

DON JUAN**Canto 14****Written: Genoa, February 23rd–March 4th 1823****Fair-copied by Mary Shelley: Genoa, 1823****First published by John Hunt, with Cantos 12 and 13, December 17th
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DON JUAN CANTO FOURTEENTH

*edited by Peter Cochran*Fy. 23, 1814.¹

1.

If, from Great Nature's or our own Abyss
 Of Thought,² we could but snatch a Certainty,
 Perhaps Mankind might find the path they miss;
 But then 'twould spoil much good philosophy –
 One System eats another up – and this 5
 Much as old Saturn ate his progeny³ –
 For when his pious Consort gave him Stones
 In lieu of Sons, of these he made no bones.⁴ –

2.

But System⁵ doth reverse the Titan's breakfast,
 And eats her parents – albeit the digestion 10
 Is difficult; pray tell me, can you make fast,
 After due search, your faith to any question?
 Look back o'er ages – ere unto the Stake fast
 You bind yourself,⁶ and call some mode the best one;
 Nothing more true than *not* to trust your Senses – 15
 And yet what are your other evidences?⁷ –

1: B. intends "1823."

2: *Great Nature's or our own Abyss*: a remote echo of the words addressed ambiguously to the Holy Ghost at *Paradise Lost*, I, 19-21: *Thou ... Dove-like satst brooding on the vast Abyss*. See also Prospero to Miranda, *The Tempest*, I ii 48-9: *What see'st thou else / In the dark backward and abysm of Time?*

3: *Much as old Saturn ate his progeny ... Stones / In lieu of Sons*: As related by Hesiod in *Theogony* and Lucretius in *De Rerum Natura*, Saturn, fearful of inter-generational conflict (he had deposed Uranus, his own father) ate all of his children by the goddess Rhea except Jupiter, Neptune and Pluto-representing Air, Water, and Death – which he could not eat / defeat. She had concealed them, and given him stones to eat instead, without him noticing. B.'s synasthæsic simile confuses mental / philosophical appetite with bodily hunger.

4: *... of these he made no bones*: means (a) he didn't reduce the *children* to bones by eating them and (b) he paid no attention to the *stones*, much as the adherents of one philosophical system pay no attention to what they consider "out-moded systems", even though they relate to them as a children relate to a parent.

5: *But System doth reverse the Titan's breakfast, / And eats her parents – albeit the digestion / Is difficult*: all systems depend to a greater or lesser extent on ("eat") previous systems, which they add to, dissent from, or modify. The confusion between eating and thinking continues. For B. on systems, see letter to Moore, 1 June 1818: "**I told him [Leigh Hunt] that I deemed it [The Story of Rimini] good poetry at bottom, disfigured only by a strange style. His answer was, that his style was a system, or based upon system, or some such cant; and, when a man talks of a system, his case is hopeless: so I said no more to him ...**" (BLJ VI 46); or *Letter to John Murray*: **When a man talks of his System – it is like a woman talking of her Virtue – – – I let them talk on**" (CMP 156).

6: *ere unto the Stake fast / You bind yourself*: for *Stake* read *Steak* to continue the synasthæsic joke.

7: *Nothing more true than not to trust your Senses – / And yet what are your other evidences?*: 1.15 is disingenuous if seen in the light of the on-going joke, for senses are the only things one can trust in a world governed by appetite.

3.

For me – I know nought – nothing I deny⁸ –
 Admit – reject – contemn – and what know *you*,
 Except perhaps that you were born to die?
 And both may after all turn out untrue; 20
 An Age may come, Font of Eternity,
 When nothing shall be either old or new;
 Death, so called, is a thing which makes Men weep –
 And yet a third of life is past in Sleep.⁹ –

4.

A Sleep without dreams, after a rough day 25
 Of toil, is what we covet most;¹⁰ and yet
 How Clay shrinks back from more quiescent clay!¹¹
 The very Suicide that pays his debt
 At once without Instalments (an old way
 Of paying debts, which Creditors regret) 30
 Lets out impatiently his rushing breath¹² –
 Less from disgust of life, than dread of death. –

8: *I know nought – nothing I deny:* echoes the words of Beatrice to Benedick at *Much Ado About Nothing*, IV I 269-71: ... *believe me not, and yet I lie not; I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing.* But compare also above, IX st.17:

*There's no such thing as Certainty – that's plain
 As any of Mortality's Conditions –
 So little do we know what we're about in
 This world, I doubt if doubt itself be doubting.*

9: *Death, so called, is a thing which makes Men weep – / And yet a third of life is past in Sleep:* echoes *Measure for Measure*, III i 32-4: *Thou hast nor youth nor age, / But, as it were, an after-dinner's sleep, / Dreaming on both.*

10: *A Sleep without dreams, after a rough day / Of toil, is what we covet most:* See Plato. *Apology*, tr. Hugh Tredennick (Penguin 1961, p.71) for Socrates' lengthy argument to the effect that if death is like a night in which we sleep so soundly as not even to dream, then it is to be welcomed. DJP and CPW both find at LJ V 186 that the statement is translated into Latin by Cicero at *Tusc. Quaest.*, I 41.

11: *How Clay shrinks back from more quiescent clay:* the obdurate clay which is human flesh and blood shrinks from merging with the quiescent clay found in graves.

12: *Lets out impatiently his rushing breath:* echoes via distortion Keats, *Ode to a Nightingale*, 1.54: *To take into the air my quiet breath.*

5.

'Tis round him – near him – here – there – every where¹³ –
 And there's a courage which grows out of Fear,
 Perhaps of all most desperate, which will dare 35
 The worst, to *know* it; when the mountains rear
 Their peaks beneath your human foot, and there
 You look down o'er the precipice,¹⁴ and drear
 The Gulph of rocks yawns, you can't gaze a minute
 Without an awful wish to plunge within it. – 40

6.

'Tis true you don't – but pale – and struck with terror
 Retire – but look into your past impression!
 And you will find, though shuddering at the mirror
 Of your own thoughts, in all their Self-Confession,
 The lurking bias, be it truth or error, 45
 To the *Unknown* a secret prepossession –
 To plunge with all your fears – but where? – you know not –
 And that's the reason why you do – or do not. –

7.

“But what's this to the purpose?” you will say.
 Gent. Reader! – nothing – a mere speculation – 50
 For which my sole excuse is, 'tis my way;
 Sometimes *with*, and sometimes without occasion,
 I write what's uppermost – without delay;
 This narrative is not meant for narration,
 But a mere airy and fantastic basis 55
 To build up common things with common places.¹⁵

13: *'Tis round him – near him – here – there – every where:* commentators parallel the shouts of the sentinels and Horatio at *Hamlet*, I i 141-2: *'Tis here. – 'Tis here. – 'Tis gone.*

14: ... *when the mountains rear / Their peaks beneath your human foot, and there / You look down o'er the precipice:* compare *King Lear* IV vi 11-24 (where there is no temptation to suicide for the speaker, the cliffs being imaginary) or, more pertinently, Manfred's feelings at I i, 74-89:

*Ye toppling crags of Ice!
 Ye Avalanches, whom a breath draws down
 In mountainous o'erwhelming – Come and crush me!
 I hear ye momentarily above – beneath –
 Crash with a frequent conflict – but ye pass,
 And only fall on things which still would live
 On the young flourishing forest, or the hut
 And hamlet of the harmless villager ...*

*... The Mists boil up around the Glaciers, Clouds
 Rise curling fast beneath me, white and sulphury,
 Like foam from the roused Ocean of deep Hell,
 Whose every wave breaks on a living shore
 Heaped with the damned like pebbles. – I am giddy.*

15: *To build up common things with common places:* recalls the poem's Horatian motto, *Difficile est proprie communia dicere:* (in B.'s own version. *'Tis hard to venture where our betters fail, / Or lend fresh interest to a twice-told tale.*)

8.

You know – or don't know – that great Bacon saith
 “Fling up a straw, 'twill show the way the Wind blows”;¹⁶
 And such a Straw, borne on by human breath,
 Is Poesy, according as the Mind glows – 60
 A paper-kite which flies twixt life and death –
 A shadow which the Onward Soul behind throws;
 And mine's a bubble – not blown up for praise,
 But just to play with as an infant plays.¹⁷

9.

The World is all before me – or behind;¹⁸ 65
 For I have seen a portion of that same,
 And quite enough for me to keep in mind;
 Of passions too I've proved enough to blame,
 To the great pleasure of our friends, Mankind,
 Who like to mix some slight alloy with Fame – 70
 For I was rather famous in my time,
 Until I fairly knocked it up with Rhyme. –

10.

I've brought this World about my ears – and eke
 The other – that's to say the Clergy – who
 Upon my head have bid their thunders break 75
 In pious libels by no means a few;¹⁹
 And yet I can't help scribbling once a week,
 Tiring old readers – nor discovering new;²⁰
 In youth I wrote because my Mind was full –
 And now because I feel it growing dull. – 80

16: ... great Bacon saith / “Fling up a straw, 'twill show the way the Wind blows”: ... we usually try which way the wind bloweth, by casting up grass, or chaff, or such light things into the air – Bacon, *Sylva Sylvarum*; or, a Natural History (1627) No 820.

17: Poesy, according as the Mind glows – / A paper-kite which flies twixt life and death – / A shadow which the Onward Soul behind throws; / And mine's a bubble – not blown up for praise, / But just to play with as an infant plays: via his inscrutably playful tone B. plants in our minds the ideas (a) that poetry is a slight insubstantial thing and (b) that as the shadow of the forward-moving soul it is nevertheless, in its lack of substance, full of power, value and meaning.

18: *The World is all before me – or behind*: jokes with *Paradise Lost* XII 646, (*The World was all before them*) in which Adam and Eve, expelled from Paradise, contemplate the variety of choice which the new fallen universe presents. According to B. he may have exhausted the new fallen universe as well as the old perfect one.

19: ... pious libels by no means a few: B. may be thinking especially of the furious pamphlet war which greeted *Cain* in 1821 and 1822.

20: Tiring old readers – nor discovering new: B. either underestimates, or does not wish to think about, the enormous extension of his readership acquired via his move to the down-market cheap editions of *Don Juan* by John Hunt.

11.²¹

But “Why then publish?”²² – there are no rewards
 Of fame or profit, when the World grows weary;
 I ask in turn – why do you play at cards? –
 Why drink? why read? – to make some hour less dreary –
 It occupies me to turn back regards 85
 On what I’ve seen or pondered, sad or cheery,
 And what I write I cast upon the Stream²³ –
 To swim or sink; I have had at least my dream. –

12.

I think that were I *certain* of success
 I hardly could compose another line – 90
 So long I’ve battled, either more or less,
 That no defeat can drive me from the Nine;²⁴
 This feeling ’tis not easy to express –
 And yet ’tis not affected, I opine;
 In play there are two pleasures for your chusing – 95
 The one is winning – and the other losing.²⁵ –

13.

