
 Of wholesome grain, detects unwholesome weeds;
 What! if amidst the standing corn appear 345
 Destructive tares, and choke the goodly ear;
 Is evil, not prepense, a crime defined?⁴⁸
 Are caitiffs those, whose sin was undesigned?
 In vice unhackney'd, in *Justine* unread,⁴⁹
 See schoolboys, by some inclination led: 350
 Some void, that's hardly to themselves confest,
 Flying for solace to some comrade's breast.
 In lonely walks their vows of friendship pass,
 Warm as the shepherd's to his rustic lass.
 Their friendship ripens into closer ties: 355
 They love. Then mutual vague desires arise.
 Perhaps by night they share each other's bed,
 'Till step by step, to closer union led,
 Like wantons, whom some unknown feeling charms,
 Each thinks he clasps a mistress in his arms. 360
 Imperious nature's sensual prickings goad,
 They own her dictates, but mistake the road.
 Fond parents, speak! if truth can find her way
 Through fogs of prejudice to open day.
 Is there a father, when, instead of this, 365
 His offspring sickens with a syphilis,
 Who can unmoved his tender bantling see
 Devoured with chancres, writhing with chordee,⁵⁰
 His blooming looks grown prematurely old,
 His manhood wasted ere its hours are told,⁵¹ 370
 His means with harlots and in brothels spent,
 His breath infected and his body bent,
 And will not own that any means were good
 To save from taint so foul, if save he could?
 Reflect, and chide not errors that arise 375
 Less from design than man's infirmities.
 Shut, shut your eyes, ye pedagogues, nor keep
 Too close a watch upon your pupils' sleep:
 For though, in boyish ignorance, they may
 Stumble perchance on some illicit play, 380

48: *evil, not prepense*: a crime not planned in advance. The argument is that if schoolboys don't know that what they're doing is wrong, how can they be held guilty?

49: *Justine*: disgusting novel by the Marquis de Sade. Byron had a copy.

50: *chancre*: a venereal ulcer. *chordee*: a painful inflammatory downward curving of the penis (O.E.D).

51: at this point the 1866 printer skips two lines in numbering, making his line-numbers out from now on. I have re-numbered both lines and notes.

Which looks like lechery the most refined,
 'Tis not in them depravity of mind.
 Ingenuous souls, oft innocent of wrong,
 For some enjoyment yet untasted long:
 'Twas ye who roused the latent sense of shame, 385
 And called their gambols by an odious name.
 Harrow, thy hill unblemished had remained
 Through years to come; but senseless fools arraigned,
 With noisy zeal the rumours faintly spread,
 And fixed a stigma on thy honoured head. 390
 Thus feverish fancies floated in my brain.
 Longing, yet forced my purpose to restrain,
 Upon the brink of infamy I staid,
 Now half resolved to plunge, now half afraid.
 But fate, that turns the eddy of our lives, 395
 And, at its will, like straws our fortune drives,
 Saved me, ere yet the desperate chance was run;
 For death deprived me of my Eddlestone.⁵²

I pass the useless hours in college spent –
 The morning's lounge, the evening's merriment, 400
 The tutor's lecture flippantly disdained,
 The bottle emptied and the punch-bowl drained,
 The restless slumber and the spewy bed,
 And all the horrors of an aching head;
 Some of our proud aristocratic joys; 405
 Youth's vision that reality destroys;
 The course pursued to people, church, and state,
 And rear up senators for grave debate.
 These classic pastimes had no charm for me;
 They filled my breast with languor and ennui. 410
 The daily round of dull scholastic rules
 Amused me not. – "I'll quit these wordy fools,"
 Cried I, "who pass unprofitable days
 To square a circle or collate a phrase.
 Be mine a wider field to till the mind, 415
 I'll ramble, and investigate mankind."

Launched on the main to distant climes I sailed,
 And mental freedom's pure Aurora hailed
 With all the glow that ardent youth inspires,
 Borne on the tempest of its own desires. 420
 What splendid cities and what navied ports,
 What feasts, what revels, and what princely courts
 I saw, were matter foreign to my theme:
 Love, love, clandestine love, was still my dream.⁵³

52 (1866): Note 28, Line 398. "And death deprived me of my Eddlestone." This was the youth's name and I have put it at full length, though in the printed work the letters E.....n are only used. He died in 1811. Stanza ix. of Canto II. Childe Harold is addressed to his memory. [In fact several of Byron's poems are addressed to Edlestone, including *The Cornelian* and *There be none of beauty's daughters* ...: see above, Introduction.]

53: *Love, love, clandestine love, was still my dream:* Byron gave as one of his reasons for the eastern travels the ambition to write a book entitled "Sodomy simplified or Pæderasty proved to be praiseworthy from ancient authors and from modern practice" (BLJ I 208).

Methought there must be yet some people found, 425
 Where Cupid's wings were free, his hands unbound,
 Where law had no erotic statutes framed,
 Nor gibbets stood to fright the unreclaimed.
 I'll seek the Turk – there undisputed reigns⁵⁴
 The little god, and still his rights maintains. 430
 There none can trespass on forbidden ground:
 There venial youths in every stew are found,
 And with their blandishments inveigle man,
 As does in Christian lands the courtesan.
 Lo! to the winds the sail its bosom heaves, 435
 Bland zephyrs waft us and the port receives,
 Where sable Euxine past is seen to glide,⁵⁵
 To join his waters with a fairer bride.
 'Tis here Byzantium's minarets arise⁵⁶
 Tipt with their golden crescents to the skies: 440
 And trees and palaces from height to height
 With vivid hues enrich the novel sight.
 Here much I saw – and much I mused to see⁵⁷
 The loosened garb of Eastern luxury.
 I sought the brothel, where, in maiden guise, 445
 The black-eyed boy his trade unblushing plies;
 Where in lewd dance he acts the scenic show –
 His supple haunches wriggling to and fro:
 With looks voluptuous the thought excites,
 Whilst gazing sit the hoary sybarites:⁵⁸ 450
 Whilst gentle lute and drowsy tambourine
 Add to the languor of the monstrous scene.
 Yes, call it monstrous! but not monstrous, where
 Close latticed harems hide the timid fair:
 With mien gallant where pæderasty smirks, 455
 And whoredom, felon-like, in covert lurks.

54: *I'll seek the Turk:* Greece was, when Byron travelled in 1809-11, a province of Turkey.

55: *Euxine:* the Black Sea. See *Don Juan* V, 5, 7-8.

56: *Byzantium:* Constantinople (Istanbul).

57: Publicly Hobhouse waxes rhetorical: "Rome itself, at the period of the famous edict of the Emperor Philip, could not have furnished a spectacle so degrading to human nature as the taverns of Galata" (*Journey* II 885).

On Saturday May 19th 1810, Hobhouse records on his diary: "This day, went with Byron and a party to the wine houses of Galata. Took pipes and saw two old and ugly boys who wrung the sweat off their brows – dance as before waving their long hair. Also they spread a mat and, putting on a kind of shawl, performed an Alexandrian woman's dance – much the same, except that they knelt and covering each other's heads seemed as if kissing – one of Mr Adair's Janissaries who talks English and has been in England was with us – I asked him if these boys would not be hanged in England. Oh yes directly. 'de Turk take and byger [sic] dem d'ye see?' For this beastly sight we paid 55 piastres, 5 to the boys each and 5 to all fiddlers and singers and performers &c. Nor is this dear, I understand. Turk boys are not allowed to dance" (B.L. Add. Mss. 56529).

58 (1866): Note 30, line 450. "Whilst gazing sits the hoary sybarite." Such houses are constantly open in Constantinople, as any one knows who has been there; and it was customary, twenty years ago (i.e. in the beginning of the nineteenth century) for all English travellers, who visited that city, to be conducted to them as to one of the curious sights of the metropolis. It is not wonderful therefore that Lord Byron went, and it is probable that Mr. John Cam Hobhouse went with him; for in conversation with Moore (see *Memoirs of Thomas Moore*, vol viii., p. 347). Hobhouse said, "I know more of Byron than any one else, and much more than I should wish any body else to know." Hobhouse's nervousness on one occasion when the subject of Byron's Life to be written by Moore, was under discussion, seems also to have reference to some such feeling. See Moore's Diary (1866 note continues for four more paragraphs).

All this I saw – but saw it not alone –
 A friend was with me, and I dared not own⁵⁹
 How much the sight had touched some inward sense,
 Too much for e'en the closest confidence. 460
 Deep in the dark recesses of my mind
 I hid my thoughts, nor told what they designed.
 "Quit we" (I cried) "these prostituted walls –
 A second Sodom here my heart appals.
 Spare us, good Lord! like patriarchal Lot! 465
 If fire and brimstone falls, oh, burn us not!"
 This mask of horror served my purpose well –
 Resolved to do what yet I feared to tell.
 I found no kindred leaning in the breast
 Of those around me, and I felt opprest. 470
 We bent again our topsails to the breeze,
 And reached unharmed those smooth cærulean seas,⁶⁰
 Whose surface, studded with a hundred isles,
 Heaves like the nurse that hugs her babe, and smiles.
 "Shipmates, farewell! and thou John Cam, adieu!" 475
 The nimble sailors up the mainsail clew:
 "Starboard the helm!" – the topsails fall aback,
 And the ship's course seems suddenly to slack.
 Down from the davits swiftly glides the boat –
 The boatswain whistles, and away we float. 480
 "Now pull together, lads!" We reach the land,
 And Zea's rocks receive me on the strand.⁶¹
 Hail, freedom, hail! For though the soil I trod,
 Still groaning lay beneath the Moslem's rod,
 Here first to me her benisons were known, 485
 For mental freedom is to think alone.
 Ah! little wots the friend I quitted here,
 What strange adventures marked the coming year.
 He sought his native shores; and, ever brave
 In danger's hour the freeman's rights to save, 490
 Stood in the senate by the people's choice,⁶²
 And, not unheeded, raised his patriot voice.
 I, wicked Childe, pursued a different course:
 A demon urged, and with Satanic force
 Still goaded on. "Retrieve the moment lost!" 495
 (He whispered) "Haste, and pleasure's cup exhaust!
 Go, lay thee down beneath the shady plain,
 Where Phædrus heard grave Plato's voice complain.⁶³
 Another Phædrus may perchance go by,
 And thy fond dreams become reality!" 500
 Thou know'st the land where cool Ilyssus flows,⁶⁴

59: *A friend*: Hobhouse.

