

**BYRON: *DON JUAN* CANTO SIXTEENTH**

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## DON JUAN CANTO SIXTEENTH

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M<sup>h</sup>. 29<sup>th</sup>. 1823.

### 1.

The antique Persians taught three useful things –  
 To draw the bow, to ride, and speak the truth;<sup>1</sup>  
 This was the mode of Cyrus,<sup>2</sup> best of kings –  
 A mode adopted since by modern Youth;  
 Bows have they – generally with two strings<sup>3</sup> – 5  
 Horses they ride without remorse or ruth –  
 At speaking truth perhaps they are less clever;  
 But draw the long Bow better now than ever. –

### 2.

The Cause of this effect, or this defect,  
 “For this effect defective comes by Cause,”<sup>4</sup> 10  
 Is what I have not leisure to inspect;  
 But this I must say in my own applause –  
 Of all the Muses that I recollect,  
 Whate’er may be her follies or her flaws,  
 In some things mine’s beyond all contradiction – 15  
 The most sincere that ever dealt in fiction. –

### 3.

And as she treats all things – and ne’er retreats  
 From any thing – this Epic will contain  
 A wilderness of the most rare conceits<sup>5</sup>  
 Which you might elsewhere hope to find in vain; 20  
 ’Tis true there be some bitters with the sweets,  
 Yet mixed so slightly that you can’t complain,  
 But wonder they so few are – since my tale is  
 “De rebus cunctis et quibûsdam aliis.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>: *The antique Persians taught three useful things – / To draw the bow, to ride, and speak the truth*: see Herodotus, Histories I 136: *The period of a boy’s education is between the ages of five and twenty, and they are taught three things only: to ride, to use the bow, and to speak the truth* (tr. Aubrey de Sélincourt).

<sup>2</sup>: *Cyrus*: Cyrus the Great (d. 529 BC) founder of the Persian Empire.

<sup>3</sup>: *generally with two strings*: implies temporising on the part of modern youth, which is thus compared unfavourably with that of ancient Persia. Keeps up the theme of education which is omnipresent in the poem.

<sup>4</sup>: “*For this effect defective comes by Cause*”: compare Polonius at *Hamlet*, II ii 103. See above, IX ll.282-3, for another imitation of Polonius on B.’s part.

<sup>5</sup>: *the most rare conceits*: the most unusual thoughts and images.

<sup>6</sup>: *my tale is / “De rebus cunctis et quibûsdam aliis*”: “my tale is about everything, plus some extra bits”. All editions adduce a facetious legend about St Thomas Aquinas, whose insecure universalising ambition was said to have caused him to write two treatises: *De Omnibus Rebus* (“About everything”) and *De Quibusdam Aliis* (“About some additional things”). This is the standard by which the all-inclusiveness of *Don Juan* is to be measured.

## 4.

But of all truths which she has told, the most 25  
 True is that which she is about to tell –  
 I said it was a story of a Ghost<sup>7</sup> –  
 What then? I only know it so befell –  
 Have you explored the limits of the Coast  
 Where all the dwellers of the Earth must dwell? 30  
 'Tis time to strike such puny doubters dumb as  
 The Sceptics who would not believe Columbus.<sup>8</sup> –

## 5.

Some people would impose now with authority –  
 Turpin's or Monmouth – Geoffrey's – chronicle<sup>9</sup> –  
 Men whose Historical Superiority 35  
 Is always greatest at a miracle;  
 But Saint Augustine has the great priority,  
 Who bids all men believe the impossible  
*Because 'tis so*; who nibble, scribble, quibble, he  
 Quiets at once with "*quia impossibile*."<sup>10</sup> – 40

## 6.

And therefore, Mortals, cavil not at all –  
 Believe; if 'tis improbable, you *must* –  
 And if it is impossible, you *shall* –  
 'Tis always best to take things upon trust;  
 I do not speak profanely to recall 45  
 Those holier mysteries which the wise and just  
 Receive as Gospel – and which grow more rooted,  
 As all truths must, the more they are disputed.

<sup>7</sup>: *I said it was a story of a Ghost*: see above, XV l.753: *Grim reader!* – *did you ever see a Ghost?*

<sup>8</sup>: *The Sceptics who would not believe Columbus*: it is not clear that B. has any particular sceptics in mind.

<sup>9</sup>: *Turpin's or Monmouth – Geoffrey's – chronicle*: Turpin (Tilpinus) made Archbishop of Reims c. 753; supposed author of the *Historia Karoli Magni et Rotholandi*; Geoffrey of Monmouth (c. 1100-54): Archbishop of Llandaff, whose *Historia Regum Britanniae* is fabulous from start to finish, but has provided us with the stories of King Lear and King Arthur. That, of the two authorities with whom B. wishes us to compare him, both should be bishops, one should not have written anything, and the other should have told nothing but imaginative falsehoods, is all part of the joke.

<sup>10</sup>: *Saint Augustine ... "quia impossibile"*: In setting up St Augustine as another authority B. jokes further, for it was Tertullian, not Augustine, who insisted that the greater the unlikelihood of the belief, the more earnestly Christians should believe. See his *De Carne Christi*, V c: "Crucifixus est Dei filius: non pudet, quia pudendum est: et mortuus est Dei filius: prorsus credibile est, quia ineptum est: et sepultus resurrexit: certum est quia impossibile est" ("The Son of God was crucified: it is not shameful, *because* it is worthy of shame: and the Son of God is dead: this is absolutely believable, *because* it is foolish: and he rose from the tomb: which is definitely impossible" – tr. Katie Beston; my italics). By this standard *Don Juan* is either as credible, or as incredible, as the New Testament, depending on how many of B.'s ironies we take on board.

## 7.

I merely mean to say what Johnson said<sup>11</sup> –  
 That in the course of some six thousand years, 50  
 All Nations have believed that from the dead  
 A Visitant at intervals appears;  
 And what is strangest upon this strange head  
 Is that, whatever bar the reason rears  
 'Gainst such beliefs, there's something stronger still 55  
 In its behalf – let those deny who will. –

## 8.

The dinner and the Soirée too were done –  
 The Supper too discussed, the dames admired –  
 The banqueteers had dropped off one by one –  
 The song was silent – and the dance expired; 60  
 The last thin petticoats were vanished, gone  
 Like fleecy Clouds into the sky retired –  
 And nothing brighter gleamed through the Saloon  
 Than dying tapers, or the peeping Moon. –

## 9.

The Evaporation of a joyous day 65  
 Is like the last glass of Champagne, without  
 The foam which made its virgin bumper gay –  
 Or like a System coupled with a doubt –  
 Or like a Soda bottle when its spray  
 Has sparkled, and left half its Spirit out – 70  
 Or like a billow left by Storms behind,  
 Without the animation of the Wind;

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<sup>11</sup>: *what Johnson said*: “It is wonderful that five thousand years have now elapsed since the creation of the world, and still it is undecided whether or not there has ever been an instance of the spirit of any person appearing after death. All argument is against it; but all belief is for it” (Boswell’s *Life*, II p.176). In Chapter 31 of *Rasselas*, Imlac rephrases: “There is no people, rude or learned, among whom apparitions of the dead are not related and believed. This opinion ... could become universal only by its truth”.