Besides, my Muse by no means deals in fiction;
 She gathers a repertory of facts –
 Of course, with some reserve and slight restriction –
 But mostly sings of human things and acts, 100
 And that’s one Cause she meets with contradiction,
 For too much Truth at first sight ne’er attracts;
 And were her object only what’s called Glory,
 With more ease too, she’d tell a different Story.

21: St.11: compare B.’s letter to John Hunt, March 17 1823: “Every publication of mine has latterly failed; I am not discouraged by this, because writing and composition are habits of my mind, with which Success and Publication are objects of remoter reference – *not causes but effects*, like those of any other pursuit. I have had enough both of praise and abuse to deprive them of their novelty, but I continue to compose for the same reason that I ride, or read, or bathe, or travel – it is a habit” (BLJ X 123).

22: But “Why then publish?”: Pope, *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, 135-6:

*But why then publish? Granville the polite,
 And knowing Walsh, would tell me I could write ...*

Pope refers to his earliest published work; B. to his latest.

23: *And what I write I cast upon the Stream*: recalls, perhaps unfortunately, the lines pilfered from Southey’s *Lay of the Laureate*, above at I ll.1769-70:

*“Go, little book, from this my Solitude!
 “I cast thee on the waters, Go thy ways!*

24: ... *the Nine*: the nine Muses.

25: *In play there are two pleasures for your chusing – / The one is winning – and the other losing*: in games of chance one can “choose” neither winning nor losing. Compare *Detached Thought* 33: “**I have a notion that Gamblers are as happy as most people – being always excited: – women – wine – fame – the table – even Ambition – sate now & then – but every turn of the card – & cast of the dice – keeps the Gambler alive – besides one can Game ten times longer than one can do any thing else. I was very fond of it when young**” (BLJ IX 23).

14.

Love – war – a tempest – surely there's variety²⁶ – 105
 Also a seasoning slight of lucubration²⁷ –
 A bird's eye view too of that Wild, Society –
 A slight glance thrown on men of every station –
 If you have nought else, here's at least Satiety,
 Both in performance and in preparation; 110
 And though these lines should only line portmanteaus,²⁸
 Trade will be all the better for these Cantos.²⁹

15.

The portion of this World which I at present
 Have taken up to fill the following sermon,
 Is one of which there's no description recent – 115
 The reason why is easy to determine;
 Although it seems both prominent and pleasant,
 There is a sameness in its Gems and Ermine –
 A dull and family likeness through all ages –
 Of no great promise for poetic pages. – 120

16.

With much to excite, there's little to exalt;
 Nothing that speaks to all men and all times –
 A sort of varnish over every fault –
 A kind of commonplace even in their crimes –
 Factitious passions – wit without much salt – 125
 A want of that true Nature which sublimates
 Whate'er it shows with truth – a smooth Monotony
 Of Character – in those at least who've got any.³⁰

26: *Love – war – a tempest – surely there's variety:* compare above, I ll.1593-7:

*My Poem's Epic, and is meant to be
 Divided in twelve books; each book containing,
 With Love, and War, a heavy Gale at Sea,
 A list of Ships, and Captains, and Kings reigning,
 New Characters ...*

27: ... *a seasoning slight of lucubration:* compare *Beppo*, l.371: *I like to speak and lucubrate my fill.* To lucubrate is to work hard at writing during the night.

28: ... *though these lines should only line portmanteaus:* see above, II l.128n.

29: ... *portmanteaus ... / ... Cantos:* B. has already tried this rhyme – in the singular, however – above, at II, 16, 7-8 (the same place in the canto as this rhyme). *Portmanteaus* should be *portmanteaux*.

30: *A want of that true Nature which sublimates / Whate'er it shows with truth – a smooth Monotony / Of Character – in those at least who've got any:* B.'s point is that the upper classes he is portraying commit their crimes and follies with such anonymous blandness that anyone who would chronicle them is given little on which to gain a satirical purchase.

17.

Sometimes, indeed, like Soldiers off parade,
 They break their ranks and gladly leave the drill – 130
 But then the roll-call draws them back afraid,
 And they must be, or seem, what they *were*, still;
 Doubtless it is a brilliant Masquerade,
 But when of the first sight you've had your fill,
 It palls – at least it did so upon me – 135
 This Paradise of Pleasure and *Ennui*.³¹ –

18.

When we have made our love, and gamed our gaming –
 Drest, voted, shone, and maybe something more –
 With Dandies dined, heard Senators declaiming,
 Seen Beauties brought to Market by the Score,³² 140
 Sad Rakes to sadder Husbands chastely taming,
 There's little left but to be bored or bore;³³
 Witness those *çi-devant jeunes hommes*, who stem³⁴
 The Stream, nor leave the World which leaveth them. –

19.

'Tis said – indeed a general complaint – 145
 That no-one has succeeded in describing
 The *Monde* exactly as they ought to paint;
 Some say that authors only snatch by bribing
 The porter – some slight scandals strange and quaint,
 To furnish matter for their moral gibing – 150
 And that their books have but one style in common –
 My Lady's prattle, filtered through her Woman.

31: *This Paradise of Pleasure and Ennui*: compare above, XI 536: *An earthly Paradise of "Or Molu"*.

32: *Seen Beauties brought to Market by the Score*: echoes above, XII, 46, 6-7: ... *the Smithfield Show / Of Vestals brought into the Marriage Mart*.

33: *There's little left but to be bored or bore*: compare above, XIII, 95, 8: *Society is now one polished horde / Formed of two mighty tribes, the Bores and Bored*.

34: *those çi-devant jeunes hommes*: "previously young men", that is, men who cling to the appearance and behaviour of youth even when their own youth is long past.

20.

But this can't well be true just now – for Writers
 Are grown of the *Beau Monde* a part potential;
 I've seen them balance even the scale with fighters³⁵ – 155
 Especially when young – for that's essential;
 Why do their Sketches fail them as inditers
 Of what they deem themselves most consequential –
 The *real* portrait of the highest tribe?³⁶
 'Tis that, in fact, there's little to describe. – 160

21.

“*Haud ignara loquor*” – these are *Nugæ* “*quarum
 Pars parva fui,*” but still Art and Part;³⁷
 Now, I could much more easily sketch a harem,
 A battle, wreck, or history of the heart,³⁸
 Than these things; and besides, I wish to spare 'em, 165
 For reasons which I choose to keep apart;
 “*Vetabo Cereris sacrum qui vulgarit*”³⁹ –
 Which means that vulgar people must not share it. –

35: *I've seen them balance even the scale with fighters:* B. refers to his own social success, and that of his friend and pugilism instructor Gentleman John Jackson.

36: *Why do their Sketches fail them as inditers / Of what they deem themselves most consequential – / The real portrait of the highest tribe?:* B. may intend an element of self-reproach here, for until *Don Juan* only his occasional squibs such as *Waltz* and *The Blues* tried to get to grips satirically with the contemporary English scene.

37: “*Haud ignara loquor*” – *these are* *Nugæ* “*quarum / Pars parva fui,*” but still *Art and Part:* Virgil, *Aeneid*, II, 91 and II, 6 (both misquoted): Virgil has (*haud ignota loquor*) and *ipse miserrima vidi / et quorum pars magna fui*. The Latin means “*the story is not unknown ... I witnessed the saddest happenings and played a large part in them*” – Aeneas' words as he starts his epic tale to Dido. B.'s travesty means “I speak not unknowingly ... these are trivial happenings in which I myself played a small part.”

38: *I could much more easily sketch a harem, / A battle, wreck, or history of the heart:* as he has in, respectively, Cantos VI-VI, VII-VIII, II, and I-IV above.

39: “*Vetabo Cereris sacrum qui vulgarit*”: Hor. Od. III, ii, 26: ... *vetabo, qui Cereris sacrum / vulgarit arcanæ* (“I shall forbid the man who has divulged the sacred rites of mystic Ceres”); in other words, B. doesn't want the secret biographical subtext of *Don Juan* (see below, this canto ll.175-6n) to be known. The line involves a self-identification with the Goddess of the harvest, and a change from *vulgarit* to *vulgarit*, facilitating the pun.

22.

And therefore what I throw off is ideal –
 Lowered – leavened – like a history of Freemasons, 170
 Which bears the same relation to the real
 As Captain Parry’s voyage may do to Jason’s;⁴⁰
 The grand Arcanum’s not for men to see all;⁴¹
 My Music hath some mystic diapasons,⁴²
 And there is much which could not be appreciated 175
 In any manner by the uninitiated.⁴³ –

23.

Alas! Worlds fall – and Woman, since she felled
 The World (as, since that history, less polite
 Than true, hath been a Creed so strictly held)
 Has not yet given up the practice quite – 180
 Poor Thing of Usages! – coerced, compelled –
 Victim when wrong, and Martyr oft when right –
 Condemned to Child-bed, as Men, for their Sins,
 Have Shaving too entailed upon their Chins.⁴⁴

24.

A daily plague – which in the Aggregate 185
 May average, on the whole, with parturition;⁴⁵
 But as to women – who can penetrate
 The real sufferings of their She-condition?
 Man’s very sympathy with their estate
 Has much of selfishness and mere suspicion; 190
 Their love, their virtue, beauty, education –
 But form good housekeepers to breed a Nation. –

40: ... bears the same relation to the real / As Captain Parry’s voyage may do to Jason’s: the historical Sir William Edward Parry (1790-1855) went on five voyages of Arctic exploration: the mythical Jason on one voyage, to the extremity of the Black Sea. See *TVOJ* 27, 8.

41: *The grand Arcanum’s not for men to see all:* an arcanum is a profound secret.

42: ... *mystic diapasons:* a diapason is a chord in perfect harmony, extending through the whole compass of the instrument.

43: ... *there is much which could not be appreciated / In any manner by the uninitiated:* this hint that *Don Juan* cannot be understood except by those intimate with B.’s life-story, which provides it with a “secret key”, has been most noticeably written about by Cecil Y. Lang in *Narcissus Jilted, Byron, Don Juan, and the Biographical Imperative* (in *Historical Studies and Literary Criticism*, ed. McGann, Madison 1985, pp.143-79) in which he speculates that Catherine the Great stands for Ali Pacha, by whom B. and Hobhouse were (according to him) debauched at Tepellene in October 1809. Compare Dante, *Inferno*, IX, 61-3.