60: *Cærulean*: sky-blue. See *Don Juan* IV 108, 2.

61: The *Salsette* dropped Byron off at Zea on Tuesday July 17th 1810.

62: Hobhouse did not become an M.P. until 1820, ten years after he left Byron in Greece.

63: 1866 has *Phædrus*.

64: *Thou know'st the land*: compare *The Bride of Abydos*, opening.

Where myrtles blossom and the olive grows,
 Where ruined temples overhang the plain,
 And lawless Klephts in devastation reign:⁶⁵
 Though reckless time has scarce preserved a trace 505
 Of what it was, I hied me to that place.
 Ye virtuous dead, whose names shall never die,
 Long as the sun illumes earth's canopy;
 Long as divine philosophy shall dwell
 In mortal breasts; long as the sacred well 510
 Of Helicon shall pour the dream of song,
 And noble deeds to poesy belong.
 Ye falling monuments and mouldering fanes,
 Where still the magic of past greatness reigns;
 Thou tall Hymettus, on whose honied top⁶⁶ 515
 Fresh odours rise, and dews in fragrance drop;
 Piræus, with thy never angry wave,⁶⁷
 Where oft my languid limbs I used to lave.
 Scenes, where my soul in stillness and retreat,
 Indulged in thought and lucubration sweet: 520
 Ne'er till this body in corruption rot,
 Shall those loved moments ever be forgot.
 In Athens stands an antiquated tower,
 Built to the winds, whose good or evil power
 Can one while fan with soft and balmy breath, 525
 Then blow the rushing mighty blast of death.
 This tower, composed by nicest rules of art,
 And richly chiselled round in every part,
 Which still the wonder of the traveller wins,
 Served as a cell for hooded capuchins, 530
 Whose walls monastic, girding it around,
 Had changed the Pagan spot to holy ground.
 'Twas here the pilgrim, doubtful where to lay
 His weary head, a welcome guest would stay;
 And, for his humble mite, could hope to share 535
 The frugal monastery's daily fare.
 Historians still some old traditions quote,
 That here Demosthenes his speeches wrote;⁶⁸
 And hence the temple with the vulgar famed,
 The Lantern of Demosthenes was named. 540
 There dwelt I long, the tenant of that cell:
 And not a mountain's side or hidden dell,
 And not a classic spot, or fragment rude,
 Or lettered plinth, but what in turn I viewed.
 Chance led me once, when idling through the street, 545
 Beneath a porch my listless limbs to seat,
 Where rudely heaped, some sculptured marbles lay,
 Of pediments now crumbled to decay.

65: *Klephts*: Greek mountain bandits.

66: *Hymettus*: tall hill near Athens.

67: 1866 has *Piræus*.

68: *An antiquated tower*: what Byron thought of as the Lantern of Demosthenes is in fact a monument to Lysicrates.

There the fallen building as I musing eyed,
 Which meditation to the mind supplied, 550
 And called me back to epochs now remote,
 When Zeuxis painted and when Plato wrote,
 Aloof my faithful Tartar waiting stood,
 (Derwish Tahiri); for he understood⁶⁹
 His master's fancies, and with naked blade, 555
 The near approach of boorish man had staid.
 Close to the spot a Grecian dwelling reared
 Its modest roof. A courteous man appeared;
 And bowing low, with invitation pressed
 To enter in, and on his sofa rest. 560
 I crossed the threshold of the courteous man,
 And smoked and chatted. Close by the divan
 His son, as Eastern usages demand,
 In modest attitude was seen to stand.
 And smiling watched the signals of my will, 565
 To pour sherbet, or the long *chibook* fill.⁷⁰
 Grace marked his actions, symmetry his form;
 His eyes had made an anchorite grow warm,
 His long attire, his silken *anteri*,
 Gave pleasing doubts of what his sex might be; 570
 And who that saw him would perplexed have been,
 For beauty marked his gender epicœne.
 Day after day my visits I renewed,
 His love with presents like a mistress wooed;
 Until his sire with dreams of greatness won, 575
 To be my page made offer of his son.
 I took him in my train, with culture stored
 His mind, and in it choice instruction poured;
 Till like the maiden, who some budding rose
 Waters with care and watches till it blows, 580
 Then plucks and places it upon her breast,
 I too this blossom to my bosom pressed.
 All ye who know what pleasure 'tis to heave
 A lover's sigh, the warm caress receive
 Of some fond mistress, and with anxious care 575
 Watch each caprice, and every ailment share.
 Ye only know how hard it is to cure⁷¹
 The burning fever of love's calenture.⁷²
 Come, crabbed philosophers, and tell us why
 Should men to harsh ungrateful studies fly 590
 In search of bliss, when e'en a single day
 Of dalliance can an age of love outweigh!
 How many hours I've sat in pensive guise,

69: Dervish Tahiri was Albanian, not Tartar.

70: A chibook (chibouk, chibouque) is a Turkish pipe.

71: 1866 has *Ye only know hard it is to cure* ...

72: *The burning fever of love's calenture*: calenture is a disease incident to sailors within the tropics, characterized by delirium, in which, it is said, they fancy the sea to be green fields and desire to leap into it. See *Don Juan*, XVI, 46, 5, or *The Two Foscari*, III i, 172-6.

To watch the mild expression of his eyes!
 Or when asleep at noon, and on his mouth 595
 His breath came sweet like odours from the south,
 How long I've hung in raptures as he lay,
 And silent chased the insect tribe away.
 How oft at morn, when troubled by the heat,
 The covering fell disordered at his feet, 600
 I've gazed unsated at his naked charms,
 And clasped him waking in my longing arms.
 How oft in winter, when the sky o'er cast
 Capped the bleak mountains, and the ruthless blast
 Moaned through the trees, or lashed the surfy strand, 605
 I've drawn myself the glove upon his hand,
 Thrown o'er his tender limbs the rough capote,
 Or tied the kerchief round his snowy throat.
 How oft, when summer saw me fearless brave
 With manly breast the blue transparent wave, 610
 Another Dædalus I taught him how⁷³
 With spreading arms the liquid waste to plough.
 Then brought him gently to the sunny beach,
 And wiped the briny moisture from his breech.
 Oh! how the happy moments seemed to fly, 615
 Spent half in love and half in poetry!
 The muse each morn I wooed, each eve the boy,
 And tasted sweets that never seemed to cloy.
 Let those, like Ædipus, whose skill divine
 Can solve enigmas strange, unriddle mine. 620
 How can two rivers from one fountain flow,
 This salt, that fresh, and in two channels go?
 Why one while would a living well-spring gush
 Forth from my brain, and with pure waters rush
 In copious streams to fertilize the rhyme, 625
 Which haply yet shall live till later time?
 And why, anon, like some Artesian fount
 Would ooziings foul e'en from my entrails mount,
 Salacious, and in murky current wet
 The urn beneath with interrupted jet? 630
 In Athens lived a widow poor and old,⁷⁴
 Who once could boast of coffers filled with gold;
 But when her husband died, misfortune came,
 And left her nothing but her honest name,
 With three young bantlings. 'Twas her lot to see 635
 Their years and charms increase to puberty.
 Theresa, Catherine, and Marianne,
 (For so their Christian appellations ran),

73 (1866): Note 34, line 611-12. "Another Dædalus, I taught him how / With spreading arms the liquid wave to plough." "His (Lord Byron's) early youth in Greece, and his sensibility to the scenes around him, when resting on a rock in the swimming excursions he took from the Piræus, were striking described" (*i.e.* in the burnt Memoirs). – DIARY OF THO. MOORE, p.192, vol. iv.

74: The widow was Tarsia Macri. What is not clear from the poem is that Byron and Hobhouse lodged with her and her three daughters from December 1809 to March 1810.

Had eyes like antelopes, with polished skins,
 And that ingenuous modesty that wins 640
 Men's admiration by no schooling taught,
 And wields a sceptre that was never sought.
 Much talk their beauty had in Athens made;
 Like others I my court and homage paid;
 For rich men find an access where they will.⁷⁵ 645
 Methought 'twere good my vacant hours to fill,
 In adoration at their beauty's shrine,
 And if they yielding proved, to make them mine.
 They proved but statues: rarely would their speech
 Beyond a simple affirmation reach. 650
 They never heard of Almack's, never knew⁷⁶
 Whose play was damned, who made the last *debut*.
 On Broadwood's keys, arranged in ivory row,
 Their taper fingers never learned to go.
 Bound in morocco, there no album lay 655
 To register each poetaster's lay.
 They read no page beyond the morning mass,
 Spelt with the aid of some revered papas:
 But, half reclined upon a low settee,
 With naked feet, and waist from corset free, 660
 Their joy was Mocha's beverage to sip⁷⁷
 From small *finjans* of Chinese workmanship,⁷⁸
 Or count their rosaries in listless ease,
 Whilst dying swains were sighing at their knees.
 Felt I their charms? I felt them not; for me, 665
 They just sufficed to tune my poetry.
 And though some leaf, which to the winds I cast
 Might say Theresa all her sex surpassed,
 I did as doctors do, who potions make,
 Which they prescribe much oftener than they take; 670
 Or as the preacher lauds the angels, more
 To make his hearers than himself adore.
 Women as women, me had never charmed,⁷⁹

75: Hobhouse's diary for Saturday March 3rd 1810 reads "Theresa twelve [years] old brought here to be deflowered, but Byron would not" (B.L. Add. Mss. 56529) See also Byron's letter to Hobhouse of August 23rd 1810 (BLJ II 13): "... the old woman Teresa's mother was mad enough to imagine I was going to marry the girl!"; or May 15th 1811 (BLJ I 46): "I was near bringing away Teresa but the mother asked 30 000 piastres!"