## 10.

Or like an Opiate which brings troubled rest,  
 Or none – or like – like nothing that I know,  
 Except itself; such is the human breast – 75  
 A thing of which Similitudes can show  
 No real likeness; like the old Tyrian vest,  
 Dyed purple, none at present can tell how –  
 If from a Shell-fish, or from Cochineal –  
 So perish ever tyrant's robe piece-meal!<sup>12</sup> 80

\* The Composition of the old Tyrian purple, whether from a Shellfish or from Cochineal, or from Kermes, is still an article of dispute, and even its colour – some say purple – blue – others scarlet – – I say nothing.<sup>13</sup>

## 11.

But next to dressing for a rout, or ball,  
 Undressing is a woe; our *Robe de Chambre*  
 May sit like that of Nessus,<sup>14</sup> and recall  
 Thoughts quite as yellow, but less clear than, amber<sup>15</sup> –  
 Titus exclaimed "I've lost a day!";<sup>16</sup> of all 85  
 The nights and days most people can remember  
 (I've had of both, some not to be disdained)  
 I wished they'd state how many they have gained!

## 12.

And Juan, on retiring for the night,  
 Felt restless and perplexed, and compromised; 90  
 He thought Aurora Raby's eyes more bright  
 Than Adeline (such is advice) advised;  
 If he had known exactly his own plight,  
 He probably would have philosophized<sup>17</sup> –  
 A great resource to all, and ne'er denied 95  
 Till wanted; therefore Juan only sighed. –

<sup>12</sup>: *So perish ever tyrant's robe piece-meal!*: purple is associated with Roman Emperors, who wore togas of that colour. The Holy Alliance of Russia, Prussia and Austria all had pretensions to descent from the Roman Empire. B. wishes them to be forgotten as thoroughly as the chemical composition of the dye which coloured their forebears' garments of majesty. By this standard, similes are, like coloured togas, just decorations, not comparisons which demonstrate the essence of something.

<sup>13</sup>: *Cochineal* ... *Kermes*: Kermes and cochineal are the same thing.

<sup>14</sup>: *our Robe de Chambre* / *May sit like that of Nessus*: that is, may give us exquisite pain. For Nessus, see above, XI l.516n.

<sup>15</sup>: *Thoughts quite as yellow*: quite as miserable. Compare *Macbeth*, V iii 32-3: *My way of life / Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf* ...

<sup>16</sup>: *Titus exclaimed "I've lost a day!"*: Suetonius (*Life of Titus* 8 i) writes of the Roman Emperor Titus (39-81) "One evening at dinner, realizing that he had done nobody any favour since the previous night ... spoke these memorable words: 'My friends, I have wasted a day'" (tr. Robert Graves. The Latin is "Amici, diem perdidit!")

<sup>17</sup>: *If he had known exactly his own plight, / He probably would have philosophized*: evidence that B. had the next part of the plot worked out in his head, at least.

## 13.

He sighed; the next resource is the full Moon,<sup>18</sup>  
 Where all sighs are deposited; and now  
 It happened luckily the chaste Orb shone  
 As Clear as such a climate will allow, 100  
 And Juan's Mind was in the proper tone  
 To hail her with the apostrophe "Oh Thou!"  
 Of amatory Egotism the *Tuism*<sup>19</sup> –  
 Which further to explain would be a truism.

## 14.

But Lover, poet, or Astronomer, 105  
 Shepherd or Swain – whoever may behold –  
 Feel some abstraction when they gaze on her;  
 Great thoughts we catch from thence (besides a Cold<sup>20</sup> –  
 Sometimes – unless my feelings rather err)  
 Deep secrets to her rolling Light are told – 110  
 The Ocean's tides, and mortal's brains, she sways –  
 And also hearts – if there be truth in lays.

## 15.

Juan felt somewhat pensive, and disposed  
 For Contemplation rather than his pillow –  
 The Gothic Chamber where he was enclosed 115  
 Let in the rippling sound of the Lake's billow,  
 With all the mystery by Midnight caused;  
 Below his window waved (of course) a willow,  
 And he stood gazing out on the Cascade –  
 That flashed and after darkened in the shade. – 120

<sup>18</sup>: *the next resource is the full Moon*: for a previous meditation on the moon, see above, I st.113. In affairs of the heart, Juan has not changed much since then.

<sup>19</sup>: *Of amatory Egotism the Tuism*: "Tuism" is a Byronic antonym for "Egotism": B. may borrow the word from Coleridge. His meaning is that lovers, bound up in their own selfish fantasies, allow otherness not the beloved, but only to the remote, inviolable and uninterested moon.

<sup>20</sup>: *Great thoughts we catch from thence (besides a Cold*: continues the ironic interplay between emotions and illnesses seen above at II, sts.12-23.

## 16.

Upon his table or his toilet – *which*  
 Of these is not exactly ascertained<sup>21</sup> –  
 I state this (for I am cautious to a pitch  
 Of nicety where a fact is to be gained)  
 A Lamp burnt high, while he leant from a niche 125  
 Where many a Gothic ornament remained;<sup>22</sup>  
 In chiselled stone and painted glass, and all  
 That Time has left our fathers of their Hall.

## 17.

Then, as the Night was clear though cold, he threw  
 His Chamber door wide open, and went forth<sup>23</sup> 130  
 Into a Gallery, of a sombre hue,<sup>24</sup>  
 Long, furnished with old pictures of great worth,  
 Of Knights and dames – heroic, and chaste too –  
 As doubtless should be people of high birth –  
 But, by dim lights, the portraits of the dead 135  
 Have something ghastly, desolate and dread.

<sup>21</sup>: *Upon his table or his toilet – which / Of these is not exactly ascertained*: his table is his toilet, or “toilette”.

<sup>22</sup>: *Gothic Chamber ... Lamp ... many a Gothic ornament*: B. seems anxious to recall the first scene of *Manfred*, where the hero, alone at night in a gothic gallery, is visited by spirits. Manfred’s intellectual satiety contrasts with Juan’s amatory confusion and insecurity. At whichever end of the experiential scale you live, the juxtaposition implies, you are never free from supernatural solliciting.

<sup>23</sup>: *His Chamber door*: E.H.Coleridge has the following uncharacteristic note, relating to B.’s own accommodation at Newstead Abbey: ‘Byron loved to make fact and fancy walk together, but, here, his memory played him false, or his art kept him true. The Black Friar walked or walks in the Guests’ Refectory (or Banqueting Hall, or “Gallery” of this stanza), which adjoins the Prior’s Parlour, but the room where Byron slept (in a four-post bed – a coronet, at each corner, atop) is on the floor above the Prior’s Parlour, and can only be approached by a spiral staircase. Both rooms look west, and command a view of the “lake’s billow” and the “cascade”. Moreover, the Guests’ Refectory was never hung with “old pictures.” It would seem that Don Juan (perhaps Byron on an emergency) slept in the Prior’s Parlour, and that in the visionary Newstead the pictures forsook the Grand Drawing-Room for the Hall. Hence the scene! *El Libertado* steps out of the Gothic Chamber “forth” into the “gallery,” and lo! “a monk in cowl and beads.” But, *Quien sabe?* The Psalmist’s caution with regard to princes is not inapplicable to poets.’