44: *Condemned to Child-bed, as Men, for their Sins, / Have Shaving too entailed upon their Chins:* Andrew Nicholson (*MSYR Byron X*) finds a source for this not-very-good joke in Spence’s *Anecdotes: Upon some lady complaining of the sufferings of women; Dr. Arbuthnot said, “Yes, the ladies suffer greatly in some particulars, but there is not one of you that undergo the torture of being shaved three times a week”*. The book (*Anecdotes, Observations, and Characters, of Books and Men ... by the Rev. Joseph Spence*, ed Samuel Weller Singer, 1820) was an important text in the Pope-Bowles controversy.

45: *A daily plague – which in the Aggregate / May average, on the whole, with parturition:* we have to protest that men shave far more frequently than women give birth.

25.

All this were very well, and can't be better;
 But even this is difficult, Heaven knows –
 So many troubles from her birth beset her, 195
 Such small distinction between friends and foes –
 The Gilding wears so soon from off her fetter
 That – but ask any woman if she'd choose
 (Take her at thirty, that is) to have been
 Female or Male? a Schoolboy or a Queen? 200

26.

“Petticoat Influence” is a grand reproach,
 Which even those who obey would fain be thought
 To fly from, as from hungry pikes a roach;⁴⁶
 But since beneath it upon earth we're brought
 By various joltings of Life's Hackney Coach, 205
 I for one venerate a petticoat –
 A Garment of a mystical sublimity,
 No matter whether russet, silk, or dimity.⁴⁷

27.

Much I respect, and much I have adored,
 In my young days, that chaste and goodly veil⁴⁸ 210
 Which holds a treasure like a Miser's hoard,
 And more attracts by all it doth conceal –
 A golden Scabbard on a Damasque Sword –
 A loving letter with a mystic Seal –
 A cure for Grief – for what can ever rankle, 215
 Before a petticoat and peeping ankle? –

28.

And when upon a silent, sullen day –
 With a Sirocco,⁴⁹ for example, blowing –
 When even the Sea looks dim with all its spray –
 And sulkily the River's ripple's flowing – 220
 And the Sky shows that very ancient gray,
 The sober sad Antithesis to Glowing –
 'Tis pleasant – if *then* anything is pleasant –
 To catch a glimpse even of a pretty peasant.⁵⁰

46: *To fly from, as from hungry pikes a roach:* compare above, II 1.1256. DJP offers the following, from *Joseph Andrews*, I vi: ... *as a voracious pike, of immense size, surveys through the liquid element a roach or gudgeon, which cannot escape her jaws, open them wide to swallow the little fish.* The simile describes Mrs Slipslop's lustful advances towards Joseph.

47: *dimity:* Lady Byron's favourite material. See above, I, 12, 6.

48: ... *that chaste and goodly veil:* that is, a petticoat.

49: *a Sirocco:* suffocatingly hot, dry wind from the Sahara. Same as *Simoom* – see above, IV 456n.

50: *To snatch a glimpse even of a pretty peasant:* it is not clear whether B. intends “To catch a glimpse of a mere pretty peasant” or “To catch the merest glimpse of a pretty peasant”.

29.

We left our heroes and our heroines 225
 In that fair clime which don't depend on climate,
 Quite independent of the Zodiac's signs,
 Though certainly more difficult to rhyme at,
 Because the Sun, and Stars, and aught that shines,
 Mountains, and all we can be most sublime at, 230
 Are there oft dull and dreary as a *Dun*⁵¹ –
 Whether a Sky's or tradesman's is all one. –

30.

And indoor Life is less poetical –
 And out-of-door hath showers – and mists – and sleet,
 With which I could not brew a pastoral;⁵² 235
 But be it as it may – a Bard must meet
 All difficulties, whether great or small,
 To spoil his undertaking, or complete,
 And work away like Spirit upon Matter –
 Embarrassed somewhat both with fire and water. 240

31.

Juan – in this respect at least like Saints –
 Was all things unto people of all sorts,⁵³
 And lived contentedly, without complaints,
 In camps, in ships, in cottages, or courts,⁵⁴
 Born with that happy Soul which seldom faints; 245
 And mingling modestly in toils or sports,
 He likewise could be most things to all women –
 Without the Coxcomby of certain *She Men*.⁵⁵

51: ... *dull and dreary as a Dun*: boring and annoying (i) as all things are which are greyish-brown in colour (ii) as the knock of a bailiff on the door.

52: *With which I could not brew a pastoral*: recalls B.'s comment on the ruralism of Crabbe (who didn't write "pastorals" exactly): "**Crabbe's the man – but he has got a coarse and impracticable subject**" (BLJ V 266); though for B. to assert "pastoral" as his intention with relation to Juan's adventures at Norman Abbey is ironical in the first place.

53: Compare the description of Lord Henry Amundeville, below, XVI, 71, 2.

54: ... *lived ... / In camps, in ships, in cottages, or courts*: compare Julia's letter, above, I, 1546-7: "... *Man may range / "The Court, Camp, Church, the Vessel, and the Mart ..."*

55: ... *mingling modestly in toils or sports, / He likewise could be most things to all women – / Without the Coxcomby of certain She Men*: punctuated according to the draft, the lines imply that Juan could demonstrate expertise in different love-making techniques without sacrificing his essential virility. Perhaps his experience with Catherine the Great had taught him things with which B. prefers not to bother us.

32.⁵⁶

A Fox-hunt to a foreigner is strange;
 'Tis also subject to the double danger 250
 Of tumbling first, and having an exchange –
 Some pleasant jesting at the awkward Stranger –
 But Juan had been early taught to range
 The Wilds, as doth an Arab turned Avenger⁵⁷ –
 So that his horse – or Charger, hunter, hack – 255
 Knew that he had a rider on his back.

33.

And now in this new field, with some applause,
 He cleared hedge, ditch, and double post,⁵⁸ and rail,
 And never *craned*, and made but few "*faux pas*" – *
 And only fretted when the Scent 'gan fail; 260
 He broke, 'tis true, some statutes of the laws
 Of Hunting, for the sagest Youth is frail –
 Rode o'er the hounds,⁵⁹ it may be, now and then –
 And once o'er several Country Gentlemen.⁶⁰ –

* *Craning*: to *Crane* is, or was, an expression used to denote a Gentleman's stretching out his neck over a hedge "to look before he leaped" – a pause in his "vaulting Ambition" *, which in the field doth occasion some delay and execration in those who may be immediately behind the equestrian Sceptic. "Sir – if you don't choose to take the leap, let me" was a phrase which generally sent the Aspirant on again, and to good purpose, for though "the horse and his rider" might fall, they made a gap through which, and over him and his steed, the field could follow.⁶¹

56: St.32, *passim*: if the previous note is taken into account, the horse-riding references here take on a clearer sexual overtone.

57: ... *to range* / *The Wilds, as doth an Arab turned Avenger*: recalls Southey's 1801 epic *Thalaba the Destroyer*.

58: *double post*: two posts were put up at the entrance to a property, one to keep up the fence, one to hold the horizontal bar which functioned as an elementary gate.

59: *Rode o'er the hounds*: that is, he allowed his enthusiasm to get the better of him and overtook the hounds (not "trampled the hounds").

60: *And once o'er several Country Gentlemen*: this *does* imply that he trampled them, but presumably they shouldn't have been in the way.

61: "*vaulting ambition*": *Macbeth*, I vii 27. "the horse and his rider": Exodus 15, 1: *I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously. The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea*. Set by Handel, *Israel in Egypt*, final chorus to Part II.

34.

But on the whole, to general admiration, 265
 He acquitted both himself and horse; the Squires
 Marvelled at merit of another nation –
 The Boors cried “Dang it! who’d have thought it?”⁶² Sires,
 The Nestors of the Sporting generation,⁶³
 Swore praises, and recalled their former fires; 270
 The Huntsman’s Self relented to a Grin,
 And rated him almost a Whipper-in. –

35.⁶⁴

Such were his trophies – not of Spear and Shield,
 But leaps, and bursts, and sometimes foxes’ brushes;⁶⁵
 Yet, I must own – although in this I yield 275
 To patriot sympathy a Briton’s blushes –
 He thought at heart like courtly Chesterfield,
 Who, after a long Chace o’er hills, dales, bushes,
 And what not – though he rode beyond all price –
 Asked next day “If men ever hunted *twice*?”⁶⁶ 280

36.

He also had a quality uncommon
 To early risers after a long chace,⁶⁷
 Who wake in winter, ere the Cock⁶⁸ can summon
 December’s drowsy Day to his dull race –
 A quality agreeable to Woman, 285
 When her soft liquid words run on apace⁶⁹ –
 Who likes a listener, whether Saint or Sinner –
 He did not fall asleep just after dinner.⁷⁰ –

62: ... *the Squires / Marvelled at merit of another nation – / The Boors cried “Dang it! who’d have thought it?”*: neither rural middle-to-upper-class nor rural working class Briton can believe that any foreigners possess riding ability.

63: *Nestors*: Nestor is the wise old Greek general in the *Odyssey* and *Iliad*.

64: Sts.35-6, *passim*: If my argument about B.’s use of horse-riding as a metaphor is granted, the stanzas would imply that although part of Juan found the act of lovemaking unnecessarily exhausting and distasteful, he was always scrupulously on the alert, and always able to give a repeat performance first thing in the morning.

65: *But leaps, and bursts, and sometimes foxes’ brushes*: innuendo.

66: “*If men ever hunted twice?*”: No-one has succeeded in tracing this query to any passage in the works or reported sayings of Lord Chesterfield.

67: *To early risers after a long chace*: innuendo.

68: *the Cock*: innuendo.

69: *When her soft liquid words run on apace*: innuendo.

70: *He did not fall asleep just after dinner*: see B.’s letter to the Earl of Blessington, April 5 1823: “... he ought also to have been in the Country during the hunting season with “a select party of distinguished guests” as the papers term it. – – He ought to have seen the Gentlemen after dinner – (on the hunting days) and the soirèe ensuing thereupon – and the women looking as if they have had hunted – or rather been hunted – too. – – And I could have wished that he had been at a dinner in town – which I recollect at Lord Cowper’s – small but select – and composed of the most amusing people. The desert was hardly on the table – when out of 12 of the masculine gender – I counted five asleep – of these five – three were Tierney – Ld. Lansdowne – and Ld. Darnley – I forget the other two – but they were either wits or orators – perhaps poets. – –” (BLJ X 139-40).

37.

But light and airy, stood on the Alert, 290
 And shone in the best part of dialogue
 By humouring always what they might assert,
 And listening to the topics most in Vogue –
 Now grave, now gay,⁷¹ but never dull or pert;
 And smiling but in secret – cunning Rogue! – 295
 He ne'er presumed to make an error Clearer –
 In short, there never was a better hearer. –

38.

And then he daunced – all foreigners excell
 The serious Angles in the eloquence⁷²
 Of Pantomime; he daunced, I say, right well –
 With emphasis – and also with good sense – 300
 A thing in footing indispenseable⁷³ –
 He daunced without theatrical pretence –
 Not like a Ballet-master in the van
 Of his drilled nymphs,⁷⁴ but like a Gentleman. –

39.