76: *Almack's*: one of the most famous and fashionable of London salons.

77: *Mocha's beverage*: coffee. See *Don Juan* III, 63, 3.

78: *finjans*: small Chinese cups.

79 (1866): Note 36, line 673. "Women as women, me had never charmed." The stories which were current up the Archipelago about Lord Byron's amours, seem to have originated in reports spread by his Greek servants, who, finding how eagerly every tale respecting his lordship was listened to by travellers and naval officers, may possibly have added to this number. Two of the servants were named *Demetrius* and *Basilus*, and the latter afterwards set up as a watchmaker at Cyprus. One of Basilus stories was that Lord B. consulted an English doctor who was passing through Athens at the time of his lordship's sojourn there, touching a relaxation in the *sphincter ani* with which the boy Giraud was troubled. The disease of a ragged fundament, arising from the frequent distension of the podex in antiphysical concubinage, was frequent among the ancient Greek and Roman *cinædi*, and the city of Clazomenæ, in Ionia, notorious for this species of debauchery, became a synonymous expression with it. To have the clazomenæ was to have what the Italians now-a-days call *fichi*.

[Inguina quod calido levas tibi dropace, causa est:

And shafts that others felt left me unharmed.
 But thou, Giraud, whose beauty would unlock⁸⁰ 675
 The gates of prejudice, and bid me mock
 The sober fears that timid minds endure,
 Whose ardent passions women only cure,
 Receive this faithful tribute to thy charms,
 Not vowed alone, but paid too in thine arms. 680
 For here the wish, long cherished, long denied,
 Within that monkish cell was gratified.
 And as the sage, who dwelt on Leman's lake,⁸¹
 Nobly his inmost meditations spake,
 Then dared the man, who would like him confess 685
 His secret thoughts, to say his own were less;
 So boldly I set calumny at naught,
 And fearless utter what I fearless wrought.
 For who that's shrived can say he ever slipped?
 Had conscience tongues what back who go unwhipt? 690
 Is there an idiosyncrasy prevails
 In those whose predilection is for males?
 And like the satirists, who gravely said,
 "When wives are tiresome take a boy to bed."
 Are female charms too feeble to resist 695
 The rooted bent of the misogynist?
 I know not; but from boyhood to the hour
 Which saw my wish accomplished in that tower,
 One thought undying ever would intrude
 In pleasure's moments or in solitude. 700
 So twigs, kept down by force, remount again,
 So casks infected still their smell retain.
 So needy spendthrifts, who are forced to pawn
 Their goods and chattels, when their credit's gone,
 From rooted instinct, where the brokers use 705
 A double entrance, will the back one choose.
 Sometimes I sauntered from my lone abode
 Down to the palace of the town waiwode.⁸²
 Methinks I see him in his rich divan,
 In crimson clad, a proud and lordly man. 710
 An amber-headed pipe of costly wood

irritant volsas levia membra lupas.]
 "Sed quod et elixo plantaria podice vellis,
 Et teris incusas podice clazomenas,
 Causa latet; bimarem nisi quod patientia morbum
 Appetit, et tergo fæmina, pube vir es."
 Auson, Epig. 122, iii.

[This epigram is so obscene that the Loeb edition refuses to translate it. Jane Raw has obliged me with a rough guide from which I have made the following (partial) version: "You have good reason to smooth your private parts with hot []: Smooth parts excite plucked she-wolves. But the reason why you also pluck hairs from your sodden anus, and rub forged [] on it, is less clear; unless endurance reaches / submissiveness grasps the illness situated between two seas [unless you have a ruptured bum??] and, though a man in the groin, you are a woman behind."

80: Niccolò Giraud was the nephew of Lord Elgin's draughtsman in Athens, Giovanni Battista Lusieri. He seems to have been Byron's favourite among his early boyfriends.

81: *The sage, who dwelt on Leman's lake:* Rousseau.

82: *the town waiwode:* local provincial ruler.

Adorned his hand; around *kawasses* stood.⁸³
 A sable beard his gravity bespoke,
 His measured words the silence rarely broke.
 Beside him sat a boy of gentle mien, 715
 In rich attire, in age about fifteen.
 His red *tarbûsh* o'ertopped his jet black hair,⁸⁴
 His cheeks were comely and his skin was fair.
 His faultless form, in Grecian garments cloaked,
 Thoughts more than mere benevolence provoked. 720
 Not Ganymede, whose all-bewitching shape,
 Could in Olympus sanctify a rape.
 Not Ali, long the Moslem prophet's joy,
 Bloomed with such graces as this Grecian boy.
 Waiwode, this stripling was thy catamite, 725
 And if by grave examples men do right
 To mould their lives, say, was my conduct weak?
 Was it a crime to imitate him? Speak.
 Full well I know the answer; thou would'st cry
 Shun, shun the monster, from his presence fly. 730
 Alas, my friend, and whither should I go?
 The self same usage reigns with high and low.
 There's not an envoy our good king has sent
 His royal majesty to represent;
 To lay a snuff-box at the sultan's feet; 735
 To coax, to lie, to threaten, or to treat;
 But must have known that, from the Grand Signor
 Down to the Tartar squatted at his door,
 All drink alike from the forbidden spring,
 And with reluctance wear Hans Carvel's ring.⁸⁵ 740
 Upon that altar friendship's vows are pledged;
 There young ambition's soaring wings are fledged;
 There the fond wife, whene'er the marriage rite
 Palls on her husband's sated appetite,
 The wily Parthian's stratagem has learned, 745
 Most sure to vanquish when her back is turned.⁸⁶
 For this the Mufti has no need to brave
 The scoffer's jest or scorn the judge's glaive;
 And fearless of the Alcoran's rebuke,⁸⁷
 O'er female tenderness would almost puke. 750
 On Albion's chaster sod we never dare
 Consort with such delinquents; not so there.
 Come Malthus, and, in Ciceronian prose,⁸⁸
 Tell how a rutting population grows,

83: A *kawass* (kavass) is an armed constable, servant or courier.

84: A *tarbûsh* (tarboosh) is a fez; a red felt hat with a blue silk tassel.

85: *Hans Carvel* is the unhappily-married hero of a poem by Matthew Prior.

86: *The wily Parthian's strategy ... when her back is turned:* Parthian cavalry tactics involved a feigned retreat, from which they would fire their arrows at the incautious enemy. The poet here writes, however, without delicacy, and does not refer to cavalry.

87: The tautological *The Alcoran* ("The TheKoran") was a common error.

88: Thomas Malthus, *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798), advocated reducing the size of poor families.

Until the produce of the soil is spent, 755
 And brats expire for want of aliment.
 Then call on God his mercies to dispense,
 And prune the mass by war or pestilence.
 Arm with your sophistry oppression's hand,
 And interdict coition through the land. 760
 Poor fool! the ruddy milkmaid's blooming cheek
 Can language stronger than your volumes speak.
 E'en in the cot, where pinching want assails,
 Love still finds time to tell his tender tales;
 Or else, when ousted from his lawful bed, 765
 Resorts to grosser substitutes instead.
 Economists, who seek the world to thin,
 'Tis you that teach this so named deadly sin;
 And the poor wretch, denied a wife's embrace,
 Appeases nature in another place. 770
 In sterile furrows why not sow his seed?
 Why follow not the strict Malthusian creed?
 The Scripture says, "Increase and multiply."
 Malthus cried "No!" till doubt brings jeopardy.
 God, like the potter, when his clay is damp, 775
 Gives every man, in birth, a different stamp.
 Divergent tastes his appetites disclose;
 These reason justifies, example those.
 Adair delights his manhood to display⁸⁹
 From window casements, and across the way 780
 Wooes some sultana's fascinated eyes,
 Convinced the surest argument is size.
 The reverend doctor, with a hernial taste,
 Goes fastening trusse with a ruptured waist.
 The Wadham fellow on a barber leers; 785
 The bishop drills the foot-guard grenadiers.
 Bred in the poisoned atmosphere of courts,
 Ernest, in youth, with maids of honour sports
 Expert on levée days their rumps to pinch;
 Then grows a whiskered roué every inch, 790
 Tumbles the pillow of a sister's bed,
 And trusts his secret only to the dead.
 Too proud to tilt upon plebeian ground,
 Of Norman blood a minion Beckford found;⁹⁰
 But caught perchance, in some unseemly play, 795

89 (1866): Note, line 779: The following anecdote is derived from a foreign ambassador's lady, who resided with her husband near Portman-Square. Sir Robert Adair, whilst he was ambassador at Constantinople, is known to have carried on an anonymous parley across the street with a Greek lady by dumb signs; a significant one was the display of his penis [sic] in a plate on the sill of the window. It was supposed, as the Greek women have latticed windows as well as the Turkish, and dare not be seen openly looking out, that someone had taken, unobserved, the lady's place, and afterwards divulged the ambassador's innocent practices; for the circumstance was very generally spoken of in the diplomatic circles of the Porte. [On May 1st 1815, Latour Maubourg – French Ambassador during Adair's time – relates in Hobhouse's hearing that A[dair] was a passionate man who disgraced himself by following the servant maids of Pera which shocked the Mussulman gravity ...]

90: See the cancelled stanza to CHP I: *Unhappy Vathek! In an evil hour / 'Gainst Nature's voice seduced to deed accurst, / Once Fortune's minion, now thou feel'st her power!* and so on.