<sup>24</sup>: *a Gallery, of a sombre hue, / Long*: for previous “long galleries”, see above, V 58, 7 (*I pass my evenings in long galleries mostly, / And that’s the reason I’m so melancholy*) VI, 26, 5, and XIII 67, 1. See also *Manfred*’s first scene, referred to above, ll.115 / 125 / 126n.

## 18.

The frowns of the grim Knight or pictured Saint  
 Look living in the Moon – and, as you turn  
 Backward and forward to the echoes faint  
 Of your own footsteps, voices from the Urn<sup>25</sup> 140  
 Appear to wake – and shadows wild and quaint  
 Start from the frames which fence their aspects stern,  
 As if to ask how you can dare to keep  
 A Vigil there – where all but Death should sleep?

## 19.

And the pale Smile of Beauties in the Grave, 145  
 The Charms of other days in starlight gleams,  
 Glimmer on high – their buried locks still wave  
 Along the canvas – their eyes glance, like dreams,  
 On ours – or Spars within some dusky cave;<sup>26</sup>  
 But Death is imaged in their shadowy beams – 150  
 A Picture is the Past – even ere its frame  
 Be gilt; who sate hath ceased to be the same. –

## 20.

As Juan mused on Mutability –  
 Or on his mistress – terms synonymous –  
 No sound except the Echo of his sigh, 155  
 Or step, ran sadly through that antique house –  
 When suddenly he heard – or thought so – nigh –  
 A supernatural Agent – or a Mouse –  
 Whose little nibbling rustle will embarrass  
 Most people as it plays along the Arras. – 160

<sup>25</sup>: *the Urn*: that is, the funeral urn.

<sup>26</sup>: *Spars within some dusky cave*: recalls Neuha's cave at *The Island*, IV, 7-9, which B. had just written when he started this canto.



## 21.

It was no Mouse – but lo! a Monk,<sup>27</sup> arrayed  
 In cowl and beads and dusky garb appeared –  
 Now in the Moonlight – and now lapsed in shade –  
 With steps that trod as heavy – yet unheard –  
 His garments only a slight murmur made; 165  
 He moved as shadowy as the Sisters Weird<sup>28</sup> –  
 But slowly – and as he passed Juan by  
 Glanced, without pausing, on him a bright eye.

## 22.

Juan was petrified – he had heard a hint 170  
 Of such a Spirit in these halls of old –  
 But thought – like most men – there was nothing in't,  
 Beyond the rumour which such spots unfold –  
 Coined from surviving Superstition's Mint,<sup>29</sup>  
 Which passes Ghosts in currency like Gold,  
 But rarely seen, like Gold compared with Paper – – 175  
 And *did* he see this? Or was it a Vapour? –

## 23.

Once – twice – thrice – passed – repassed – the thing of air,<sup>30</sup>  
 Or earth beneath, or heaven – or t'other place –  
 And Juan gazed upon it with a stare,  
 But could not speak or move – but, on its base 180  
 As stands a Statue, stood: he felt his hair  
 Twine like a knot of Snakes around his face<sup>31</sup> –  
 He taxed his tongue for words, which were not granted,  
 To ask the reverend person what he wanted. –

<sup>27</sup>: *a Monk*: some visitors to Newstead Abbey *claimed* to have seen a headless monk in the chamber next to B.'s bedroom, in which Robert Rushton usually slept (Marchand I, 174-5). On August 13 1814 B. writes to Moore, "The ghosts, however, and the gothics, and the waters, and the desolation, make it [Newstead] very lively still" (BLJ IV 158). See LJ III 126n for Moore's reference to B.'s own sighting of a ghost at Newstead.

<sup>28</sup>: *as shadowy as the Sisters Weird*: the witches in *Macbeth* tell the spirits of Banquo and his descendants to *Come like shadows, so depart!* (IV i 111).

<sup>29</sup>: *surviving Superstition's Mint*: from medieval, specifically Roman Catholic, legends. As Juan was raised a Catholic (though his education was no great success) he should feel less sceptical about such things.

<sup>30</sup>: Compare: "Then be it Cirico." – *And Cirico appeared.*

*The poet so evidently shewed as much of flesh and blood as ever had entered into his spare composition, that I ran to embrace him: but I grasped only unsubstantial air!* (Anastasius III, 382).

<sup>31</sup>: *he felt his hair / Twine like a knot of Snakes around his face*: that is, he felt like the Gorgon, not like one of the Gorgon's victims.

## 24.

The third time – after a still longer pause – 85  
 The shadow passed away – but where? the hall  
 Was long – and thus far there was no great cause  
 To think his vanishing unnatural –  
 Doors there were many, through which by the laws  
 Of Physics, Bodies whether short or tall 90  
 Might come or go – but Juan could not state  
 Through which the Spectre seemed to evaporate.

## 25.

He stood – how long he knew not – but it seemed  
 An age – expectant – powerless – with his eyes  
 Strained on the spot where the first figure gleamed; 195  
 Then by degrees recalled his energies –  
 And would have passed the whole off as a dream,  
 But could not wake; he was – he did surmise –  
 Waking already – and returned at length  
 Back to his chamber – shorn of half his strength.<sup>32</sup> 200

## 26.

All there was as he left it – still his taper  
 Burnt – and not *blue*, as modest tapers use,  
 Receiving Sprites with sympathetic vapour;<sup>33</sup>  
 He rubbed his eyes – and they did not refuse  
 Their office – he took up an old Newspaper – 205  
 The paper was right easy to peruse –  
 He read an article the king attacking<sup>34</sup> –  
 And a long eulogy of “Patent Blacking”.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup>: *shorn of half his strength*: CPW parallels the shearing of Samson by Delila in Judges 16.

<sup>33</sup>: *his taper / Burnt – and not blue, as modest tapers use, / Receiving Sprites with sympathetic vapour*: a blue-burning candle heralded a supernatural visitation. Coleridge quotes *Richard III* V iii 180, just after Richard has been visited by the ghosts of those he has slain: *The lights burn blue. It is now dead midnight*. B. refers to the scene again below: see this canto, l.1020 and n. A deleted version of *Manfred* I i 195 (the spectral Voice in the Incantation) goes *And the <Marsh=lamp in it's blue>*.

<sup>34</sup>: *an article the king attacking*: as this is the early 1790s, Juan must be reading a radical newspaper.

<sup>35</sup>: *a long eulogy of “Patent Blacking”*: that is, an advertisement for shoe-polish. B. was once credited with writing a jingle for such a product – Day and Martin’s Patent Blacking. See BLJ VIII 150 (July 16 1821).

## 27.

This savoured of this World – but his hand shook;  
 He shut his door – and after having read 210  
 A paragraph (I think about Horne Tooke)<sup>36</sup>  
 Undrest, and rather slowly went to bed;  
 There, couched all snugly on his pillow's nook,  
 With what he'd seen, his Phantasy he fed,  
 And though it was no Opiate – Slumber crept 215  
 Upon him be degrees – and so he slept.