Chaste were his steps, each kept within due bound, 305
 And Elegance was sprinkled o'er his figure;
 Like swift Camilla,⁷⁵ he scarce skimmed the ground,⁷⁶
 And rather held in than put forth his vigour –
 And then he had an ear for Music's sound
 Which might defy a Crotchet Critic's rigour;
 Such classic *pas, sans* flaws, set off our hero, 310
 He glanced like a personified Bolero,⁷⁷

71: *Now grave, now gay:* commentators quote Pope's address to his Genius at *Essay on Man*, IV 379-0:
Form'd by thy converse, happily to steer
From grave to gay, from lively to severe ...

But B. may also be remembering the following disapprobatory passage from the letter Francis Cohen sent John Murray on July 16 1819, the day of the publication of Cantos I and II: *But Lord B[yron]. should have been grave & gay by turns; grave in one page & gay in the next; grave in one stanza & gay in the next; grave in one line, & gay in the next. And not grave & gay in the same page, or in the same stanza, or in the same line.* (John Murray Archive / National Library of Scotland). The reference would equate Juan's adroitness in conversation with B.'s suppleness in ottava rima. Cohen himself is probably echoing Pope.

72: *The serious Angles:* the solemn English, supposedly as ungainly in bed as on the dance-floor.

73: *A thing in footing indispenseable:* the voiced second e of *indispenseable* in this spelling gives the line a "light and airy" lilt. B., unable to dance himself, affected to despise the accomplishment.

74: *Not like a Ballet-master in the van / Of his drilled nymphs, but like a Gentleman:* sexual subtext.

75: *swift Camilla:* Camilla was a servant of Diana (an irony heavy for us, but for no previous generation) and was famous for her speed at running. See Virgil, *Aeneid* VII 803-17.

76: *... he scarce skimmed the ground, / And rather held in than put forth his vigour:* innuendo.

77: *He glanced like a personified Bolero:* to glance is to move in swift oblique lines. Compare Yeats, *Among School Children*, last line: *How can we know the dancer from the dance?*

40.

Or like a flying Hour before Aurora
 In Guido's famous Fresco⁷⁸ – which alone
 Is worth a tour to Rome⁷⁹ – although no more a
 Remnant were there of the old World's sole throne; 315
 The "tout ensemble" of his movements wore a
 Grace of the soft Ideal – seldom shown,
 And ne'er to be described – for to the dolour
 Of Bards and Proser, Words are void of colour. – 320

41.

No marvel then he was a favourite –
 A full grown Cupid, very much admired;
 A little spoilt, but by no means so quite;
 At least he kept his vanity retired;
 Such was his tact, he could alike delight 325
 The chaste, and those who aren't so much inspired:
 The Dutchess of Fitzfulke – who loved "Tracasserie"⁸⁰ –
 Began to treat him with some small "Agacerie."⁸¹ –

42.

She was a fine and somewhat full-blown blonde,
 Desirable, distinguished, celebrated 330
 For several winters in the grand *grand Monde* –
 I'd rather not say what might be related
 Of her exploits, for this were ticklish ground –
 Besides, there might be falsehood in what's stated;
 Her late performance had been a dead set⁸² 335
 At Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.⁸³ –

78: *a flying Hour before Aurora / In Guido's famous Fresco:* the *Aurora* of Guido Reni (1575-1642) is the ceiling fresco at the Palazzo Rospigliosi at Rome. It shows Apollo as Sun God, together with Aurora and the Hours. *Aurora* anticipates Aurora Raby, with whom Juan will soon either be dancing or not, as the case may be.

79: *a tour to Rome:* B. undertook one with Hobhouse early in 1817. Because Hobhouse's diary is lost for that period, the tour is under-chronicled, but we may assume that they saw the Reni fresco.

80: *The Dutchess of Fitzfulke – who loved "Tracasserie":* her name is obscene. She loved making trouble.

81: *Began to treat him with some small "Agacerie":* commenced seductive overtures against him.

82: *a dead set:* to make a dead set at someone is to demonstrate the determination to enjoy their attention and / or affection. The OED records this as the earliest usage.

83: *Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet:* his name would, if it existed, indicate the most ancient lineage, and even royal blood.

43.

This noble personage began to look
 A little black upon this new flirtation,
 But such small licences must lovers brook –
 Mere freedoms of the female Corporation;
 Woe to the Man who ventures a rebuke! 340
 'Twill but precipitate a situation
 Extremely disagreeable, but common
 To calculators when they count on Woman. –

44.

The Circle smiled, then whispered, and then sneered – 345
 The Misses bridled, and the Matrons frowned⁸⁴ –
 Some hoped things might not turn out as they feared –
 Some would not deem such women could be found –
 Some ne'er believed one half of what they heard –
 Some looked perplexed – and others looked profound, 350
 And several pitied with sincere regret
 Poor Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

45.

But what is odd, none ever named the Duke,
 Who, one might think, was something in the affair;
 True, he was absent and, 'twas rumoured, took 355
 But small concern about the when or where
 Or what his Consort did; if he could brook
 Her gaieties, none had a right to stare;
 Theirs was that best of Unions, past all doubt –
 Which never meets, and therefore can't fall out. 360

84: *The Circle smiled, then whispered, and then sneered – / The Misses bridled, and the Matrons frowned:* compare above, IX ll.361-2: *The Courtiers stared, the ladies whispered, and / The Empress smiled; the reigning Favourite frowned ...*

46.

But, oh! that I should ever pen so sad a line!
 Fired with an abstract love of Virtue, She,
 My Dian of the Ephesians – Lady Adeline⁸⁵ –
 Began to think the Dutchess' conduct free,
 Regretting much that she'd chosen so bad a line, 365
 And, waxing much chiller in her courtesy,
 Looked grave, and pale, to see her friend's fragility⁸⁶ –
 For which most friends reserve their sensibility.

47.

There's nought in this bad world like Sympathy –
 'Tis so becoming to the Soul and Face⁸⁷ – 370
 Sets to soft Music the harmonic sigh,
 And robes sweet Friendship in a Brussels lace;⁸⁸
 Without a friend, what were Humanity,
 To hunt our errors up with a good grace? –
 Consoling us with – “Would you had thought twice! 375
 “Ah – if you had but followed my advice!”

85: ... *She, / My Dian of the Ephesians – Lady Adeline*: see the outbreak of mass-hysteria reported at Acts 19, 33-4: *And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people. / But when they knew he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.* Diana was the multi-mammaried fertility goddess worshipped at Ephesus in Asia Minor. As DJP points out, B., who with Hobhouse had visited the ruins of Ephesus on March 13-15 1810, probably thought that she was identical with the virginal hunting goddess of Greek and Roman myth, and is using her here as a metaphor for what Adeline would like to be thought of as resembling.

86: *Looked grave, and pale, to see her friend's fragility*: implies Adeline's jealousy of Fitz-Fulke's attentiveness, not to Fitz-Plantagenet, but to Juan.

87: *There's nought in this bad world like Sympathy – / 'Tis so becoming to the Soul and Face*: compare the mixture of charity and lust seen above, in Haidee's reaction to Juan at II, 129, 6-8.

88: ... *Brussels lace*: one of the most expensive and beautiful kinds. Love and personal aesthetics again confused.

48.

Oh Job! you had two friends⁸⁹ – one's quite enough –
 Especially when we are ill at ease;
 They're but bad pilots when the weather's rough,
 Doctors less famous for their cures than fees; 380
 Let no man grumble when his friends fall off –
 As they will do, like leaves at the first breeze –
 When your affairs come round, one way or t'other,
 Go to the Coffee-House and take another. – *

* In Swift's or Horace Walpole's letters I think it is mentioned that somebody regretting the loss of a friend was answered by an universal Pylades "When I lose one – I go to S^t. James's coffee-house and take another." I recollect having heard an anecdote of the same kind. Sir W. D. was a great gamester. Coming one day to the club of which he was a member, he was observed to look melancholy. "What is the matter, Sir Wiliam?" cried Hare of facetious memory. "Ah!" replied Sir W. "I have just *lost* poor Lady D." "*Lost?* What *at* – *Quinze* or *Hazard?*" was the consolatory rejoinder of the querist.⁹⁰ – –

49.

But this is not my maxim. Had it been, 385
 Some heartaches had been spared me, yet I care not;
 I would not be a tortoise in his screen
 Of stubborn shell, which waves and weather wear not;⁹¹
 'Tis better on the whole t'have felt and seen
 That which Humanity may bear or bear not;⁹² 390
 'Twill teach discernment to the Sensitive,
 And not to pour their Ocean in a Sieve.

89: *Oh Job! you had two friends:* actually he had three, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophan the Naamathite. See *Job* 2, 11.

90: No-one has succeeded in tracing the source of the first of the two anecdotes. It is in neither Swift's nor Walpole's correspondence. *Pylades:* friend of the mother-killer Orestes. *Sir W.D.:* Sir William Drummond (1770-1828) sometime Ambassador to Naples and to the Porte, whom B. had met at Gibraltar in 1809. He was author of *Ædipus Judaicus* (see BLJ XI 179) which gave an allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament. *Hare of facetious memory:* Francis Hare-Naylor (or Naylor Hare: 1753-1815) friend to the gambling Duchess of Devonshire. See BLJ II 87. The stanza and note are extremely mean to B.'s loyal friend Hobhouse, who stuck with him through all his vicissitudes.

91: ... *a tortoise in his screen / Of stubborn shell, which waves and weather wear not:* that is, the evidence of the tortoise's protective carapace which is all that survives – the tortoise having died insensient within it.

92: *'Tis better on the whole to have felt and seen / That which Humanity may bear or bear not:* an anti-Stoic maxim.

50.

Of all the horrid hideous notes of woe,
 Sadder than Owl-songs on the Midnight blast
 Is that portentous phrase "I told you so", 395
 Uttered by friends, those prophets of the past,
 Who, 'stead of saying what you now should do,
 Own, they foresaw that you would fall at last,
 And solace your slight lapse 'gainst "*bonos mores*"⁹³
 With a long memorandum of old Stories. – 400

51.

The Lady Adeline's serene severity
 Was not confined to feeling for her friend –
 Whose fame she rather doubted with posterity,
 Unless her habits should begin to mend;
 But Juan also shared in her Austerity – 405
 But mixed with Pity pure as e'er was penned;
 His inexperience moved her gentle Ruth,
 And (as her Junior by six weeks) his Youth.

52.

These forty days advantage of her years –
 And hers were those which can face calculation, 410
 Boldly referring to the list of peers
 And noble births, nor dread the enumeration –
 Gave her a right to have maternal fears
 For a young Gentleman's fit education –
 Though she was far from that Leap Year whose Leap, 415
 In female dates, strikes Time all of a heap.⁹⁴ –

53.