Years have not served to wipe the stain away.
 H — D — paws,⁹¹ and red-haired Charlton sips,
 Tiptongued, the nectar from vaginal lips.
 Some take a flogging, till the smart supplies
 Incentives to their dormant energies. 800
 Some hoary captains oft their yards have braced
 Where Jean Secundus only *basia* placed;⁹²
 For Mother Wood has maidens complaisant,
 With mouthpiece ready for each old gallant;
 And Mother Windsor plies her dirty work, 805
 To suit the taste of Hebrew, Greek, or Turk.
 Professors there peer through the wainscot hole,
 And watch the needle dipping at the pole.
 Or nicely solve by observations found,
 The problem of the oval and the round. 810
 Some in the flask can give their prowess leaven;
 Whilst some in corners give themselves a heaven.
 The strumpet, Myrrha, steals by night, and stirs
 Her sire to incest – Cenci’s poignard hers.⁹³
 Dixie, to vengeance and to lust less prone, 815
 Nor saves her father’s honour nor her own.
 A pair of breeches S — n and W — k shock,⁹⁴
 They ask no joys beyond each other’s smock.
 Penelope, the model of a wife,⁹⁵
 Grasps in her hand all night the staff of life. 820
 And e’en in sleep to lose that bauble fears,
 For which she sighed, a widow twenty years.
 Lucretia drives a dagger to her heart,
 Unwilling with her chastity to part.
 The stern Virginius views his daughter dead⁹⁶ 825

91: “H.D.” unidentified.

92: Johannes Secundus, sixteenth century Dutch poet who imitated Catullus. He wrote the *Liber Basiorum* (*Book of Kisses*).

93: References to father-daughter incest in Alfieri’s *Mirra* and Shelley’s *The Cenci*.

94: [817: 1866 has S — and W — k.] (1866) Note 52, lines 817-18. “A pair of breeches S — n and W — k shock, / They ask no joys beyond each other’s smock.” These two names (Lady Strachan and Lady Warwick) seem to have been selected by the author, because they had obtained some notoriety for a species of lasciviousness, probably common enough nowadays, but of frequent practice among the Roman ladies. There was a caricature of these two ladies in the window of Fores’ shop in Piccadilly some years ago. Females addicted to these modes of mutual gratification were called tribades and frictrices.

“Lenorum ancillas positâ Lanfella coronâ
 Provocat et tollit pendentiae premia coxæ
 Ipsa Medullinæ frictuno crissantis adorat.

“Inter se geminos audes committere cunnos;
 Mentiturque virum prodigiosa Venus.
 Commenta est dignam Thebano ænigmate monstrum,
 Hic ubi vir non est ut sit adulterium.” – Mart.

[First epigram unidentified. Second: “You dare to join two cunts and your monstrous organ feigns masculinity. You have invented a portent worthy of the Theban riddle: where no man is, there is adultery”. - tr. D.R.Shackleton Bailey, Loeb I 109.] [This 1866 note continues for another two pages.]

95: “Penelope, that model of a wife.” “Et, quamvis Ithaco, stertente, pudica solebat / Illic Penelope semper habere manum.” – MART. ii, 105. Martial refers to Penelope’s way of consoling herself for Odysseus’ absence.

96: In Livy, Virginius slew his daughter to save her from the lecherous advances of the magistrate Appius.

Unmoved, to save that film – a maidenhead;
 Which modern virtue is so used to slight,
 It hardly serves to make rich gudgeons bite.
 For things when new, not always will command
 A price as great as when they're second hand. 830
 So good Cremona fiddles sell for more,
 Which amateurs have played upon before.
 So able navigators sail secure,
 Where previous soundings make the passage sure.
 Had Foote been prudish,⁹⁷ nobody would meet 835
 Her carriage rolling down St. James's Street.⁹⁸
 Had Blessington⁹⁹ resolved her charms to bring
 Into the market for a wedding ring,
 She now might toil an honest farmer's bride,
 And one fair flower unseen had bloomed and died. 840
 Oh! England, with thy hypocritic cant,
 To hear the bench disdain, the pulpit rant,
 Who would not say that chastity's pure gems
 Had shed their lustre o'er the muddy Thames?
 That, self-condemned, decried, ineffable, 845
 Innominate, the blackest sin of hell,
 Had fled dismayed down some Transalpine shore,
 To sully Albion's pudic cliffs no more?
 Marked you the thousand inkhorns that indite,
 With ruthless glee the name of some poor wight, 850
 By Bow Street bloodhounds to their Jeffreys brought,
 With flap unbuttoned, in some tap-room caught?¹⁰⁰
 Heard you the thousand post-horns that diffuse
 The foul details, and pimp to lust for news?
 Saw you the wealthy, who profusely dine 855
 On viands rich; and o'er their evening wine,
 With well-feigned horror prophecy his end,
 Nor at his fate one saving accent lend?
 Barbarians! know you whence his failings sprung?
 Know you what Mentor tutored him when young? 860
 Perhaps he scorned the maiden's troth to win,
 And thought seduction was the greater sin;
 Or feared the scald of that infectious taint,
 Which makes a man or sodomite or saint.
 Perhaps he was ill-favoured, humpbacked, shy; 865
 Or shunned the harlot's laugh and ribaldry.
 He kept no miss to dandle on his knee,
 Or could not pay a bed room at the Key.¹⁰¹
 This was his fault, to weigh with scales too nice
 Between a heartless crime and harmless vice. 870

97: Maria Foote, actress, daughter of Samuel Foote.

98: St James's Street, south of Piccadilly, where Byron lived during 1812.

99: Lady Blessington started life as the wife of an Irish farmer, who sold her to her next "husband".

100: This was the case with the Bishop of Clogher.

101 (1866): Note 57, line 868. "Or could not pay a bed room at the Key." A celebrated brothel in Chandos Street, since pulled down.

Yes, London! all thy chastity is show;
 Bear witness Vere Street and the Barley Mow.¹⁰²
 Lives there a man, whate'er his rank may be,
 Who now can say, my caste from stain is free?
 Are you a soldier? Pace the barrack room, 875
 Just as the morning dawn dispels the gloom.
 See where the huddled groins in hot-beds lie,
 Each fit to be a garden deity.
 Though all the Messalinas of the shire,¹⁰³
 Devote their days and nights to quench the fire, 880
 And misses club in every country town,
 To keep the martial priapism down,
 The fermentation still much scum supplies,
 Which to the bung-hole will o'erflowing rise.
 Drummers may flog, judge advocates impeach, 885
 The soldier's post is ever at the breach.
 Are you a sailor? Look between the decks;
 What sinews thewed are there! what sturdy necks!
 Pent in their hammocks for a six month's cruise,
 They dream of Portsmouth Point and Wapping stews. 890
 No deep-sea lead, suspended from a weight,
 Could keep their manhood in quiescent state:
 Or if the urinary organs prest
 By grog o'ernight, should interrupt their rest,
 Not all the founts that Marley's height supplies, 895
 In surer perpendicular may rise.
 The prurient metal hot desire begets;
 Their mouths delight in foulest epithets;
 And that gross word, which crowns a seaman's phrase,
 The latent thought if not the deed betrays. 900
 At college bred, and destined for the church,
 You turn a Busby, and you wield the birch.
 Think you there's no incentive in the sight
 Of sixth-form bottoms, naked, round, and white?
 Ask Drury, Butler, sleek-gilled Goodenough,¹⁰⁴ 905
 How looks a kallipygic disk in buff?¹⁰⁵
 Ask him of Eton, who if fame speaks true,
 Made open boast he all his scholars knew
 By their posteriors better than their face,
 As most familiar with the nether place.¹⁰⁶ 910
 Flog, lechers, flog, the measured strokes adjust:
 'Tis well your cassocks hide your rising lust.

102 (1866): Note 58, line 872. "Bear witness Vere Street and the Barley Mow." Two gangs of miscreants (as they were called when this poem was written) were discovered at these places.

103: *Messalina*: sexually voracious (in legend), wife of the Emperor Claudius. See JUV. SAT. 6 and 10.

104: Joseph Drury, headmaster of Harrow when Byron was there; Samuel Butler, head of Shrewsbury School; and Edmund Goodenough, head of Westminster (Hobhouse's school).

105: *kallipygic* means "beautiful-buttocked".

106 (1866): Note 62, line 910. "As most familiar with the nether place." This anecdote must have some truth in it, for it was related by Mr. Freemantle in an after-dinner party over his wine. Mr. Jepson, of Trinity College, Cambridge, probably could have made the same recognition of his pupils.

Are you a senator? But come with me,
 And seat yourself beneath the gallery.
 Faugh! how the steams of fetid stomachs rise, 915
 In belchings fresh brought down from Bellamy's.
 Now look: those crowded benches contemplate,
 Where legislators sit in grave debate.
 They make our laws, and twist the hempen cord,
 That hangs the penniless and spares the lord. 920
 Behold that shining forehead, scant of hair:
 Our learned schools are represented there.
 He moves his seat. His limping steps denote,
 The gout has found a passage down his throat.
 Yet judge not rashly; for his mind's a hoard, 925
 With Bodley's tomes and Boyle's acumen stored.¹⁰⁷
 Alas! the time shall come, when he, like me,
 Shall fall a victim to foul calumny.
 Then all his love of learning, all his worth,
 The seat he holds by talent and by birth, 930
 Shall count as dross; whilst basest rumours, spread
 Folks care not how, shall light upon his head.
 Then friends shall shun him, and a venal press
 Shall seal in blackest types his wretchedness.
 Whilst some false lawyer, whom he called his friend, 935
 To damn his name his arguments shall lend.
 Shall take a brief to make his shame more clear,
 And drop his venom in a jury's ear.
 But had that tongue with earnest friendship glowed,
 His words had lighted, not increased the load; 940
 Had poured a balmy unguent on his sore,
 And chased mendacious slander from the door.
 So uncorked hartshorn, when its odour flies¹⁰⁸
 Forth from the phial, almost blinds the eyes;
 But, if the stopper is replaced with care, 945
 The scent diffused evaporates in air.¹⁰⁹
 Look at that row where elder Bankes is placed,¹¹⁰
 There sits a youth with courtly manners graced.
 He fought his country's wars, and fixed his tent
 Where Etna burns with fuel never spent.¹¹¹ 950
 'Twas there, where summer suns eternal beam,
 And life's the doze of one delicious dream,
 Where pleasure loves to twine her silken chains,

107: Thomas Bodley, founder of the Bodleian at Oxford; and Robert Boyle, seventeenth-century scientist.