## 28.

He woke betimes – and, as may be supposed,  
 Pondered upon his visitant or vision –  
 And whether it ought not to be disclosed,  
 At risk of being quizzed for Superstition – 220  
 The more he thought, the more his Mind was posed;  
 In the meantime, his valet – whose precision  
 Was great, because his Master brooked no less –  
 Knocked, to inform him it was time to dress. –

## 29.

He dressed, and, like young people, he was wont 225  
 To take some trouble with his toilet – but  
 This morning rather spent less time upon't;  
 Aside His very mirror soon was put –  
 His curls fell negligently o'er his front<sup>37</sup> –  
 His cloathes were not curbed to their usual cut – 230  
 His very Neckcloth's Gordian knot<sup>38</sup> was tied  
 Almost a hair's breadth too much on one side.

<sup>36</sup>: *Horne Tooke*: John Horne Tooke, 1736-1812, radical writer, friend of the demagogue John Wilkes. An unsuccessful politician who took up the pen against the anonymous writer Junius. Tried for high treason but acquitted. Further evidence – perhaps – that Juan's political reading is subversive.

<sup>37</sup>: *His curls fell negligently o'er his front*: a style cultivated by B. himself.

<sup>38</sup>: *His very Neckcloth's Gordian knot*: so called after the un-unravellable knot severed by Alexander the Great with a single blow of his sword. See also below, this canto l.639 and n.

## 30.

And when he walked down into the saloon,  
 He sate him pensive o'er a dish of Tea, 235  
 Which he perhaps had not discovered soon,  
 Had it not happened scalding hot to be,  
 Which made him have recourse unto his Spoon;  
 So much distraight he was that all could see,  
 That something *was* the matter<sup>39</sup> – Adeline  
 The first – but *what*, she could not well divine. 240

## 31.

She looked, and saw him pale – and turned as pale  
 Herself – then hastily looked down, and muttered  
 Something, but what's not stated in my tale;  
 Lord Henry said – his muffin was ill-battered;<sup>40</sup>  
 The Dutchess of FitzFulke played with her veil, 245  
 And looked at Juan hard, but nothing uttered,<sup>41</sup>  
 Aurora Raby, with her large dark eyes,  
 Surveyed him with a kind of calm surprize.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>: *So much distraight he was that all could see, / That something was the matter*: the effect on Juan of having seen the Friar is borrowed from Matthew Lewis's *The Monk: Far from growing accustomed to the ghost, every succeeding visit inspired me with greater horror. Her idea pursued me continually, and I became the prey of habitual melancholy. The constant agitation of my mind naturally retarded the re-establishment of my health. Several months elapsed before I was able to quit my bed; and when, at length, I was moved to a sofa, I was so faint, spiritless, and emaciated, that I could not cross the room without assistance. The looks of my attendants sufficiently denoted the little hope which they entertained of my recovery* (*The Monk*, Chapter IV).

<sup>40</sup>: *Lord Henry said – his muffin was ill-battered*: Henry notices both that Juan is ill at ease, and that Adeline notices it.

<sup>41</sup>: *The Dutchess of FitzFulke played with her veil, / And looked at Juan hard, but nothing uttered*: suspecting him to have a sexual encounter with someone else before he's had one with her.

<sup>42</sup>: *Aurora Raby, with her large dark eyes, / Surveyed him with a kind of calm surprize*: as opposed to little Leila above at VIII, 95, 7-8, who ... *opened her large eyes, / And gazed on Juan with a wild surprize*.

## 32.

But seeing him all cold and silent still,<sup>43</sup>  
 And every body wondering more or less, 250  
 Fair Adeline enquired "If he were ill?"  
 He started – and said "Yes – No – rather, Yes –"  
 The family physician had great skill,  
 And, being present now, began to express  
 His readiness to feel his pulse, and tell 255  
 The cause – but Juan said "He was quite well." –

## 33.

"Quite well – yes – no" – these answers were mysterious,  
 And yet his looks appeared to sanction both,  
 However they might savour of delirious;  
 Something like illness of a sudden growth 260  
 Weighed on his Spirit, though by no means serious;  
 But for the rest, as he himself seemed loath  
 To state the case, it might be ta'en for granted,  
 It was not the Physician that he wanted.<sup>44</sup> –

## 34.

Lord Henry, who had now discussed his Chocolate – 265  
 Also the Muffin whereof he complained –  
 Said Juan had not got his usual look elate,<sup>45</sup>  
 At which he marvelled, since it had not rained –  
 Then asked her Grace what news were of the Duke of late?<sup>46</sup>  
 Her Grace replied, *his* Grace was rather pained 270  
 With some slight light hereditary twinges  
 Of Gout, which rusts Aristocratic hinges.<sup>47</sup> –

<sup>43</sup>: *silent still*: an echo of verse 8 of *The Isles of Greece* (see above, Canto III):

*What silent still? and silent All?*

*Ah! No – the Voices of the dead*

*Sound like a distant Torrent's fall,*

*And answer – "Let one living head,*

*"But one, arise – We come, We come!"*

*'Tis but the Living Who are dumb. –*

*The Voices of the dead* would here be those of the dispossessed medieval monks.

<sup>44</sup>: *It was not the Physician that he wanted*: compare the Doctor's words about Lady Macbeth at V i 72:  
*More needs she the divine than the physician.*

<sup>45</sup>: *Lord Henry, who had now discussed his Chocolate – / Also the Muffin whereof he complained – / Said Juan had not got his usual look elate*: Henry's suspicion about Juan are now thoroughly aroused.

<sup>46</sup>: *Then asked her Grace what news were of the Duke of late?*: Henry suspects Juan with Fitz-Fulke.

<sup>47</sup>: *Gout, which rusts Aristocratic hinges*: gout was caused by over-indulgence in port, which only rich men could afford.

## 35.

Then Henry turned to Juan, and addressed  
 A few words of condolence on his state –  
 “You look,” quoth he, “as if you had had your rest                   275  
 “Broke in upon by the Black Friar of late – ”  
 “What Friar?” said Juan, and he did his best  
 To put the question with an air sedate  
 Or careless – but the effort was not valid  
 To hinder him from growing still more pallid.                   260

## 36.

“Oh! have you never heard of the Black Friar?  
 “The Spirit of these walls?” – “In truth, not I – ”  
 “Why, Fame – but Fame, you know’s, sometimes a liar<sup>48</sup> –  
 “Tells an odd story – of which by the bye –  
 “Whether with time the Spectre has grown shyer –                   285  
 “Or that our Sires had a more gifted eye  
 “For such sights – though the tale is half believed,  
 “The Friar of late has not been oft perceived.” –

## 37.

“The last time was” – “I pray”, said Adeline  
 (Who watched the changes of Don Juan’s brow,                   290  
 And from its context, thought she could divine  
 Connections stronger than he ought to avow  
 With this same legend) “if you but design  
 “To jest, you’ll chose some other theme just now,  
 “Because the present tale has oft been told,                   295  
 “And is not much improved by growing old.”