This may be fixed at somewhere before thirty –
 Say seven and twenty; for I never knew
 The Strictest in Chronology and Virtue⁹⁵
 Advance beyond, while they could pass for new; 420
 Oh! Time, why dost not pause? thy Scythe, so dirty
 With rust, should surely cease to hack and hew;
 Reset it; shave more smoothly, also slower,
 If but to keep thy Credit as a Mower.⁹⁶

93: ... *your slight lapse 'gainst "bonos mores"*: your infringement of the rules of correct ethical deportment.

94: ... *that Leap Year whose Leap, / In female dates, strikes Time all of a heap*: a standard Byronic joke is given an amusing mathematical twist (people born on February 28 can claim to be one-quarter of their actual age, having one birthday every four years). Compare *Beppo*, ll.169-71:

*She was not old, nor young, nor at the years
 Which certain people call a "certain Age" –
 Which yet the most uncertain age appears ...*

compare also above, VI st.69.

95: *thirty ... virtue*: for a precedent for the rhyme here ("Varty ... tharty") compare above, I 495-6: *Ladies even of the most uneasy Virtue / Prefer a Spouse whose age is short of thirty*.

96: ... *shave more smoothly, also slower, / If but to keep thy Credit as a Mower*: the implication is that Time should be politer, shaving closely, not right down to the ground.

54.

But Adeline was far from that ripe age 425
 Whose ripeness is but bitter at the best –
 'Twas rather her experience made her sage,
 For she had seen the World, and stood its test –
 As I have said – in I forget what page –
 My Muse despises reference, as you've guessed 430
 By this time; but strike six from seven and twenty,
 And you will find her sum of years in plenty. –

55.

At Sixteen, she came out; presented, vaunted,
 She put all Coronets into commotion;
 At Seventeen, too, the World was still enchanted 435
 With the new Venus of their brilliant Ocean;
 At Eighteen, though below her feet still panted
 A Hecatomb of Suitors with devotion,
 She had consented to create again
 That Adam called “the Happiest of Men.”⁹⁷ – 440

56.

Since then she'd sparkled through three glowing Winters –
 Admired – adored – but also so correct
 That she had puzzled all the acutest hinters,
 Without the Apparel of being circumspect;
 They could not even glean the slightest splinters 445
 From off the Marble, which had no defect;
 She'd also snatched a moment since her marriage
 To bear a son and heir – and one miscarriage. –

57.

Fondly the wheeling fire-flies flew around her –
 Those little Glitterers of the London Night; 450
 But none of these possessed a sting to wound her –
 She was a pitch beyond a Coxcomb's flight;
 Perhaps she wished an aspirant profounder,⁹⁸
 But whatsoe'er she wished, she acted right;
 And whether Coldness, Pride, or Virtue dignify 455
 A Woman, so she's good, what does it signify?

97: *That Adam called “the Happiest of Men”*: implies that the marriage, despite its early promise, is doomed to disintegration and misery. Andrew Nicholson calls attention to B.'s letter to Moore of August 3 1814 (BLJ IV 151-2) in which both Lord Erskine's son and Francis Hodgson, both newly-married, are quoted as applying the phrase in inverted commas to themselves.

98: *an aspirant profounder*: a “deeper sigher”: a more sincere and passionate lover.

58.

I hate a motive like a lingering bottle,⁹⁹
 Which with the landlord makes too long a stand,
 Leaving all claret-less the unmoistened throttle –
 Especially with politics on hand; 460
 I hate it as I hate a drove of Cattle,
 Who whirl the dust as Simooms¹⁰⁰ whirl the Sand;
 I hate it as I hate an Argument,¹⁰¹
 A Laureate's ode,¹⁰² or servile Peer's "Content!"¹⁰³

59.

'Tis sad to hack into the roots of things , 465
 They are so intertwined with the earth ;
 So that the branch a goodly verdure flings,
 I reckon not if an Acorn gave it birth;
 To trace all actions to their secret springs
 Would make indeed some melancholy mirth, 470
 But this is not at present my concern –
 And I refer you to wise Oxenstiern.¹⁰⁴ – *

* The famous Chancellor Oxenstiern said to his Son, on the latter expressing his surprize upon the great effects arising from petty causes in the presumed mystery of politics, "You see by this, my Son, with how little wisdom the Kingdoms of the World are governed."

99: *I hate a motive like a lingering bottle:* "a motive" is in this case a mean ulterior motive for spreading gossip: envy, for instance. The image is a variation on Sir Toby's line at *Twelfth Night* II iii, 7: *A false conclusion – I hate it as an unfilled can.*

100: *Simooms:* see above, this canto, 218n.

101: *I hate it as I hate an Argument:* except that B. loved arguments. See his letter to Scott, 12 January 1822: "**I love a row – & always did from a boy – in the course of which propensity I must needs say that I have found it of all to be gratified – personally and poetically**" (BLJ IX 86).

102: *A Laureate's ode ...:* what Jerome McGann would call a "shrewd thrust" (*Henry IV* 2, II, iv 201) or Andrew Nicholson a "sly dig" at Southey, the poem's super-dedicatee.

103: *... or servile Peer's "Content!":* the word used in the House of Lords when passing a motion. The Lords defeated all three motions for which B. spoke.

104: *wise Oxenstiern:* Axel Oxenstierna (1583-1654) Swedish Chancellor from 1612 until his death (sic: hence perhaps "wise"). Opposed at first to Gustavus Adolphus' intervention in the Thirty Years' War, he supported him in the event. He is said to have written the comment to his son, whom he had sent as Ambassador to the Treaty negotiations at Westphalia in 1648.

60.

With the kind view of saving an *Eclât*¹⁰⁵ –
 Both to the Duchess and Diplomatist –
 The Lady Adeline, as soon's she saw 475
 That Juan was unlikely to resist
 (For foreigners don't know that a *faux pas*
 In England ranks quite on a different list
 As those of other climes, unblest with Juries,¹⁰⁶
 Who lay such heavy duties on our Houries.¹⁰⁷ 480

61.

The Lady Adeline resolved to take¹⁰⁸
 Such measures as she thought might best impede
 The further progress of this sad mistake –
 She thought with some simplicity indeed,
 But Innocence is bold even at the stake, 485
 And simple in the World – and doth not need,
 Nor use, those palisades by dames erected,
 Whose Virtue lies in never being detected. –

62.

It was not that she feared the very worst –
 His Grace was an enduring married man, 490
 And was not likely all at once to burst
 Into a Scene, and swell the Clients' Clan
 Of Doctors' Commons,¹⁰⁹ but she dreaded first
 The Magic of her Grace's Talisman,¹¹⁰
 And next a quarrel (as he seemed to fret) 495
 With Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantaganet.

105: *Eclât*: sensation, scandal.

106: *other climes, unblest with Juries*: echoes above, I st.64:

Happy the Nations of the moral North!
Where all is Virtue, and the Winter Season
Sends Sin without a rag on shivering forth
('Twas Snow that brought St. Francis back to reason)
Where Juries cast up what a wife is worth
By laying whate'er sum in Mulct they please on
The lover, who must pay a handsome price,
Because it is a marketable Vice.

107: *Houries*: the young women (*black eyed girls in green*) who minister to the needs of Islamic warriors in paradise. See above, VIII sts.111-15. B.'s implication is that in Christian England a Jury would fine anyone enjoying their company.

108: *Lady Adeline resolved*: continues the satire on female will-power and self-deception started very early in the poem. See Inez's resolution at I 297-8: *Sagest of women, even of widows, She / Resolved that Juan should be quite a paragon*; or Julia's at I 593-5: *Poor Julia's heart was in an awkward state; / She felt it going, and resolved to make / The noblest efforts for herself and mate ...*

109: *swell the Client's Clan / Of Doctors' Commons*: he would never rush into a divorce. See above, I 288 and n.

110: *the Magic of her Grace's Talisman*: that is, the intuition which would lead Fitz-Fulke (correctly) to suspect Adeline's motive. A talisman is any mystic object which gives its owner occult or other powers.

63.

Her Grace too passed for being an *Intriguante*¹¹¹ –
 And somewhat *méchante*¹¹² in her amorous sphere;
 One of those pretty precious Plagues which haunt
 A lover with caprices soft and dear – 500
 That like to make a quarrel when they can't
 Find one – each day of the delightful year
 Bewitching, torturing – as they freeze or glow –
 And, what is worst of all, won't let you go. –

64.

The Sort of thing to turn a young man's head, 505
 Or make a Werther of him¹¹³ in the end;
 No wonder then a purer Soul should dread
 This sort of chaste liaison for a friend¹¹⁴ –
 It were much better to be wed or dead
 Than wear a heart a woman loves to rend; 510
 'Tis best to pause and think, ere you rush on,
 If that a "*bonne Fortune*" be really "*bonne*."¹¹⁵ –

65.¹¹⁶

At first in the o'erflowing of her heart –
 Which really knew, or thought it knew, no Guile –
 She called her husband now and then apart 515
 And bade him counsel Juan; with a smile
 Lord Henry heard her plans of artless art –
 To wean Don Juan from the Siren's wile -
 And answered like a Statesman or a prophet –
 In such guise that she could make nothing of it. – 520

111: *Intriguante*: one who lives for and by intrigue.

112: *méchante*: wicked, naughty, mischievous.

113: *make a Werther of him*: drive him to suicide, as in Goethe's novel *Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1774). It was B.'s expressed intention to make Juan into a *Sentimental* "*Werther-faced man*" (BLJ VIII 78) – but in Germany, not in England.

114: *chaste liaison*: recalls above, III ll.193-5: *And Oh! Ye Gentlemen who have already / Some chaste liaison of the kind; I mean / An honest friendship with a married Lady ...*

115: *'Tis best to pause and think, ere you rush on, / If that a "bonne Fortune" be really "bonne"*: to try and predict whether a successful (or "lucky") conquest will be worth the stress it causes afterwards.

116: Models for Lord Henry may have included Lord Holland, James Wedderburn Webster, and William Lamb. However, Andrew Nicholson (*MSYR Byron X* pp.120-1) also adduces the second (*not* the letter-writing) Earl of Chesterfield (1633-1713) privy councillor and aloof husband, described in detail in the *Memoirs* of Count Gramont, for B.'s pre-1816 ownership of which see CMP 235. B. refers to Gramont's treatment of Chesterfield at BLJ III 146 and 148. See also BLJ VII 202 for a comparison between Gramont's *Memoirs* and *Don Juan*.

66.