108: 1866 has *To uncorked hartshorn*.

109: "But if the stopper is replaced with care, / The scent diffused evaporates in air." Mr. Richard Heber, M.P. for Oxford, the great book-collector, is the gentleman here meant. Mr. Heber's shame was brought to light in consequence of an action for libel, instituted by Mr. Hartshorn against the editor of a newspaper, wherein pointed allusions were made to a supposed intimacy between Mr. Heber and Mr. Hartshorn's son. In this action Mr. Scarborough, afterwards Lord Abinger, was counsel for the plaintiff.

110 (1866): Note 63, lines 947. "the elder Bankes" is the father of William Bankes, Trinity friend of Byron and Hobhouse. See notes below to 1317-18. Louis Crompton (*Byron and Greek Love*, p.360) uses this line as evidence that the writer was intimate with the seating arrangements in the House of Commons, which Hobhouse would have been.

111: Sicily.

And builds her altars in a thousand fanes,
 There, nursed by heated sap, new blossoms shot, 955
 And the rich soil exotic fruit begot.
 For there, e'en rivers in their course are found
 To run not on the bosom of the ground.
 But when from Alpheus Arethusa fled,¹¹²
 And, frightened, sought a subterranean bed, 960
 Not face to face his stream with hers combined,
 But mixed his nasty waters from behind.
 Ah! youth beware! forget Trinacria's isle;¹¹³
 A deadly blight lies hid beneath her smile:
 And when the day shall come (for come it will), 965
 The honoured station, which in life you fill,
 Will only add momentum to your fall,
 And stain the scutcheon in your father's hall.
 Now turn your eyes athwart the speaker's chair:
 A pious orator is seated there. 970
 In vain the negro's cause he nightly pleads;
 Tells how the gangrened back with lashes bleeds;
 Delights with philanthropic zeal to rail,
 And paint the horrors of a felon's jail,
 Let but some knave vituperate his name, 975
 Adieu to all his former well-earned fame!
 An exile to a foreign land he'll fly,
 Neglected live, and broken-hearted die.¹¹⁴
 Britons! and will no penalty suffice,
 Except the gibbet for a lecher's vice? 980
 To lose his country, to behold the chain
 That linked his best affections snapped in twain,
 To find no refuge for his stricken head,
 Where'er he goes to know his shame is spread,
 And is not this enough, without he's cast 985
 By judge and jury? fiends would cry "Avast!"
 Blot out the crimson leaf! the glaive¹¹⁵ forbear!
 Count o'er the wretched victims of despair.
 The panic flight, the suicidal beam,
 The knife, the bullet, do they trifles seem? 990
 Thirst ye for blood? and will no punishment,
 But what Old Bailey metes, your hearts content?
 Oh! Peel, for this nefarious deed alone,
 Do what thou wilt, thou never canst atone.
 Why blow the bubble of thy own repute 995

112: Alpheus and Arethusa: see Milton, *Lycidas*, 132 and 85. Alpheus, a Sicilian river-god, fell in love with Arethusa, a nymph.

113: Trinacria, the three "corners" of Sicily.

114 (1866): Note 66, lines 977-8. "An exile to a foreign land he'll fly; / Neglected live, and broken-hearted die." Mr. Grey Bennett, who was maligned in the *Age* newspaper, in some verses which had reference to the name of a Brussels valet-de-place, one Valle, with gross insinuations of an improper intimacy between them. His death is recorded in *Galignani's Messenger* as having taken place at Florence some few days before, June 16, 1836. [Henry Grey Bennett (1777-1836) was Whig MP for Shrewsbury, 1806-7 and 1811-26. He was an associate of George Lamb and an opponent of Hobhouse.]

115: A glaive is an improvised spear: a blade fastened to a long handle.

For laws amended, and on this be mute?
 Mute! no, not mute; for heretofore there lay
 A stumbling block in every jury's way;
 But, Draco-like, thou (gainsay who that can)¹¹⁶
 Didst add a cause to drown the sinking man. 1000
 Why were the listening Commons silent then?
 Martin has mercy – yes, for beasts, not men;
 And Brogden's modesty his voice impedes,¹¹⁷
 Who, when the sections of a bill he reads,
 With furs of coneys, to a gentle hush 1005
 Subdues his tone, and feigns a maiden's blush.
 But answer, Mackintosh;¹¹⁸ wert thou asleep?
 Or was the tide of feeling at its neap?
 Why gull the nation, with thy plans to mend
 The penal code, in speeches without end, 1010
 And, like a jelly bag, with open chops,
 Dwindle and dwindle into drizzling drops?
 Who dreamt of witchcraft? antiquated theme,
 And fall'n from long disuse in Lethe's stream,
 Whilst every circuit death was riding post 1015
 With warrants, signed by Sidmouth¹¹⁹ o'er his toast.
 Was it to do thy native soil a turn,
 Where hags are found yet weird enough to burn?
 Or hadst thou learnt the Scotchman's wily tricks,
 To make thy fortune by thy politics, 1020
 And meddled only with those points of law,
 Which raise a talk, and matter not a straw?
 Statesmen, in your exalted station know
 Sins of omission for commission go;
 Since ships as often founder on the main 1025
 From leaks unstopped as from the hurricane.
 Shore up your house; it totters to the base;
 A mouldering rot corrodes it; and the trace
 Of every crime you punish I descry:
 The least of all perhaps is sodomy. 1030
 Close to the chair, where Sutton¹²⁰ half the year
 Counts Ayes and Noes to make himself a peer,
 Behold yon reptile with his squinting eyes:
 Him shall my curses follow till he dies.¹²¹

116: Draco was a Greek lawmaker who devised an exact and savage punishment for every imaginable crime.

117: Brogden unidentified. Crompton (*op.cit.*, p.360) uses this line as further evidence that the writer was intimate with the House of Commons.

118: Sir James Mackintosh, Scots philosopher and parliamentarian.

119: Lord Sidmouth, Home Secretary during much of Byron's lifetime.

120: Charles Manners-Sutton, Speaker of the Commons. Described by one enemy as "a damned tiresome old bitch".

121 (1866): Note 70, lines 1033-4. "Behold yon reptile with his squinting eyes: / Him shall my curses follow till he dies." "Do you suppose I have forgotten or forgiven it? It has comparatively swallowed up in me every other feeling, and I am only a spectator upon earth till a tenfold opportunity offers; it may come yet! There are others more to be blamed than * * * *, and it is on them that my eyes are fixed unceasingly." – (Moore's *Life of Byron*, vol.3, p. 249.) [This passage is repeated as a note to 1427-8: *Divulge it not, lest Lushington should know, / And fill your cup with calumny and woe.* Dr Stephen Lushington (1782-1873) was the Noels' principle legal adviser during the separation proceedings. He was subsequently one of the defenders of Queen Caroline in 1820.] Lord Byron's animosity against

'Twas he that plugged my Annabella's ears 1035
 With vile opinions, fallacies, and fears;
 The richest treasure of my youth purloined,
 And put asunder those whom God had joined.
 Forgive these railings, much lamented bride!
 Who said I wronged my Ada's mother lied. 1040
 Thee, whom resemblance, wheresoe'er I go,
 Maketh a source of happiness and woe,
 Since, when dejected to the past I turn,
 I fancy griefs like mine thy bosom burn.¹²²
 For if the vows we plighted once were true, 1045
 So needs must be our mutual sorrows too.
 And are those happy days forever fled?
 Methinks 'twas yesterday, as both in bed
 We lay: her cheeks were pillowed in my breast;
 Fondly my arms her snowy bosom pressed. 1050
 Love no denial found, desire no stay.
 That night it was, when tired of amorous play,
 She bade me speak of wonders I had seen.¹²³
 In cities where my wandering steps had been.
 "Tell me," she said, "of strange and jealous men 1055
 In secret harems who their consorts pen,
 Of bluebeard Turks on Ottomans reclined,
 And young sultanas to their will resigned.
 And then she added, Leon, have a care;
 Say not we English ladies are so fair. 1060
 Some Eastern maid has heard thy plighted vows:
 She was thy love. I'm nothing but thy spouse."
 The veil of night, that hid her blushing cheek,
 Had made her bold to ask and me to speak:
 And though her words but half her thoughts betrayed 1065
 I knew their drift, and thus my answer made:
 "My tales, sweet Bell, will shock chaste ears like thine,
 The Moslem's wife is but a concubine.
 The nuptial night no altar sanctifies.
 No priest the knot indissoluble ties, 1070
 A marriage bond of half a dozen lines,
 Short as a billet-doux, the *cadi* signs,
 And from that hour, whate'er her lord may say,
 Or do, 'tis hers to honour and obey.
 For her 'tis true, the carpet spreads its flowers, 1075
 For her the arbour twines its roseate bowers;
 For her the vase exhales its choice perfume;
 For her rich sofas cushion every room;
 Bazaars supply their muslin and brocade,

Dr. Lushington, for the advice he gave to Lady Byron, seems to have known no bounds; – or is it Sir Samuel Romilly who is meant? [Compare *Manfred*, I i 244-51: *By that most seeming virtuous eye, / By thy shut soul's Hypocrisy, / By the perfection of thine art / Which passed for human thine own heart, / By thy delight in others' pain, / And by thy brotherhood of Cain, / I call upon thee! and compel / Thyself to be thy proper Hell!*]

122: 1866 has *I fancy griefs like mine thine thy bosom burn*.