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<sup>48</sup>: *Fame, you know’s, sometimes a liar*: a *Don Juan*-esque truism. Compare, for example, above, VII 15, 7-8: *but Fame (capricious Strumpet) / It seems, as got an ear, as well as trumpet*.



40.<sup>50</sup>

After some fascinating hesitation –  
 The Charming of these Charmers, who seem bound,  
 I can't tell why, to this dissimulation – 315  
 Fair Adeline, with eyes fixed on the ground  
 At first – then kindling into animation –  
 Added her sweet voice to the lyric sound,  
 And sang with much simplicity – a merit  
 Not the less precious, that we seldom hear it. – 320

## 1.

Beware – Beware! of the Black Friar  
 Who sitteth by Norman Stone –  
 For he mutters his prayer in the Midnight Air,  
 And his Mass of the days that are gone;  
 When the Lord of the Hill, Amundeville, 325  
 Made Norman Church his prey,  
 And expelled the Friars,<sup>51</sup> one friar still  
 Would not be driven away. –

## 2.

Though he came in his might with King Henry's right,  
 To turn Church lands to Lay, 330  
 With sword in hand – and torch to light  
 Their walls if they said Nay –  
 A Monk remained – unchased and unchained –  
 And he did not seem formed of Clay;  
 For he's seen in the porch – and he's seen in the Church – 335  
 Though he is not seen by day. –

<sup>50</sup>: Adeline's singing should be compared with the improvised song, sung to her own lyre accompaniment, by the heroine of Madame de Staël's novel *Corinne, ou l'Italie* (1807) in Book II Chapter iii. The novel was the favourite of Teresa Guiccioli. Where Corinne improvises on "The Glory and Happiness of Italy", Adeline sings of the hereditary guilt and doom of one corner of England. See below, st.42n.

<sup>51</sup>: *the Lord of the Hill, Amundeville, / Made Norman Church his prey, / And expelled the Friars*: on the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII in the 1530s. The Amundevilles – according to the ballad which Adeline has written – live on property stolen from God.



## 3.

And whether for Good, or whether for Ill,  
 It is not mine to say –  
 But still to the House of Amundeville  
 He abideth night and day; 340  
 By the marriage bed of their Lords, 'tis said,  
 He flits on the bridal Eve<sup>52</sup> –  
 And 'tis held as faith, to their bed of death  
 He comes – but not to grieve. –

## 4.

When an heir is born, he is heard to mourn – 345  
 And when aught is to befall  
 That antient line – in the pale Moonshine  
 He walks from Hall to Hall;  
 His form you may trace, but not his face –  
 'Tis shadowed by his Cowl – 350  
 But his Eyes may be seen from the folds between –  
 And they seem of a parted Soul. –

## 5.

But Beware – Beware! of the Black Friar –  
 He still retains his sway –  
 For he is yet the Church's heir, 355  
 Whoever may be the Lay;  
 Amundeville is Lord by day,  
 But the Monk is Lord by Night –  
 Nor wine nor wassail<sup>53</sup> could raise a Vassall  
 To question that Friar's right. 360

<sup>52</sup>: *By the marriage bed of their Lords, 'tis said, / He flits on the bridal Eve*: see Henry's words – interrupted by Adeline, who seems not want to remember, or does not want others to know – above at this canto, ll.298-9.

<sup>53</sup>: *wassail*: loud partying. Compare *Hamlet*, I iv 8-9: *The King doth wake tonight and takes his rouse, / Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels* ...No amount of conviviality on the part of the Amundevilles will lift the baneful effect of the Friar's presence.

## 6.

Say naught to him as he walks the Hall,  
 And he'll say naught to you;  
 He sweeps along in his dusky pall  
 As o'er the grass the dew;  
 Then Gramercy!<sup>54</sup> for the Black Friar! 365  
 Heaven sain<sup>55</sup> him! fair or foul!  
 And whatsoever may be his prayer,  
 Let ours be for his Soul.

## 41.

The Lady's voice ceased, and the thrilling wires  
 Died from the touch that kindled them to sound, 370  
 And the pause followed, which, when Song expires,  
 Pervades a moment those who listen round –  
 And then of course the Circle much admires,  
 Nor less applauds, as in politeness bound,  
 The tones – the feeling – and the execution – 375  
 To the Performer's diffident confusion.

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<sup>54</sup>: *Gramercy*: "May God grant mercy". Often used as a general exclamation of happiness, surprise and / or relief: see Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* l.164: *Gramercy! they for joy did grin ...*

<sup>55</sup>: *sain*: to sain was to make the sign of the Cross with a view to exorcising a devil.

42.<sup>56</sup>

Fair Adeline, though in a careless way,  
 As if she rated such accomplishment  
 As the mere pastime of an idle day –  
 Pursued an instant for her own content – 380  
 Would now and then as 'twere *without* display,  
 Yet *with* display in fact, at times relent  
 To such performances with haughty smile –  
 To show she *could*, if it were worth her while. –

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<sup>56</sup>: For a contrast with Adeline's mock-modesty here, see de Staël's description of Corinne's crowning with the laurel after her improvisation at the Capitol, *Corinne*, Book II, Chapter iv, opening: *Le sénateur prit la couronne de myrte et de laurier qu'il devait placer sur la tête de Corinne. Elle détacha le schall qui entourait son front, et tous ses cheveux, d'un noir d'ébène, tombèrent en boucles sur ses épaules. Elle s'avança la tête nue, le regard animé par un sentiment de plaisir et de reconnaissance qu'elle ne cherchait point à dissimuler. Elle se remit une seconde fois à genoux pour recevoir la couronne, mais elle parassait moins troublée et moins tremblante que la première fois; elle venait de parler, elle venait de remplir son âme des plus nobles pensées, l'enthousiasme l'emportait sur la timidité. Ce n'était pas une femme craintive, mais une prêtresse inspirée qui se consacrait avec joie au culte du génie* ["The Senator took up the crown of myrtle and laurel he was to place on Corinne's head. She removed the turban entwined about her forehead, and all her jet black hair tumbled down in curls onto her shoulders. Bareheaded she stepped forward with a look of pleasure and gratitude she did not seek to conceal. She knelt down a second time in order to be crowned, but this time she seemed less anxious and trembling. She had just spoken, she had just filled her soul with the noblest thoughts; enthusiasm had won the day over bashfulness. No more a timorous woman, she was an inspired priestess joyfully dedicating herself to the worship of genius"] (tr. Sylvia Raphael). De Staël's book is noticeable for the absence from it of any irony.

## 43.

Now this (but we will whisper this aside) 385  
 Was – pardon the pedantic illustration –  
 Trampling on Plato’s pride with greater pride,  
 As did the Cynic on some fit occasion,<sup>57</sup>  
 Deeming the Sage would be much mortified,  
 Or thrown into a philosophic passion, 390  
 For a spoilt Carpet \* – but this “Attic Bee”<sup>58</sup>  
 Was much consoled by his own repartee.