Firstly he said, “He never interfered
 “In any body’s business but the King’s;
 “Next, that he never judged from what appeared,
 “Without strong reason, of those sorts of things;
 “Thirdly, that Juan had more brain than beard, 525
 “And was not to be held in leading strings;
 “And fourthly – what need hardly be said twice –
 “That good but rarely came from good advice.”

67.

And therefore, doubtless, to approve the truth
 Of the last maxim – he advised his spouse 530
 To leave the parties to themselves, forsooth,
 At least as far as *bienséance*¹¹⁷ allows –
 That time would temper Juan’s faults of youth –
 That young men rarely made monastic vows –
 That – Opposition only more attaches – 535
 But here a Messenger brought in dispatches,¹¹⁸

68.

And being of the Council called “the Privy”,¹¹⁹
 Lord Henry walked into his Cabinet
 To furnish matter for some future Livy¹²⁰ –
 To tell how he reduced the Nation’s debt; 540
 And if their full contents I do not give ye,
 It is because I do not know them yet –
 But I shall add them in a brief appendix,
 To come between mine Epic and its index.

117: *bienséance*: politeness, decorum.

118: Andrew Nicholson (op. cit.) also adduces, as antecedents to Lord Henry’s mechanical listing of reasons, Vellum in Addison’s *The Drummer* and Scrub in Farquhar’s *The Beaux’ Stratagem*: *First, it must be a plot, because there’s a woman in’t; secondly, it must be a plot, because there’s a priest in’t; thirdly, it must be a plot, because there’s French gold in’t; and fourthly, it must be a plot, because I don’t know what to make on’t* (III i 330-334). Behind all three lies Dogberry: *Marry, sir, they have committed false report; moreover, they have spoken untruths; secondarily, they are slanders; sixth and lastly, they have belied a lady; thirdly, they have verified unjust things; and to conclude, they are lying knaves* (Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, V i 202-8). All four use the appearance of systematic analysis to cover the fact that they don’t know what’s going on.

119: ... “the Privy” ... *his Cabinet* ... *To furnish matter*: lavatorial humour (or “deliberate scatological leers” – CPW) *passim*. The OED gives Middle English as the origin simultaneously of “privy = latrine” and “privé conseil = Privy Council”.

120: *Livy*: Roman historian (59 BC-17 AD). The toilet jokes in the previous lines would imply him to be full of crap.

69.

But ere he went, he added a slight hint – 545
 Another gentle commonplace or two
 Such as are coined in Conversation's mint,
 And pass for want of better, though not new;
 Then broke his packet to see what was in't,
 And having casually glanced it through, 550
 Retired; and as he went out, calmly kissed her –
 Less like a young wife than an aged Sister. –

70.

He was a cold, good, honourable man,¹²¹
 Proud of his birth, and proud of every thing;
 A goodly Spirit for a State divan¹²² – 555
 A figure fit to walk before a king –
 Tall – stately – formed to lead the courtly van
 On birthdays – glorious with a Star and String¹²³ –
 The very Model of a Chamberlain –
 And such I mean to make him when I reign. – 560

71.

But there was something wanting on the whole –
 I don't know what, and therefore cannot tell –
 Which pretty women – the sweet souls! – call *Soul*;
Certes it was not body – he was well
 Proportioned as a poplar or a pole; 565
 A handsome Man-that human miracle –
 And in each circumstance of love or War
 Had still preserved his perpendicular.¹²⁴ –

121: *an honourable man*: ever since its ironical use by Mark Antony in *Julius Caesar* III ii, the phrase has carried the overtones of “man of limited awareness”, or “loser”. At I 273 above, it is applied to Don José, Juan's father.

122: *a State divan*: council of state, from the Ottoman word “divan” meaning the political colloquium presided over by the Sultan at Constantinople.

123: *a Star and String*: a courtly decoration, for example the Order of the Garter.

124: *preserved his perpendicular*: in the context of “circumstance of love” (previous line) indecent.

72.

Still there was something wanting, as I've said –
 That undefinable "*Je ne sçais quoi*"¹²⁵ 570
 Which, for what I know, may of yore have led
 To Homer's *Iliad*, since it drew to Troy
 The Greek Eve Helen¹²⁶ from the Spartan's bed;
 Though on the whole, no doubt, the Dardan boy¹²⁷
 Was much inferior to King Menelaus – 575
 But thus it is some women will betray us.

73.

There is an awkward thing which much perplexes,
 Unless, like wise Tiresias, we'd proved
 By turns the difference of the several sexes¹²⁸ –
 Neither can show quite *how* they would be loved – 580
 The Sensual for a short time but connects us –
 The Sentimental boasts to be unmoved –
 But both together form a sort of Centaur,
 Upon whose back 'tis better not to venture.

125: *That undefinable "Je ne sçais quoi"*: on Sunday May 13 1810 – two weeks after leaving the site of Troy, ten days after B. swam the Hellespont, just as the Salsette came within sight of Constantinople – Hobhouse recorded in his diary

... have been reading Lord Chesterfield – admire him very much, but he mentions a pretty person as to be possessed by the accomplished gentleman so his precepts are not for me (B.L. Add. Mss. 56529, 43v)

The *Letters to his Son* of the fourth Earl of Chesterfield (1694-1773: not the second Earl – see above, sts.65-74n) were published in 1774. The standards by which Hobhouse found himself lacking are listed by Chesterfield as follows: *A thousand little things, not separately to be defined, conspire to form these Graces, this je ne sçais quoi, that always please. A pretty person, genteel motions, a proper degree of dress, an harmonious voice, something open and chearful in the countenance, but without laughing; a distinct and properly varied manner of speaking: all these things, and many others, are necessary ingredients in the composition of the pleasing je ne sçais quoi, which every body feels, though no body can describe.* – Letter CXII (Bath, March 9 1748: first edition 1774, I 268). Dr. Johnson said the *Letters* taught *the morals of a whore and the manners of a dancing master* (*Life*, I 177). Above, at IV ll.683-5, Raucocanti echoes another phrase from Chesterfield's passage as he, Juan and the enslaved opera troupe also approach Constantinople:

*"As for the figuranti, they are like
 "The rest of all that tribe, with here and there
 "A pretty person, which perhaps may strike ...*

126: *The Greek Eve Helen:* Helen was Eve-like in that she introduced dissension and set men against gods.

127: *the Dardan boy:* Paris, who seduced Helen away from Menelaus.

128: *Unless, like wise Tiresias, we had proved / By turns the difference of the several sexes:* see Ovid, *Metamorphoses* Book III, for Tiresias' experience of sex from both gender-viewpoints.

74.

A something all sufficient for the *heart* 585
 Is that for which the Sex are always seeking –
 But how to fill up that same vacant part?
 There lies the rub – and this they are but weak in –
 Frail mariners afloat without a chart,
 They run before the wind, through high Seas breaking, 590
 And when they've made the shore through every shock –
 'Tis odd – or odds – it may turn out a Rock.

75.

There is a flower called “Love in Idleness”
 For which see Shakespeare's ever blooming Garden¹²⁹ –
 I will not make his great description less – 595
 And beg his British Godship's humble pardon,
 If in my extremity of Rhyme's distress
 I touch a single leaf where he is Warden –
 But – though the flower is different, with the French –
 Or Swiss – Rousseau, cry, “*Voilà la Pervenche!*”¹³⁰ 600

76.

Eureka! – I have found it¹³¹ – what I mean
 To say is, not that Love is Idleness,
 But that in Love such Idleness has been
 An accessory – as I've cause to guess;¹³²
 Hard Labour's an indifferent Go-between; 605
 Your men of business are not apt to express
 Much passion, since the Merchant-ship the Argo
 Conveyed Medea as her Super-Cargo.¹³³

129: *There is a flower called “Love in Idleness” / For which see Shakespeare's ever blooming Garden:* see Oberon's words to Puck at *A Midsummer Night's Dream* II i 168. It is from this flower (strictly the wild pansy) that the love-juice is extracted which will cause such chaos in the rest of the play. B. is in these Stanzas reflecting on the harm which aristocrats such as Adeline cause, when love affairs make up their sole *raison-d'être*. The flower's nickname is a convenient way of signalling his theme.

130: ... *though the flower is different, with the French – / Or Swiss – Rousseau, cry, “Voilà la Pervenche!”:* in Book VI of his *Confessions*, Rousseau relates two moments – twenty-six years apart – when he saw periwinkle (not a wild pansy) on a mountainside. On the first occasion (in 1738) his “Maman” (Madame de Warens) pointed the flowers out, but Rousseau was too short-sighted to inspect them. On the second occasion (1764) *he* cried out, “Voilà la pervenche!” (“There is a periwinkle!”). This second sighting reminded him magically of the first, which occurred during the happiest period of his life. B.'s couplet makes *pervenche* rhyme barbarically with *French*: given the disillusion with love which he is expressing, the effect is probably intentional.

131: *Eureka! – I have found it:* the word (followed by its translation) cried by Archimedes as he rushed naked through the street from the bath in which he had just “discovered” his famous principle relating to the displacement of water. B. is making a jump to Archimedes' joy from Rousseau's ecstasy upon seeing the periwinkle.

132: *An accessory – as I have cause to guess:* that is, B. speaks from experience about the effect idleness has on one's capacity for love. *Accessory* is strictly the noun substantive.

133: ... *Argo / Super-Cargo:* a rhyme employed already above, II ll.527-8. The facetious statement is that Jason's voyage, from which he brought back the Golden Fleece (hardly a *mercantile* venture) has devalued love for all businessmen since, because he also brought back Medea, his marriage to whom caused him much stress. A ship's supercargo was the officer whose job it was to oversee the cargo and all the voyage's commercial transactions.

77.

“*Beatus ille procul*” from “*negotiis*”
 Saith Horace;¹³⁴ the great little poet’s wrong – 610
 His other maxim, “*noscitur a sociis*”,¹³⁵
 Is much more to the purpose of his song –
 Though even that were sometimes too ferocious –
 Unless good company he kept too long,
 But – in his teeth – whate’er their state or station – 615
 Thrice happy they who *have* an occupation!

78.

Adam exchanged his Paradise for ploughing,
 Eve made up millinery with fig leaves,¹³⁶
 The earliest knowledge from the tree so knowing –
 As far as I know – that the Church receives; 620
 And since that time it need not cost much showing
 That many of the ills o’er which Man grieves –
 And still more Women – spring from not employing
 Some hours to make the remnant worth enjoying.

79.

And hence high Life is oft a dreary Void – 625
 A Rack of Pleasures¹³⁷ – where we must invent
 A something wherewithal to be annoyed;
 Bards may sing what they please about *Content* –
Contented – when translated – means but *cloyed*, –
 And hence arise the Woes of Sentiment – 630
 Blue Devils, and Blue-Stockings, and Romances,¹³⁸
 Reduced to practice and performed like Dances.