123: Compare *Othello*, I iii, Othello's description of how fascinated Desdemona was by his exotic adventures.

And pearls of many a carat's worth are weighed. 1080
 The jet black girl, from Darfur's¹²⁴ burning sands,
 Bear fragrant Mocha in her lily hands;¹²⁵
 And slaves unnumbered all her wants supply,
 All, but that vital one of liberty."
 "Ah! hopeless wish to see those doors unbarred, 1085
 (Which lynx-eyed eunuchs, never dozing, guard)
 Save to a mother's or a sister's call,
 Or female guest on days of festival;
 Save when close muffled in her *feridjee*,¹²⁶
 She walks abroad her relatives to see, 1090
 Or to the bath her weekly visit pays,
 And pleased her jewels and her silks displays;
 Save when the *araba*, by oxen drawn¹²⁷
 Jolts her afield, where some secluded lawn
 Spreads its green sward, and no intruder checks, 1095
 The harmless gambols suited to her sex."
 "Thus through the morn (for that at least is hers)
 She sits immured, or else well-guarded stirs.
 But, when the hour is on the noontide tick,
 Her Aga slowly quits the *selamlik*;¹²⁸ 1100
 The harem opens to his loud *testoor*,¹²⁹
 Humbly she greets his entrance at the door,
 Serves him his pipe, and, crossing both her hands,
 Before her waist, expects his stern commands.
 His dinner set, she like a menial waits, 1105
 Watches his looks, his wants anticipates,
 Nor honoured sits beside him at his meat,
 Honour enough to see her husband eat!"
 "Perhaps, if still her cheeks their bloom possess,
 He lets her sit – vouchsafes a cold caress, 1110
 Or when the day is sultry, bids her chase
 The gnats away, that buzz around his face.
 But ah! the worst remains behind to tell –
 How must her breast with indignation swell,
 To see that tenderness by marriage owed 1115
 To her, upon a minion's form bestowed!
 Spurned from his couch, or with neglect dismiss
 Another lip than hers, a boy's, is kissed,
 To him with ithyphallic¹³⁰ gifts he kneels;

124: Darfur, the now-notorious area of Sudan.

125: 1866 has *Moka*.

126 (1866): Note 72, line 1089. "Save when close muffled in her *feridjee*." Feridjee, cloak or mantle of cloth, generally of a gay colour, worn by Turkish women out of doors.

127 (1866): Note 73, line 1101. "Save when the *araba*, by oxen drawn." Araba, a light wagon, drawn by oxen, in which Turkish women are carried out of town, in th[e]ir daily excursions. There is a tilt over it; and [it] is covered by curtains all round. [On Saturday June 9th 1810, Hobhouse records what he and Byron saw on an expedition to Buyuckdere, near Constantinople: here the ladies of the seraglio frequently come in the summer & [...] getting into Arabas jaunt up the beautiful vallies to the reservoir & fish & dine (B.L. Add. Mss. 56529)]

128 (1866): Note 74, line 1100. "Her Aga slowly quits the *selamlik*." Aga, master of the house. Selamlik, or salutation room, a small room just within the entrance door, where the master receive[s] his male visitors.

129 (1866): Note 75, line 1101. "The harem opens to his loud *testoor*." Testoor, or by your leave.

And that bright spark, which from Sol's chariot wheels 1120
 Prometheus stole to animate our clay,
 He husbands not, but throws the boon away."
 "Dear Leon," interrupting here my tale,
 My wife exclaimed, "can male then covet male?
 Can man with man hold intercourse of love, 1125
 And mar the ends designed by God above?"
 "Nay, Anna, hush! no falsehood I advance,¹³¹
 Yet wonder little at thy ignorance.
 On maiden's shelves, with chastest volumes lined,
 Systems like these, perchance 'tis rare to find. 1130
 But we, whose thirst of love no draughts appease,
 Exhaust the cask, and swallow e'en the lees;
 Watch proud philosophy in dishabille,
 Catch Parr with Meursius¹³² or with Fanny Hill;
 Stir up the ordure of the cynic's tub, 1135
 And prove the sage a butterfly or grub.
 Know then that boys strung old Anacreon's lyre,
 That boys the sober Virgil's lines inspire.
 Catullus pours his elegiac strains,¹³³
 Soothed by the portrait of a stripling's reins; 1140
 And" – "Hold!" she cried, "How little had I thought
 Catullus such abominations taught,
 That Virgil's shades beneath the shady beech
 In songs of lewdness dared the muse beseech.
 I oft have heard my venerable sire 1145
 The ancients praise, their doctrines too admire;
 But, sure I am, such things he never read
 To dear Mamma, unless it were in bed."
 That time it was, as we in parlance wiled 1150
 Away the hours, my wife was big with child.
 Her waist, which looked so taper when a maid
 Like some swol'n butt its bellying orb displayed,
 And Love, chagrined, beheld his favourite cell
 From mounds opposing scarce accessible.
 "Look, Bell!" I cried; "yon moon, which just now rose 1155
 Will be the ninth; and your parturient throes
 May soon Lucina's¹³⁴ dainty hand require
 To make a nurse of thee, of me a sire.
 I burn to press thee, but I fear to try,
 Lest like an incubus my weight should lie; 1160
 Lest, from the quick encounter we should doom
 Thy quickened fœtus to an early tomb.
 Thy size repels me, whilst thy charms invite;
 Then say, how celebrate the marriage rite?
 Learn'd Galen, Celsus, and Hippocrates,¹³⁵ 1165

130: *Ithyphallic*: a verse composed either in the metre or the mood of a Bacchic hymn.

131: Byron never addressed Annabella as Anna.

132: Johannes Meursius was a Dutch classical scholar of the sixteenth and seventeenth century.

133: For these references to Catullus, Virgil and Anacreon, compare *Don Juan* I, st. 42.

134: *Lucina*: the moon.

Have held it good, in knotty points like these,
 Lest mischief from too rude assaults should come,
 To copulate *ex more pedicum*.¹³⁶
 What say'st thou, dearest? Do not cry me nay;
 We cannot err where science shows the way." 1170
 She answered not; but silence gave consent,
 And by that threshold boldly in I went.
 So clever statesmen, who concoct by stealth
 Some weighty measures for the commonwealth,
 All comers by the usual door refuse, 1175
 And let the favoured few the backstairs use.
 Soon as the languor which our limbs o'erspread
 Had ceased, I thus resumed the theme, and said,
 "Thou see'st how Nature's operations tend,
 By various roads, to work one common end, 1180
 Just as a vessel, from opposing rhumbs,¹³⁷
 Though winds may vary, to her haven comes.
 But ah! thou little dream'st how wide her hand
 Has spread her gifts o'er Cytheria's land,
 Another path untrodden yet remains, 1185
 Where pleasure in her close recesses reigns.
 The neophyte to that more hallowed spot
 But rarely ventures; 'tis the favourite grot
 Where sages, prelates, kings, and bards retire
 To quench the rage of Priapeian fire. 1190
 How many view this grotto from afar,
 Whilst fear and prejudice the entrance bar!
 There fain the pedagogue's lewd glance would reach
 Through the convulsions of a schoolboy's breech.
 There as the youth with tightened pantaloons, 1195
 Whirls through the dance in waltz or rigadoons,
 Or misses haunches wriggle in quadrilles,
 In thought the lecher his libation spills.
 There, as my lord, with achromatic glass,
 O'erlooks St. James's Park,¹³⁸ and on the grass, 1200
 Beneath his mansion's half-closed windows spies
 Two crouching urchins' gross obscenities,
 He turns his eager gaze, adjusts the screw,
 And brings their unwashed nudities in view.
 That spot, concealed by two o'erhanging hills, 1205
 Foul sweat and fœtid excrement distils,¹³⁹
 Yet frowsy, there the pipe-clayed soldier sports,
 And bishops hold episcopalian courts.
 'Tis there the Bath empiric's finger guides,
 The oiled bougie; and as the dildo slides¹⁴⁰ 1210

135: *Galen, Celsus, and Hippocrates*: three medieval medical authorities.

136: *ex more pedicum*: compare Catullus, XVI: *pedicabo vos et irrumbabo vos ...*

137: A rhumb is the line followed by a vessel sailing on one course, or a wind blowing continuously in one direction.

138: St James's Park, then as now a rendezvous-location for lonely and frustrated people.

139: 1866 has *foul sweat ane*.

140: a *bougie* is a thin flexible instrument made of waxed linen.

Besmeared, to meet last night's descending meal,
 Oft makes the strictures he pretends to heal.
 'Tis there Sir Astley, as his round he goes¹⁴¹
 In Guy's sick wards,¹⁴² to gaping pupils shows
 How art can grope to find a schirrous gland, 1215
 And in his cambric kerchief wipes his hand.
 But when ablution purifies its gates,
 And from within no odour emanates;
 Or when the bath its thermal waters lends
 The oppilated¹⁴³ passages to cleanse, 1220
 Its shade can e'en ambrosial gods delight,
 And makes great Jove become a proselyte,
 Thus to the Cnidian Venus¹⁴⁴ men inclined
 The knee, in homage to her parts behind;
 Despised her face, and greater pleasure found 1225
 In buttocks smooth, protuberant, and round."
 "And thou, dear Anna, think'st thou I can see
 Without a longing, all these charms in thee?
 Thou'lt say the seed that useless there is spilt,¹⁴⁵
 Thwarts Nature's purposes, and argues guilt. 1230
 Thou'lt tell me how we God's commands defy,
 Who bade mankind increase and multiply.
 Vain fear! to fancy he bestows a thought
 What germ is fruitful, or what ends in naught.
 Else show me why, for nine long months, thy womb 1235
 Is closed; since there that germ would find a tomb.
 And were no foetus in it, still we know
 Those lenten days when women's courses flow.
 How oft in dreams, that ape the hour of bliss,
 Our passions wander, 'till we wake, and miss 1240
 The lovely phantom clasp't in our embrace,
 And find a lost emission in its place.
 Then turn thee round, indulge a husband's wish,
 And taste with me this truly classic dish."
 Who that has seen a woman wavering lie 1245

141: Sir Astley unidentified.