\* I think that it *was* a *Carpet* on which Diogenes trod with, “Thus I trample on the pride of Plato!” – “With greater pride,” as the other replied; but as *Carpets* are *meant* to be trodden upon, my memory probably misgives me – and it might be a robe, or tapestry, or a table-Cloth, or some other expensive and uncynical piece of furniture.

## 44.

Thus Adeline would throw into the Shade  
 By doing easily, whene’er she chose,  
 What dilettanti do with vast parade 395  
 Their sort of *half-profession* – for it grows  
 To something like this, when too oft displayed;  
 And that it is so, every body knows  
 Who have heard Miss That or This, or Lady T’other,  
 Show off, to please their company, or Mother. 400

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<sup>57</sup>: *Trampling on Plato’s pride with greater pride, / As did the Cynic on some fit occasion*: Diogenes the Cynic apparently stamped upon Plato’s couch to show his contempt for the other’s arrogance, and was answered in the manner noted. Coleridge refers us to Diogeni Laertii *De Vita et Sententiis*, lib. vi. ed. 1595, p.321. Thus the scorner of pride (in this case, Adeline) is found guilty of greater, because covert, pride.

<sup>58</sup>: *this “Attic Bee”*: that is, Plato. A bee was said to have landed on the infant philosopher’s lips as he lay in his cradle, thus guaranteeing him great future eloquence. Our source is Cicero, *De divinatione*, 36. See above, IX ll.223-4n for the political and sexual implications of the phrase (neither of which apply here).

## 45.

Oh, the long Evenings of Duets and Trios!  
 The Admirations, and the Speculations,  
 The “Mamma Mia’s!” and the “Amor Mio’s!”<sup>59</sup>  
 The “Tanti palpiti’s”<sup>60</sup> on such occasions,  
 The “Lasciami’s,” and quivering “Addio’s!”<sup>61</sup> 405  
 Amongst our own most musical of Nations; \*  
 With “Tu mi chama’s” from Portingale  
 To soothe our ears lest Italy should fail.

\* I remember that the Mayoress of a provincial town,<sup>62</sup> somewhat surfeited with a similar display from foreign parts, did rather indecorously break through the applause of an intelligent audience – intelligent, I mean, as to the Music – for the words besides being in recondite languages (it was some years before the peace – ere all the World had travelled – and while I was a Collegian)<sup>63</sup> were sorely disguised by the performers – this Mayoress, I say, broke out with, “Rot your Italianos! For my part I loves a simple Ballat!” Rossini will go a good way to bring most people to the same Opinion – some day. Who would imagine that he was to be the Successor of Mozart?<sup>64</sup> However – I state this with diffidence, as a liege and loyal admirer of Italian Music in general, and of much of Rossini’s, but we may say, as the Connoisseur did of Painting in *The Vicar of Wakefield*,<sup>65</sup> “that the picture would be better painted if the painter had taken more pains.”

<sup>59</sup>: *The “Mamma mias”, and the “Amor Mios”*: Italian opera-libretto clichés (all in the plural) signifying roughly “Mother of mine!” and “My Love!”

<sup>60</sup>: *The “Tanti palpitis”*: signifies “It [the heart] beats so much” (an actual aria from Rossini’s *Tancredi*, which B. saw often in Italy).

<sup>61</sup>: *The “Lasciamis”, and quivering “Addios!”*: “Allow me!” and “Farewell!”

<sup>62</sup>: The provincial town may be Brighton.

<sup>63</sup>: B. was a “Collegian”, that is, an undergraduate, from 1805 to 1807.

<sup>64</sup>: See above, X1, 47, 3, for another one of only four other references to Mozart in all B.’s writing. The two others are at BLJ VII 25 and X 189. B. seems to have seen few Mozart operas, even though the three da Ponte opera buffo’s are so similar in tone to his three ottava rima poems. Leigh Hunt (Hart p.207) tells us that in reality Rossini was B.’s “real favourite. He liked his dash and animal spirits”, and that he asked expert musical advice before making the judgement here.

<sup>65</sup>: “Upon asking how he had been taught the art of a cognoscento so very suddenly, he assured me that nothing was more easy. The whole secret consisted in a strict adherence to two rules: the one, always to observe that the picture might have been better if the painter had taken more pains: and the other, to praise the works of Pietro Perugino” – Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Chapter XX.

## 46.

In Babylon's Bravuras,<sup>66</sup> as the home  
 Heart-ballads of Green Erin, or Grey Highlands<sup>67</sup> 410  
 That bring Lochaber<sup>68</sup> back to eyes that roam  
 O'er far Atlantic Continents or Islands,  
 The Calentures<sup>69</sup> of Music, which o'ercome  
 All Mountaineers with dreams that they are nigh lands,  
 No more to be beheld but in such visions – 415  
 Was Adeline well versed, as compositions. –

## 47.

She also had a twilight twinge of "Blue"<sup>70</sup> –  
 Could write rhymes, and compose more than she wrote –  
 Made epigrams, occasionally, too –  
 Upon her friends, as every body ought; 420  
 But still from that sublimer azure hue,  
 So much the present dye, she was remote –  
 Was weak enough to deem Pope a great poet,  
 And – what was worse – was not ashamed to show it.<sup>71</sup> –

<sup>66</sup>: *Babylon's Bravuras*: elaborate Italian arias, from operas such as Rossini's *Semiramide*, about Semiramis, Queen of Babylon (for whom see above, V, 60, 8 and nn).

<sup>67</sup>: *the home / Heart-ballads of Green Erin, or Grey Highlands*: Irish or Scots ballads designed to make the auditors home-sick.

<sup>68</sup>: *Lochaber*: see the ballad *The Road to the Isles*: "Sure, by Tummel, and Loch Rannoch, and Lochaber I will go, / By heather tracks wi' heaven in their wiles; / If it's thinkin' in yer inner heart, / Braggart's in ma step, / Ye've never smelled the tangle of the Isles".

<sup>69</sup>: *The Calentures of Music*: a calenture was a tropical fever which made sailors think the sea was a green field, and want to jump into it. The folk-songs Adeline plays have a similarly hypnotic effect. Coleridge draws our attention to *The Two Foscari*, III i 172-6: ... *that malady / Which calls up green and native fields to view / From the rough deep, with such identity / To the poor exile's fevered eye, that he / Can scarcely be restrained from treading them ...*

<sup>70</sup>: *She also had a twilight twinge of "Blue"*: Adeline was an amateur *littérateuse* – normally a damnable thing in a woman for B. (see above, IV, sts.108-12, XI, 51, 8, XI, 64, 2, or XIV, 79, 7) but we assume that a *twilight tinge* is pale, and vanishing.

<sup>71</sup>: *Was weak enough to deem Pope a great poet, / And – what was worse – was not ashamed to show it*: such confident conservative literary taste would have B.'s approval – he thought Pope the greatest English poet.

## 48.

Aurora – since we are touching upon taste, 425  
 Which nowadays is the thermometer  
 By whose degrees all characters are classed –  
 Was more Shakespearian, if I do not err;  
 The Worlds beyond this World's perplexing Waste  
 Had more of her Existence,<sup>72</sup> for in her 430  
 There was a depth of feeling to embrace  
 Thoughts boundless, deep, but silent too as Space.