134: “*Beatus ille procul*” from “*negotiis*” is from Horace, *Epodes* I i, opening:

*Beatus ille qui procul negotiis,
 ut prisca gens mortalium,
 paterna rura bobus exercet suis,
 solutus omni faenore ...*

[*Happy is he who, far from cares of business, / like the earliest mortals, / works his family acres with his cattle, / free from all money-lending ...*]

B. places an English preposition, “from”, tautologically before the Latin noun which carries that meaning already. Horace was his favourite Roman poet-hence the familiar macaronic use.

135: *His other maxim*, “*noscitur a sociis*”: not by Horace. It is a standard proverb, and means “a man is known by the company he keeps”.

136: *Adam exchanged his Paradise for ploughing, / Eve made up millinery with fig leaves*: a false antithesis. Genesis, 3 7: *And the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked: and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons* (my italics).

137: *A Rack of Pleasures*: compare above, IV l.421 and n.

138: *Blue Devils*: see above, X, 38, 8 and n, or below, XV, 4, 4. *Blue-Stockings*: see above, IV, sts. 109-12 and nn. See also the erased marginalia, this canto, st.50 above. B. seems to have the *Blue Devils* / *Blue Stockings* parallel in mind for some time. The implication – that female intellectuals are melancholy hypochondriacs *ipso facto* – remains controversial.

80.

I do declare – upon an affidavit –
 Romances I ne'er read like those I've seen –
 Nor, if unto the world I ever gave it, 635
 Would some believe that such a tale had been;
 But such intent I never had – nor have it;
 Some truths are better kept behind a screen,
 Especially when they would look like lies –
 I therefore deal in generalities.¹³⁹ 640

81.

“An Oyster may be crost in Love”¹⁴⁰ – and why?
 Because he mopeth idly in his shell,
 And heaves a lonely subterraqueous sigh¹⁴¹ –
 Much as a Monk may do within his cell;
 And, à propos of Monks, their Piety 645
 With Sloth hath found it difficult to dwell;
 Those Vegetables of the Catholic Creed
 Are apt exceedingly to run to seed.¹⁴²

82.

Oh Wilberforce! Thou man of black renown,¹⁴³
 Whose merit none enough can sing or say – 650
 Thou hast struck one immense Colossus down,
 Thou moral Washington of Africa!¹⁴⁴
 But there's another little thing I own,
 Which you should perpetrate some summer's day,
 And set the other half of Earth to rights – 655
 You've freed the *Blacks* – now – pray – shut up the *Whites*.¹⁴⁵

139: *I therefore deal in generalities*: that B. appears in this section to be dealing in generalities should not blind us to the fact that in *Don Juan* he is for the most part concerned with amassing specifics.

140: “An Oyster may be crost in love”: Sheridan, *The Critic*, III I 297. Tilburina, deprived of Whiskerandos, runs mad. For another *Critic* reference, see *The Two Foscari*, epigraph.

141: *subterraqueous*: “Living, situated, performed, etc, under water (rare)” – OED.

142: *Those Vegetables of the Catholic Creed / Are apt exceedingly to run to seed*: implies (with a pun on “exceedingly / seed”) monastic self-abuse. B. is still concerned with the incompatibility of meaningful labour and love: monks, in this analysis, are without both, and their faith remains inadequately propagated.

143: *Oh Wilberforce! Thou man of black renown*: for previous references to Wilberforce in *Don Juan*, see above, IV 1.915 and n, and XII 1.157 and n: also *Beppo* 1.543. He was for B. the type of the canting do-gooder (hence the double-edged *black renown*) though B.'s impatience with his methodistical style may mask envy of one who could stick to a political point for decades, and finally gain it.

144: *Thou moral Washington of Africa!*: compare above, XII ll.157-9:

... Wilberforce; the last set free
 The Negroes, and is worth a million fighters,
 While Wellington has but enslaved the Whites ...

145: *You've freed the Blacks – now – pray – shut up the Whites*: “shut up” in the sense of “incarcerate”, not “silence” – though the effect would be the same. B.'s attitude is that Wilberforce, in setting one wrong to rights, has left thousands more untouched closer to home. Compare the passage on Mrs Fry, above, X sts.84-7.

83.

Shut up the bald-coot bully Alexander¹⁴⁶ –
 Ship off the Holy Three to Senegal¹⁴⁷ –
 Teach them that “Sauce for Goose is Sauce for Gander,”¹⁴⁸
 And ask them how *they* like to be in thrall? 660
 Shut up each high heroic Salamander¹⁴⁹
 Who eats fire *gratis* (since the pay’s but small)
 Shut up – no – *not* the King, but the Pavilion¹⁵⁰ –
 Or else ’twill cost us all another million.

84.

Shut up the World at large – let Bedlam out, 665
 And you will be perhaps surprized to find
 All things pursue exactly the same route
 As now with those of *soi-disant* sound Mind;¹⁵¹
 This I could prove beyond a single doubt,
 Were there a jot of Sense among Mankind – 670
 But till that *point d’appui* is found – Alas!
 Like Archimedes, I leave Earth as ’twas.¹⁵²

85.

Our gentle Adeline had one defect –
 Her heart was vacant, though a splendid mansion;
 Her conduct had been perfectly correct – 675
 As she had nought claiming its expansion;¹⁵³
 A wavering Spirit may be easier wrecked,
 Because ’tis frailer, doubtless, than a staunch one,
 But when the latter works its own undoing,
 Its inner crash is like an Earthquake’s ruin. 680

146: *the bald-coot bully Alexander*: the follicularly-challenged Tsar Alexander I, abused previously above at VI l.737 and n.

147: *Ship off the Holy three to Senegal*: the Holy Alliance, consisting of the Emperors of Russia and Austria and the King of Prussia. To send them to Senegal, a French colony in West Africa, would parallel sending Napoleon to St Helena, an English colony in the South Atlantic. If a blasphemy against the Trinity is detectable, B. is only aping that implicit in the idea of the “Christian” Alliance itself.

148: *what’s “Sauce for Goose is Sauce for Gander”*: what’s good dressing for one dish is, logically, good for another.

149: *each high heroic Salamander*: a salamander was (i) the mythical creature who lived in fire, (ii) a soldier brave enough to dare any barrage: B.’s use here is ironical. Compare above, VII l.413 and n.

150: *the Pavilion*: George IV’s Brighton folly. E.H.Coleridge refers us to *Sardanapalus*, II i, first speech, and B. to Murray, May 25 1821 (BLJ VIII 126-7).

151: *Shut up the World at large – let Bedlam out, / And you will be perhaps surprized to find / All things pursue exactly the same route / As now with those of soi-disant sound Mind*: echoes the quotation from Oxenstierna, above, this canto, l.472 and B.’s n. Andrew Nicholson adduces also Pope, *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*, opening: *The Dog-star rages! nay ’tis past a doubt, / All Bedlam, or Parnassus, is let out*. This is in turn echoed above, Dedication, l.30.

152: *But till that point d’appui is found – Alas! / Like Archimedes, I leave Earth as ’twas*: the second Archimedes reference in nine stanzas. Archimedes said that, given a long enough lever and a fulcrum point sufficiently far away, one could move the earth. See Pliny, *Natural History* VII 37. It is not clear that, for Archimedes, the idea had the political subtext with which B. invests it.

153: *she had nought claiming its expansion*: strictly, *had had nought* ...

86.

She loved her lord – or thought so – but *that* Love
 Cost her an *effort*, which is a sad toil –
 The stone of Sysiphus,¹⁵⁴ if once we move *
 Our feelings 'gainst the nature of the soil;
 She had nothing to complain of, nor reprove; 685
 No bickerings – no connubial turmoil –
 Their union was a model to behold –
 Serene and noble – conjugal – but cold.¹⁵⁵

87.

There was no great disparity of years,
 Though much in temper, but they never Clashed; 690
 They moved like Stars united in their Spheres –
 Or like the Rhone by Lemman's waters washed –
 Where mingled and yet separate appears
 The River from the Lake – all bluely dashed
 Through the serene and placid, glassy deep, 695
 Which fain would lull its River-Child to sleep.¹⁵⁶

154: *The stone of Sysiphus:* Sysiphus, fraudulent and avaricious King of Corinth, was condemned by the gods to try and roll a huge stone to the top of a hill, and fix it there – but every time he got it to the top it rolled back again. A heavy metaphor for wilfully-devoted marital love.

155: *Serene and noble – conjugal – but cold:* Andrew Nicholson draws attention to the echo here of the last line of Sun of the Sleepless, from *Hebrew Melodies: A night-beam Sorrow watcheth to behold, / Distinct, but distant – clear – but, oh how cold!*

156: *Or like the Rhone by Lemman's waters washed – / Where mingled and yet separate appears / The River from the Lake – all bluely dashed / Through the serene and placid, glassy deep, / Which fain would lull its River Child to sleep:* a self-borrowing. Compare *CHP III*, st.71:

... the blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone,

Or the pure bosom of its nursling lake ...

Or the moment from *The Prisoner of Chillon* (332-6) when Bonnivard sees the mountains from his cell window:

I saw them – and they were the same;

They were not changed like me in frame;

I saw their thousand years of snow

On high – their wide long lake below,

And the blue Rhone in fullest flow ...

... although the Rhone can only be seen from the castle battlements. See Rousseau, *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*, Part IV, Letter XVII (St. Preux is boating with Julie, in the absence of her husband): *Là j'expliquois à Julie toutes les parties du superbe horizon qui nous entourait. Je lui montrais de loin les embouchures du Rhône dont l'imptueux cours s'arrête tout à coup au bout d'un quart de lieue, et semble craindre de souiller de ses eaux bourbeuses le cristal azuré du lac. (Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse, ed. Mornet, vol. 3, pp.279-280). Shelley, who admits to having been reading the novel all day, echoes this section: We passed from the blue waters of the lake over the stream of the Rhone, which is rapid [cp. B.'s "fullest flow"] even at a great distance from its confluence with the lake; the turbid waters mixed with those of the lake, but mixed with them unwillingly. (Letters, ed. Jones, vol.I p.353).*

88.

Now, when she once had ta'en an interest
 In any thing – however she might flatter
 Herself that her intentions were the best –
 Intense intentions are a dangerous matter –¹⁵⁷ 700
 Impressions were much stronger than she guessed,
 And gathered, as they run,¹⁵⁸ like glowing water
 Upon her Mind, the more so that her breast
 Was not at first too readily imprest.

89.

But when it was, she had that lurking Demon, 705
 Of double Nature, and thus doubly named –
 Firmness ycleped¹⁵⁹ in Heroes, kings, and Seamen –
 That is when they succeed – but greatly blamed
 As *Obstinacy*, both in men and women,
 Whene'er their triumph fails, or Star is tamed;¹⁶⁰ 710
 And 'twill perplex the Casuists in Morality
 To fix the due bounds of this dangerous quality.