142: *Guy's sick wards*: in Guy's Hospital, London.

143: *Oppilated*: blocked up; obstructed.

144: *The Cnidian Venus*: Cnidos in Asia Minor had, with Paphos, one of the two main shrines to Venus. See Horace, Odes, I, 30, 1: *Venus regina Cnidi Paphiquæ* ...

145 (1866): Note 83, line 1229. "Thou'lt say the seed that there is spilt / Thwarts nature's purposes and argues guilt." It is quite clear that the author of this epistle had read *Justine, ou Les Malheurs de la Vertu*, by the Marquis de Sade, as the arguments used in the sixteen following lines are assuredly taken from that extraordinary work. The public journals have lately been filled with execrations against the memory of that nobleman, who had recently died in an advanced age; but why is he worse than Pliny the Younger, who wrote lascivious poetry, and takes no great shame to himself for having done so? (Vid. *Epist.* xviii. *Epist.* iv, 14, 15) and Ausonius (*Cent. Nupt.*) alludes to these writings of Pliny as something very obscene. Meminerint autem quippe eruditi probatissimo viro, Plinio, in poematiis lasciviam, in moribus constitisse cesuram. [The signs are that Hobhouse had read *Justine*. On Saturday April 22nd 1815, he writes in his diary: Macnamara told us to day some horrid stories of the depravity of Paris, of what he had himself seen of beastly unnatural crimes in the palais royale, and the reality of the horrors of *Justine* – a man has been guillotined for cutting his mistress out of lust & opening a vein in her neck which killed her (Berg 3:128). On Tuesday May 2nd 1815 he further records: going through the Rue Richelieu I was aborded by a woman who made me several singular propositions a la *Justine* – beginning with the most brutal (Berg 3:163)]

Betwixt her shame and curiosity,
 Knowing her sex's failing, will not deem,
 That in the balance shame would kick the beam?
 Ah, fatal hour, that saw my prayer succeed,
 And my fond bride enact the Ganymede. 1250
 Quick from my mouth some bland saliva spread¹⁴⁶
 The ingress smoothed to her new maidenhead,
 The Thespian God his rosy pinions beat,
 And laughed to see his victory complete.
 'Tis true that from her lips some murmurs fell – 1255
 In joy or anger, 'tis too late to tell;
 But this I swear, that not a single sign
 Proved that her pleasure did not equal mine.
 Ah, fatal hour! for thence my sorrows date:
 Thence sprung the source of her undying hate.¹⁴⁷ 1260
 Fiends from her breast the sacred secret wrung,
 Then called me monster; and, with evil tongue,
 Mysterious tales of false Satanic art
 Devised, and forced us evermore to part.¹⁴⁸
 Pardon, dear Tom, these thoughts on days gone by: 1265
 Me men revile, and thou must justify.
 Yet in my bosom apprehensions rise,
 (For both poets have their jealousies),
 Lest, under false pretences, thou should'st turn
 A faithless friend, and these confessions burn.¹⁴⁹ 1270
 Scott, you and I, rule o'er Parnassus now:
 Who next may wear the laurels on their brow
 I care not. To my country I bequeath
 My works; posterity our crowns shall wreath,
 Then why should malice vex us during life? 1275
 Between us bards unseemly is the strife.
 Why fight for fame? Thou hast not now to learn
 On what small pivots empty honours turn.
 We, paper kites, in vain essay to rise,
 Unless some wind propels us to the skies. 1280
 Scott would have been plain, simple Walter still,
 Had not a monarch smarted from my quill,
 And, sick with spite, to give my rival fame,
 Planted a Sir before his Christian name.¹⁵⁰
 GEORGE little cared for Walter's doggrels; he, 1285

146 (1866): Note 85, line **1251**. “Quick from my mouth some bland saliva spread, / The ingress smoothed to her new maidenhead.” Juvenal tells us that the Romans used to lubricate the same orifice in the same way.

“Ille fruatur

Vocibus obscænis, omnique libidinis arte,

Qui Lecadæmonium pytismate lubricat orbem.” – Juv. xi. 171.

147: (1866): Note 86, lines **1259-60**. In vol. iv, p.555, of *Byron's Life*, Lady B. is made to say, when speaking of her separation from her husband, “Although I had reason of reserving a part of the case from the knowledge of even my father and another, &c.” Was this the part of the case that Lady B. meant?

148: Many more offences in addition to this on Byron's part lead to the separation.

149 (1866): Note 87, lines **1269-70**. “It was a pity that nothing, save the total destruction of Byron's memoirs would satisfy his executors, but there was a reason” *Premat nox alta*. – *LIFE OF BYRON*.

150: Obscure. Scott's knighthood had nothing to do with any attacks Byron made on the monarchy.

Exalting him, had hoped to lessen me.
 Light paste makes puffs, but solid dough makes bread,
 On that we cloy, on this are daily fed.
 The fearless man, in conscious virtue clad,
 Endures the persecution of the bad, 1290
 Pursues his road by envy's shafts assailed,
 Nor reaps renown until his coffin's nailed.
 Then should you, tempted by some Lintot, print¹⁵¹
 My strange career, allow one friendly hint.
 Be true to nature; paint me as I am; 1295
 Abate no sin I had, no virtue sham;¹⁵²
 Be simple in your style; for truth looks best,
 Not spangled o'er with tropes, but plainly drest;
 Shun meretricious ornaments; for why?
 You've whored enough, men think, in poetry. 1300
 With judgement sound, unmoved by passion, write,
 And leave to Rogers¹⁵³ all an author's spite.
 Yet not unsung be his and Southey's¹⁵⁴ praise:
 Mine be the tasks their monuments to raise.
 My verse shall live, more durable than brass,¹⁵⁵ 1305
 And make their streams to future ages pass.
 But, whilst St. Stephen's candle still give light,¹⁵⁶
 Let us resume our seats. A luckless wight¹⁵⁷
 Sits on the left, one rich in classic lore,
 Who roamed, like me, strange countries to explore. 1310
 In Moslem lands, like me, long time he dwelt,
 Long time the venom of their custom felt.
 And could I, as the Pythoness of old,
 His morrow in these distichs rude unfold,
 Nor warn in riddles understood too late, 1315
 Haply I might avert his future fate.
 "Hearken, oh gifted youth!" (my voice should be)
 "The Abbey walls reserve a niche for thee;
 "And where to fame the great and good consign
 "Their ashes, living thou shalt blazon thine."¹⁵⁸ 1320

151: [1293]: 1866 has *Lintol*. *Lintot*: Barnaby Bernard Lintot (1675-1736) publisher of Pope's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.]

152: Compare *Othello*, V ii 342 *et seq*: *Speak of me as I am, nothing extenuate*, and so on.

153: Samuel Rogers, banker, poet, and friend of Byron.

154: Robert Southey, Poet Laureate and enemy of Byron.

155: Compare Shakespeare, Sonnet 65.

156: St Stephen's Chapel, where the Commons met.

157: The author now forgets completely that Byron would never have sat in the Commons. The *luckless wight* is William Bankes; see next note.

158 (1866): Note 88, lines 1319-20. "And where to fame the great and good consign / Their ashes, living thou shalt blazon thine." In Galignani's *Messenger* of June 11 (quoted from the *Globe*), we find who it was that the writer meant in the preceding lines. Here is the paragraph. "We yesterday stated that a case was under inquiry during the day at Queen Square Office, with closed doors. From delicacy we withheld the name of the individual charged; but the publicity given to it by the morning papers renders further concealment unnecessary; it is Mr. William John Bankes, M.P. for Dorsetshire. On its being known outside the office that the public were excluded, the greatest murmuring took place, and frequent were the cries of "It is because he is a rich man." One of the witnesses, who was highly indignant at the exclusion of the reporters, promised to take copious notes of the evidence adduced; and the public are indebted to him for the account of what transpired at this second examination of the wealthy individual. Mr. Bankes was accused of having been seen standing behind the screen of a place for making water against Westminster Abbey walls, in company

Portentous hour for him, who's doomed to feel
 The iron grasp of some rude *alguazil*;¹⁵⁹
 When through the streets the sanguinary crowd
 Shall mouth their curses horrible and loud,
 When e'en a father shall avert his face, 1325
 And fear to own his progeny's disgrace.
 Then Peel, if conscience be not wholly dumb,
 Within thy bosom shall compunction come.
 How shalt thou sorrow for the moment, when
 A single scratch of thy reforming pen 1330
 Had from our code erased a peccant lust,

with a soldier named Flower, and of having been surprised with his breeches and braces unbuttoned at ten at night, his companion's dress being in similar disorder. Other circumstances transpired, including a belief that a criminal connexion had taken place between them. When the evidence was finished, Mr. White, the magistrate, required bail in two sureties for £3000 each. Mr. Banks, senior, the prisoner's father, soon after arrived with another gentleman. Their bail was accepted. Mr. Banks, senior, never once looked on his son. The prisoner was then escorted with a strong body of the police into the Birdcage Walk, followed by an immense crowd, hooting and reviling. As soon as the prisoner got into the park, the constables blocked up the gateway, whilst he (Mr. Banks, jun.) got into his father's carriage, which immediately drove off.