## 49.

Not so her gracious, graceful, graceless, Grace  
 The full grown Hebe<sup>73</sup> of FitzFulke – whose Mind,  
 If She had any, was upon her face – 435  
 And that was of a fascinating kind –  
 A little turn for Mischief you might trace  
 Also thereon – but that's not much;<sup>74</sup> we find  
 Few females without some such gentle leaven,  
 For fear we should suppose us quite in heaven. 440

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<sup>72</sup>: *Aurora ... / Was more Shakespearian, if I do not err; / The Worlds beyond this World's perplexing Waste / Had more of her Existence ...*: gives a strange idea of B.'s reading or misreading of Shakespeare, who, although he can write in apocalyptic and other-worldly terms, writes in all other kinds of registers too.

<sup>73</sup>: *Hebe*: goddess of youth.

<sup>74</sup>: *but that's not much*: *Othello*, III iii 269-70: *for I am declined / Into the vale of years - yet that's not much ...*

## 50.

I have not heard she was at all poetic –  
 Though once she was seen reading “The Bath Guide”,<sup>75</sup>  
 And “Hayley’s Triumphs”<sup>76</sup> – which she deemed pathetic,  
 Because, she said, *her temper* had been tried  
 So much, the bard had really been prophetic 445  
 Of what she had gone through with, since a bride;<sup>77</sup>  
 But of all verse, what most insured her praise  
 Were Sonnets to herself, or “Bout rimés”.<sup>78</sup>

## 51.

’Twere difficult to say what was the object  
 Of Adeline, in bringing this same lay 450  
 To bear on what to her appeared the Subject  
 Of Juan’s nervous feelings on that day<sup>79</sup> –  
 Perhaps she merely had the simple project  
 To laugh him out of his supposed dismay –  
 Perhaps she might wish to confirm him in it – 455  
 Though why I cannot say – at least this minute.

<sup>75</sup>: “*The Bath Guide*”: The Rev. Christopher Anstey’s verse novel *The New Bath Guide* (1766, numerous expansions and reprints) is a hilarious and indecent account of the sexual adventures and misadventures of a family in fashionable Bath.

<sup>76</sup>: “*Hayley’s Triumphs*”: William Hayley’s *Triumphs of Temper* is a sentimental verse novel of 1781, modelled vaguely on *The Rape of the Lock*. In it, as is not the case in *The New Bath Guide*, virtue triumphs. See *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* II.315-16: *Triumphant first see “Temper’s Triumphs” shine! / At least I’m sure they’ve triumphed over mine*. Hayley (1745-1820) was a friend of Cowper and of Blake. Gifford despised him. He is author of the *Life of Milton* to which B. refers above, at Dedication, st.11.

<sup>77</sup>: ... *which she deemed pathetic, / Because, she said, her temper had been tried / So much, the bard had really been prophetic / Of what she had gone through with, since a bride*: echoes B.’s lines in *English Bards*, just quoted. Fitz-Fulke would not find the pure ethics of Hayley as congenial as the romping depravity to be found throughout *The New Bath Guide*.

<sup>78</sup>: “*Bout rimés*”: a poetic game in which one partner supplies the rhymes and the other has to fill in the matter; or, one partner starts and finishes a stanza and the other supplies the middle lines, or alternate lines, and so on. B. and Annabella played the game at Seaham: see CPW III 282-3: **Annabella**: *My husband is the greatest goose alive / Byron*: *I feel that I have been a fool to wive*.

<sup>79</sup>: *’Twere difficult to say what was the object / Of Adeline, in bringing this same lay / To bear on what to her appeared the Subject / Of Juan’s nervous feelings*: we suspect that there was no point in the subject of Adeline’s ballad, and more in her manner of singing it before Juan so as to render herself attractive to him.



## 52.

But so far, the immediate effect  
 Was to restore him to his Self-propriety –  
 A thing quite necessary to the Elect,  
 Who wish to take the tone of their Society – 460  
 In which you cannot be too circumspect,  
 Whether the Mode be persiflage or piety –  
 But wear the newest mantle of hypocrisy,  
 On pain of much displeasing the Gynocracy.<sup>80</sup>

## 53.

And therefore Juan now began to rally 465  
 His Spirits – and without more explanation  
 To jest upon such themes in many a sally;  
 Her Grace too also seized the same occasion –  
 With various similar remarks to tally –  
 But wished for a still more detailed narration 470  
 Of this same Mystic Friar's curious doings<sup>81</sup>  
 About the present family's deaths and wooings.

## 54.

Of these, few could say more than has been said;  
 They passed, as such things do, for Superstition  
 With some, while others, who had more in dread 475  
 The theme, half credited the strange tradition –  
 And much was talked on all sides on that head;  
 But Juan, when cross-questioned on the Vision –  
 Which some supposed (though he had not avowed it)  
 Had stirred him – answered in a way to cloud it. – 480

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<sup>80</sup>: *the Gynocracy*: government by women, a major theme throughout *Don Juan*. They seem to thrive on two-facedness. See B.'s letter to Murray of July 16 1821: “[Teresa Guiccioli] **had read the two first [cantos of *Don Juan*] in the French translation – & never ceased beseeching me to write no more of it. – The reason of this is not at first obvious to a superficial observer of FOREIGN manners[,] but it arises from the wish of all women to exalt the *sentiment* of the passions – & to keep up the illusion which is their empire. – Now D.J. strips off this illusion – & laughs at that & most other things. – I never knew a woman who did not protect *Rousseau* – nor one who did not dislike de Grammont – Gil Blas & all the *comedy* of the passions – when brought out naturally.” (BLJ VIII 148).**

<sup>81</sup>: *Her Grace too also seized the same occasion – / With various similar remarks to tally – / But wished for a still more detailed narration / Of this same Mystic Friar's curious doings*: it's at this point that FitzFulke conceives the plan around which the rest of the canto revolves.

## 55.

And then, the Mid Day having worn to One,  
 The Company prepared to separate –  
 Some to their several pastimes, or to none;  
 Some wondering 'twas so early, some so late;  
 There was a goodly match, too, to be run, 485  
 Between some greyhounds on my Lord's estate –  
 And a young racehorse of old pedigree,  
 Matched for the Spring,<sup>82</sup> whom several went to see.

## 56.

There was a picture dealer, who had brought  
 A Special Titian<sup>83</sup> – warranted original<sup>84</sup> – 490  
 So precious that it was not to be bought,  
 Though Princes the possessor were besieging all –  
 The King himself had cheapened it, but thought  
 The Civil list<sup>85</sup> (he deigns to accept, obliging all  
 His subjects by his gracious acceptation) 495  
 Too scanty – in these times of low taxation.

## 57.

But as Lord Henry was a Connoisseur<sup>86</sup> –  
 The Friend of Artists, if not Arts – the owner,  
 With motives the most classical and pure –  
 So that he would have been the very donor 500  
 Rather than Seller – had his wants been fewer –  
 So much he deemed his patronage an honour –  
 Had bought the *Capo d'Opera*<sup>87</sup> – not for sale –  
 But for his judgement – never known to fail.