89a.

De Staël said that Napoleon “was a System
 And not a man”; I don't know what She meant –
 Did She? – but this I know – that France has missed him –
 That Europe also is as malcontent –
 That She was fool enough still to resist him;
 The World deplors his hated banishment,
 Since far better obey one Grand Ambition
 Than some fly-catching Dandy Russ Domitian.¹⁶¹

157: *Intense intentions are a dangerous matter:* Hell is, according to the proverb, paved with them. Compare above, VIII l.200, or *TVOJ*, l.296.

158: *run:* rare past tense usage.

159: *ycleped:* called, known as. For more facetious use of this pseudo-medievalism see above, V l.1207, and XII l.442, or below, XVI l.579.

160: *Whene'er their triumph fails, or Star is tamed:* with a distant glance at the career of Napoleon. See next stanza.

161: Andrew Nicholson (*MSYR Byron X* p.127, pp.156-8) conjectures that B. may at first have intended these lines as a draft for a stanza to go between received sts.89 and 90. They are on the reverse of the writing printed above, beneath st.60. *Long bow* refers to the character in Canto XIII above, ll.729-44. *Charm less / Harmless* is a rhyme used below, XV ll.751-2. The query about kings' suicides does not find an echo anywhere in the poem. In fact de Staël said (*Considerations on the Principal Events of the French Revolution*, 1818, II 226) that “Bonaparte is not only a man but also a system”- which somewhat nullifies B.'s quarrel with her here. The *Dandy Russ Domitian* is Tsar Alexander I.

90.

Had Buonaparte¹⁶² won at Waterloo,
 It had been Firmness – now 'tis Pertinacity –
 Must the Event decide between the two? 715
 I leave it to your people of Sagacity
 To draw the line between the false and true –
 If such can e'er be drawn by Man's capacity;
 My business is with Lady Adeline,
 Who in her way, too, was a heroine. 720

91.

She knew not her own heart – then how should I?
 I think not she was *then* in love with Juan;
 If so, she would have had the strength to fly
 The wild sensation, unto her a new one;¹⁶³
 She merely felt a common sympathy 725
 (I will not say it was a false or true one)
 In him, because she thought he was in danger –
 Her husband's friend – her own; young – and a stranger.¹⁶⁴ –

92.

She was, or thought she was, his friend – and this
 Without the farce of friendship or romance 730
 Of Platonism, which leads so oft amiss¹⁶⁵ –
 Ladies who have studied friendship but in France,
 Or Germany, where people *purely* kiss¹⁶⁶ –
 To thus much Adeline would not advance,
 But of such friendship as Man's may to man be 735
 She was as capable – as Woman can be. –

162: *Buonaparte*: four syllables – the Italian version, as in the title of B.'s *Ode*.

163: *She knew not her own heart – then how should I? / I think not she was then in love with Juan; / If so, she would have had the strength to fly / The wild sensation, unto her a new one*: echoes the unguarded because unacknowledged emotions of Julia in Canto I.

164: *she thought he was in danger – / Her husband's friend – her own; young – and a stranger*: compare the supposedly Christian compassion shown by Haidee for Juan, above, II ll.1031-2:

“to take him in,

A Stranger” dying, with so white a Skin. –

165: *Platonism, which leads so oft amiss*: compare above, I l.629, I l.885, I st.116, V ll.7-8 ... and so on.

166: *Ladies who have studied friendship but in France, / Or Germany, where people purely kiss*: B. (who never visited France, and was only in Germany for a short time) may intend a joke about kissing as social greeting in France, and idealist philosophy in Germany. He may also be thinking of such novels of spiritual love as Rousseau's *Julie*, or of Goethe's *Werther*.

93.

No doubt the secret influence of the Sex
 Will there – as also in the ties of blood –
 An innocent predominance annex,
 And tune the concord to a finer mood; 740
 If free from Passion, which all friendship checks,
 And your true feelings fully understood,
 No friend like to a Woman Earth discovers –
 So that you have not been – nor will be – lovers.¹⁶⁷ –

94.

Love bears within its breast the very germ 745
 Of change – and how should this be otherwise?
 That Violent Things more quickly find a term¹⁶⁸
 Is shown through Nature's whole Analogies –
 And how should the most fierce of all be firm? –
 Would you have endless lightning in the Skies? 750
 Love's very title also speaks enough –
 How should the “*tender* passion” e'er be *tough*?

95.

Alas! by all experience – seldom yet
 (I merely quote what I have heard from many)
 Had lovers not some reason to regret 755
 The passion which made Solomon a Zany;¹⁶⁹
 I've also seen some wives (not to forget
 The marriage state – the best or worst of any)
 Who were the very paragons of wives,
 Yet made the misery of at least two lives. – 760

167: *No friend like to a Woman Earth discovers – / So that you have not been – nor will be – lovers:* compare B. to Lady Hardy, December 1 1822: “**have always laid it down as a maxim – and found it justified by experience – that a man and a woman – make far better friendships than can exist between two of the same sex – but then with the condition – that they never have made – or are to make love with each other**” (BLJ X 50). Andrew Nicholson also refers to B.'s 1813 journal at BLJ III 219: “**Mem. A mistress never is nor can be a friend. While you agree, you are lovers; and when it is over, anything but friends.**”

168: *Violent Things more quickly find a term:* B. remembers the lines of Friar Lawrence at *Romeo and Juliet* II vi, 9-11: *These violent delights have violent ends, / And in their triumph die, like fire and powder, / Which, as they kiss, consume.*

169: *The passion which made Solomon a Zany:* alluding to the “strange women” whom Solomon loved, for which God was angry with him. See *II Kings*, 11.

96.

I've also seen some female *friends*¹⁷⁰ ('tis odd,
 But true – as, if expedient, I could prove)
 They faithful were through thick and thin – abroad,
 At home – far more than ever yet was Love;
 Who did not quit me when Oppression trod 765
 Upon me – whom no Scandal could remove –
 Who fought and fight, in absence too, my battles –
 Despite the Snake Society's loud rattles. –

97.

Whether Don Juan and chaste Adeline
 Grew friends, in this or any other sense, 770
 Will be discussed hereafter, I opine;
 At present I am glad of a pretence
 To leave them hovering – as the effect is fine,
 And keeps the atrocious reader¹⁷¹ in *suspense*,
 The surest way for Ladies and for Books, 775
 To bait their tender or their tenter hooks.¹⁷² –

98.

Whether they rode, or walked, or studied Spanish¹⁷³
 To read *Don Quixote* in th'Original –
 A pleasure before which all others vanish¹⁷⁴ –
 Whether their talk was of the kind called “small”, 780
 Or serious, are the topics I must banish
 To the next Canto – where perhaps I shall
 Say something to the purpose, and display
 Considerable talent in my way. –

170: *I've also seen some female friends:* B.'s loyal female friends included Madame de Staël, Lady Jersey, Lady Holland, Lady Melbourne, Mercer Elphinstone, and Augusta.

171: *the atrocious reader:* implies the reader's ferocity in criticising.

172: *their tender or their tenter hooks:* a tenter is a frame on which cloth is stretched to prevent shrinking. A tenter-hook is a nail with a right-angle bend in it, used for fastening the cloth to the tenter. To “be on tenter-hooks” is an expression which dates from the sixteenth century and means to kept in a state of painful suspense, as at the end of a canto of *Don Juan*. The OED does not allow “tender-hooks”.

173: *Whether they rode, or walked, or studied Spanish:* for the moral pitfalls being glanced at here, see above, II st.164, where Juan is taught Greek by Haidee. See also B.'s Spanish lessons with Señorita Cordova in the box at the Seville opera (BLJ I 220).

174: *To read Don Quixote in th'Original – / A pleasure before which all others vanish:* it is not clear to me that B. was sufficiently fluent in Spanish to read Cervantes. For his admiration of *Don Quixote*, see above, XIII, sts.8-11.

99.

Above all, I beg all men to forbear 785
 Anticipating aught about the matter;
 They'll only make mistakes about the fair –
 And Juan too – especially the latter –
 And I shall take a much more serious air
 Than I have yet done in this Epic Satire; 790
 It is not clear that Adeline and Juan
 Will fall, but if they do, 'twill be their ruin. –

100.

But great things spring from little;¹⁷⁵ would you think
 That in our youth, as dangerous a passion
 As e'er brought man and woman to the brink 795
 Of ruin rose from such a slight occasion
 As few would ever dream could form the link
 Of such a sentimental situation?
 You'll never guess – I'll bet you millions – milliards¹⁷⁶ –
 It all sprung¹⁷⁷ from a harmless game at Billiards.¹⁷⁸ 800

101.

'Tis strange, but true – for truth is always strange –
 Stranger than Fiction, if it could be told¹⁷⁹ –
 How much would novels gain by the Exchange!
 How differently the world would men behold!
 How oft would Vice and Virtue places change! 805
 The new World would be nothing to the old,
 If some Columbus of the moral Seas¹⁸⁰
 Would show Mankind their Souls' Antipodes.

175: *But great things spring from little:* echoes Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, opening: *What dire Offence from am'rous Causes springs, / What mighty Contests rise from trivial Things, / I sing ...* the idea leads on to the tantalising reference to the game at Billiards in line 800.

176: *milliards:* a milliard was a thousand million. E.H.Coleridge credits Voltaire with the word's invention.

177: *sprung:* past tense.

178: *It all sprung from a harmless game at Billiards:* B. refers to his unconsummated love-affair with Frances Wedderburn Webster, described in a letter to Lady Melbourne of October 8 1813 (BLJ III 133-6). One near-climactic sequence takes place in a billiard room.

179: *for truth is always strange – / Stranger than Fiction:* this is the first coinage of this commonplace.

180: For Columbus, compare below, XV, 27, 6.

102.

What "Antres vast and desarts idle"¹⁸¹ then
 Would be discovered in the human soul! 810
 What Icebergs in the hearts of mighty men,
 With Self-Love in the Centre as their Pole!
 What Anthropophagi¹⁸² in nine of ten –
 Of those who hold the kingdom in Controul!¹⁸³
 Were things but only called by their right name, 815
 Cæsar himself would be ashamed of Fame.

/
 /NB/ March 4th. 1823.
 /

181: "Antres vast and desarts idle": Othello's words to the senate (I iii 140) describing the remote and inhospitable regions he has been to.

182: *Anthropophagi*: cannibals. *Othello*, I iii 144.

183: *What Anthropophagi in nine of ten – / Of those who hold the kingdom in Controul*: the syntax is unclear, and subsequent editions have *is nine of ten* and *are nine of ten*. But B.'s meaning is that nine out of ten kings and emperors are parasitical monsters and / or cannibals.