At Mr. Banks's trial, the Duke of Wellington, — Montgomery, Esq., Samuel Rogers, the poet, Mr. Banks, the father, Lord F. Somerset, Dr. Butler, Master of Harrow, Dr. Chambers, Lord Burghesh, Mr. Galley Knight, the Earl of Ripon, Lord Caledon, The Rev. Mr. Jones, Sir E. Kerrison, Mr. Rose, Mr. Seaton, a barrister, Mr. Harcourt, M.P. for Derby, Dr. Batten, the Earl of Brownlow, Captain York, M.P. for Cambridge, Mr. Clive, M.P., Mr. Bond, Mr. R. Gordon, M.P., Mr. Harris, one of the judges of the Insolvent Court, Honourable Mr. Dundas, Lord Gage, Sir C. Beckwith, Mr. Peach, Honourable Mr. Best, Mr. Arbuthnot, Lord Cowley, Lord Brecknock, Sir C. Grant, Mr. William Smyth, Professor of Cambridge, Mr. Alexander, Mr. Beachey, Lord Stuart de Rothsay, Mr. D. Bailey, the Rev. G. Picker, and Mr. D. Brown. Some of these noblemen and gentlemen had known Mr. Banks, the prisoner, for thirty years, and the majority of them from twenty up to thirty years. They were all on terms of the greatest intimacy with him, and they all declared that, although Mr. Banks was a most open, candid, agreeable, lively person, he was never yet known to be guilty of an expression bordering on licentiousness or profaneness. The Lord Chief Justice then summed up the evidence, and the jury, after consulting together about twelve minutes, returned a verdict of Not Guilty. The foreman, Colonel Astell, added, "I am farther directed by the jury to declare their unanimous opinion that the defendants leave this court without the least stain upon their characters from this trial." THE GLOBE.

In September, 1841, this same Mr. Banks was again brought before a magistrate for indecently exposing himself in the Green Park, and was set at liberty on bail. Mr B. this time forfeited his recognizances, disappeared from society, and has not been heard of since. In fact he made everything over to his brother, retired to Venice, lived in the Ca d'Oro, continued to buy grand art which he shipped back to his home at Kingston Lacy - and was rumoured to have returned to England on Sundays, when he was free from arrest.

[Banks (date of birth uncertain) was a friend of Byron at Trinity, where Byron called him "my pastor and master" and "the father of all mischiefs" (BLJ VII 230-1). He achieved fame with his travels, on which he went in 1812 *et seq.* He was Tory M.P. for Truro (1810-12) for Cambridge University (1822-4) for Marlborough (1829-32) and for Dorset in the first reformed parliament (1832-5) a post from which, as the DNB puts it, he "retired voluntarily." His father died in 1835; he in 1855. See Jack Gumpert Wasserman, *William John Banks: "I love and esteem him": Byron*, NBSR July 2001, pp.70-84. Hobhouse's diaries are missing from May 10th 1833 to June 28th 1835, so we are unable to gauge his reaction to his friend's near-miss in that year; and there are no references to Banks in the diary entries for either September or October 1841.]

159: *alguazil* is Spanish for constable – a Dogberry. Hobhouse had felt the iron grasp of one such. Part of his diary for December 14th 1819 (the day of his arrest) goes: "Very well," said I, "then use force – I shall not go without". The messenger went out, and soon appeared with two tall fellows having certain badges on their breasts, they being other messengers. They waited in the other room. He came in again, and asked me if I should go – "Not without force." He seemed to hesitate, and not know what to do. "I am not going to shoot you" I said. "Oh", replied the man, "you are too much of a gentleman I am sure". This made us both laugh. The man said, "Well then Sir, you are my prisoner," and saying so laid his hand gently on my arm. I made a bow. "Very well – I yield to force – but recollect – I say it before Mr Bruce that it is to force only, and that I desire you to tell the Speaker the warrant is illegal and the arrest illegal and that I appeal against it." The man promised he would tell the Speaker. I put on my great coat, and walked down stairs. Ellice's two servants stood bowing at the door, and seemed as much distressed as if their brother had been carried off. I desired my compliments to Lady Hannah, and shook hands with Bruce and stepped into the coach. The two *alguazils* followed (B.L.Add.Mss. 56540)]

And left its punishment to men's disgust.
 Nor wilt thou pass that house without a pang,
 Which erst with social joy and revels rang,
 When rendered desolate by his disgrace, 1335
 Whose hand had helped to prop thy tottering place.
 For think not, man, the speeches thou hast made,
 And all thy frothy sophistry, has weighed
 One single vote! Their breaths 'twas filled thy sail,
 Who threw their rotten boroughs in the scale. 1340
 Backed by Corfe Castles,¹⁶⁰ orators have sense,
 And there find sinews for their eloquence!
 So stands a unit on a schoolboy's slate,
 A figure of no consequence or weight.
 It cannot multiply, it can't divide; 1345
 But place some hollow zeros by its side,
 And what alone for things of nothing tell,
 By union into vast importance swell.
 'Tis thus the bolstered minister requires
 A row of booby lords and country squires, 1350
 To cry out "Aye" to every wicked law,
 For every sop to sit with open maw.
 At every budget's launch the grease to smear,
 And hail their country's ruin with a cheer.
 Let my example one great truth unfold! 1355
 And in the mirror of my life behold
 How foulest obloquy attends the good,
 Whose words and deeds are never understood.
 Oh! strange anomaly, that those should wage
 War on my actions, who approve my page. 1360
 Whate'er I write, the town extols my song;
 Whate'er I do, the vulgar finds me wrong.
 Their feelings are not mine; in vain they scoff;
 I hate the vulgar, and I keep them off.
 They've done their worst, and now I heed them not; 1365
 On me long since their farthest bolts were shot.
 Admired and shunned, now courted, now contemned.
 By many eulogised, by more condemned.
 I stand a monument, whereby to learn
 That reason's light can never strongly burn 1370
 Where blear-eyed prejudice erects her throne,
 And has no scale for virtue but her own.
 That little spot, which constitutes our isle,
 Is not the world! Its censure or its smile
 Can never reason's fabric overthrow, 1375
 And make a crime what really is not so.
 The willing maid who plights her marriage vows,
 Owes blind obedience to her lawful spouse.
 Flesh of his flesh, and knitted bone to bone,
 As in a crucible two metals thrown, 1380

160: Corfe Castle, Dorset, was a famous rotten borough, abolished in 1832.

The ores commixt, but one amalgam form,
 And fuse more sure the more their natures warm.
 At Hymen's altar mystery presides,
 Spreads her dense veil, and in oblivion hides
 The sacred orgies of the nuptial bed, 1385
 Where timid nymphs to sacrifice are led.
 God of the universe, whose laws shall last,
 When Lords and Commons to their graves have past,
 Are good and evil, just as man opines,
 And kens he thy inscrutable designs? 1390
 Love, like the worship which to thee is paid,
 Has various creeds by various nations made:
 One holds as dogmas what the other mocks;
 That's schism here which there is orthodox.
 Some mode of faith finds favour in your eyes, 1395
 But must you, therefore, damn my heresies?
 Behold two nooks obscure, where, side by side,
 His feathered pinions Cupid loves to hide.
 What! if the little urchin I pursue,
 As fancy guides, in either of the two, 1400
 'Tis hard to say why erring mortals think
 This fount is pure, and that unfit to drink;
 And still the more the problem I revolve,
 The more I find it difficult to solve.
 When laws are made, which common sense decries, 1405
 Inert, they prove no bugbear to the wise.
 Philosophy the wiles of priestcraft scans,
 And shows what code is God's, and what is man's.
 Does not the gunner, who his mark would reach,
 First load the muzzle, and then prime the breach? 1410
 Boys, tickled by the tail, in wisdom grow,
 And by their tails *bashaws* their honours show.¹⁶¹
 Health through the tail by doctors is infused,
 And to a bum debts seldom are refused.
 Amidst the firmament when comets sail, 1415
 Where are our eyes directed? – on its tail.¹⁶²
 The ship gets bigger with the wind astern,
 The horse well figged appears the ground to spurn;
 The learned student, poring o'er his books,
 Like one absorbed in gravest study looks; 1420
 Yet, mark him well! and sometimes I'll engage,
 His finger's on the bottom of a page.¹⁶³
 Women and watches have one common power;
 We look on both their faces by the hour;
 Hung round our necks, their hands in secret move 1425

161: The seniority of a Turkish general (a Bashaw) was shown by the number of horse-tails fixed to his standard. Three was the maximum.

162 (1866): Note 90, line 1416. Amidst the firmament when comets sail, / Where are our eyes directed? – on its tail. "Blessed Jupiter! and blessed every other heathen god and goddess! for now you all come into play again, and with Priapus at your tails. What Jovial times!" Tristram Shandy, ch. c.

163: Compare *Beppo*, 99, 5: *My pen is at the bottom of a page ...*

In parts, where most we warm emotions prove:
 Both are wound up at night – the watch behind;
 But where you place the key to womankind,
 Divulge it not, lest Lushington should know,¹⁶⁴
 And fill your cup with calumny and woe. 1430

Look through the world! whatever mortals do,
 They still must keep their latter ends in view –
 Not death; for that let bloated parsons quail:
 Our latter end – what is it, but our tail?
 Where honour, sensitive, a shelter seeks, 1435
 Whose mouth in oracles to physic speaks;
 Whose voice can soothe a rumbling belly's moan,
 And, conscience-like, is loudest when alone;
 Whose motions imperceptibly controul
 The energies of body and of soul. 1440
 Health, ease, and honour centres on that spot,
 But, at the risk of life, approach it not.
 Oh, glorious privilege of kings! in this,
 That they alone can give the part to kiss.
 Once these were epigrams to raise a laugh: 1445
 The world is grown too scrupulous by half.
 Deprived through life of fundamental joys,¹⁶⁵
 Things can no longer find their equipoise.
 Closed is the Cnidian temple, and we see
 Writ on its walls "*Hic nefas mingere.*"¹⁶⁶ 1450

THE END

164: For Lushington, see 1032-3n.

165: Compare Dr Johnson, rephrasing "at bottom": "I say the woman is *fundamentally* sound".

166: *Hic nefas mingere* means "No pissing".