<sup>82</sup>: *Matched for the Spring*: DJP notes “Entered for the spring races in a match book, in which a list of the dates of the races was kept”.

<sup>83</sup>: *A Special Titian*: but Henry has one already. See above, XIII 1.563.

<sup>84</sup>: *warranted original*: echoes above, IV, 114, 3: *Some went off dearly: fifteen hundred dollars / For one Circassian, a sweet Girl, were given, / Warranted virgin ...* The market for art in England comparing with the flesh-market in Constantinople.

<sup>85</sup>: *The Civil list*: the monarch's income as determined by Parliament.

<sup>86</sup>: *Lord Henry was a Connoisseur*: B. distrusted art connoisseurs. Compare *TVOJ*, 229-2: *There also are some Altar-pieces, though / I really can't say they much evince / One's inner notions of immortal Spirits; / But let the Connoisseurs explain their merits*. See also *CHP* IV 53, where connoisseurs are said to describe the indescribable. B. says, speaking about critics of the Medici Venus, which he admires, *I would not their vile breath should crisp the stream / Wherein that image shall for ever dwell*.

<sup>87</sup>: *Capo d'Opera*: master-work.

## 58.

There was a modern Goth – I mean a Gothic 505  
 Bricklayer of Babel, called an Architect –  
 Brought to survey these gray walls, which, though so thick,  
 Might have, from Time, acquired some slight defect –  
 Who, after rummaging the Abbey through thick  
 And thin, produced a plan whereby to erect 510  
 New buildings of correctest conformation,  
 And throw down old – which he called *Restoration*.<sup>88</sup>

“Ausu Romano – Ære Veneto”<sup>89</sup> is the inscription (and well inscribed in that instance) on the Sea Walls between the Adriatic and Venice. – The Walls were a Republican Work of the Venetians; the inscription – I believe – Imperial, and inscribed by Napoleon – the *First*: it is time to continue to him that title – there will be a second by and bye<sup>90</sup> – “Spes altera Mundi,” if he live; let him not defeat it like his father. – – – – –

But in any case, he will be preferable to the Imbeciles.<sup>91</sup> – – – –

There is a glorious field for him – if he know how to cultivate it. – – –

## 59.

The Cost would be a trifle – an “old Song”  
 Set to some thousands (’tis the usual burthen  
 Of that same tune, when people hum it long) – 515  
 The price would speedily repay its worth, in  
 An Edifice no less sublime than strong –  
 By which Lord Henry’s good Taste would go forth in  
 Its Glory – through all ages shining sunny  
 For Gothic daring shown in English money. – 520

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<sup>88</sup>: *to erect / New buildings of correctest conformation, / And throw down old – which he called Restoration*: perhaps a reference to Colonel Thomas Wildman’s £100,000 restoration of Newstead Abbey, which B., however, never saw. On November 18 1818 B. wrote to Wildman, giving him a free hand even on the Byron family remnants: “**I should regret to trouble you with any requests of mine in regard to the preservation of any signs of my family which may still exist at Newstead – and leave every thing of that kind to your own feelings, present or future, upon that Subject**” (BLJ VI 81).

<sup>89</sup>: “*Ausu Romano – Ære Veneto*”: “Built by Roman daring and Venetian money”.

<sup>90</sup>: ... *there will be a second by and bye*: Napoleon’s son was François Charles Joseph Napoleon, Duke of Reichstadt (1811-32). The Emperor Napoleon III was the son of Louis Bonaparte, Napoleon’s third brother.

<sup>91</sup>: ... *the Imbeciles*: the restored monarchs of post-Vienna Europe.

## 60.

There were two lawyers busy on a Mortgage  
 Lord Henry wished to raise for a new purchase –  
 Also a lawsuit upon tenures Burgage,<sup>92</sup>  
 And one on Tithes – which sure are Discord’s torches,<sup>93</sup>  
 Kindling Religion till she throws down *her gage*,<sup>94</sup> 525  
 “Untying” Squires “to fight against the Churches”,<sup>95</sup>  
 There was a prize ox, a prize pig, and ploughman –  
 For Henry was a sort of Sabine Showman.<sup>96</sup> –

\* “Though ye *untie* the Winds and bid them fight Against the *Churches*” – *Macbeth*.

## 61.

There were two Poachers caught in a steel trap,  
 Ready for Jail – their place of convalescence; 530  
 There was a Country Girl in a close cap  
 And Scarlet Cloak<sup>97</sup> (I hate the sight to see since –  
 Since – since – in youth – I had the sad mishap –  
 But luckily I have paid few parish fees since),<sup>98</sup>  
 That Scarlet Cloak, alas! unclosed with rigour – 535  
 Presents the problem of a double figure.

<sup>92</sup>: *tenures Burgage*: a burgage property was one rented directly from the crown, or from a feudal overlord, with an annual payment. B.’s Southwell residence was called, and still is, Burgage Manor.

<sup>93</sup>: *Tithes – which sure are Discord’s torches*: the tithe represented one-tenth of a parishioner’s income, which had to be paid annually to the church. It was very unpopular.

<sup>94</sup>: *she throws down her gage*: that is, challenges those who challenge her.

<sup>95</sup>: “Untying” Squires “to fight against the Churches”: *Macbeth* IV i 51-2: *Though you untie the winds and let them fight / Against the churches*. Macbeth is defying the witches to do their worst as long as he can know his fate.

<sup>96</sup>: *a sort of Sabine Showman*: a gentleman-farmer; an amateur, as B asserts Horace to have been on his Sabine farm. See above, IX 55.

<sup>97</sup>: *a close cap / And Scarlet Cloak*: public emblems of her shame, as in Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*.

<sup>98</sup>: (*I hate the sight to see since – / Since – since – in youth – I had the sad mishap – / But luckily I have paid few parish fees since*): B. had at least one and perhaps two illegitimate children by girls on the Newstead estate. See BLJ I 189: “... **the youngest** [maidservant] **is pregnant (I need not tell you by whom) and I cannot leave the girl on the parish.**” He wrote a fanciful poem to one of his children, called *To My Son* (CPW I 210).

## 62.

A Reel within a Bottle is a Mystery<sup>99</sup> –  
 One can't tell how it e'er got in or out;  
 Therefore the present piece of Natural history  
 I leave to those who're fond of solving doubt, 540  
 And merely state – though not for the Consistory<sup>100</sup> –  
 Lord Henry was a Justice, and that Scout  
 The Constable,<sup>101</sup> beneath a warrant's banner,  
 Had bagged this poacher upon Nature's manor.<sup>102</sup>

## 63.

Now Justices of Peace must judge of pieces<sup>103</sup> 545  
 Of mischief of all kinds, and keep the game  
 And morals of the country from caprices  
 Of those who've not a license for the same;<sup>104</sup>  
 And of all things, excepting tithes and leases,  
 Perhaps these are most difficult to tame; 550  
 Preserving partridges and pretty wenches  
 Are puzzles to the most precautious benches.

## 64.

The present Culprit was extremely pale –  
 Pale as if painted so; her cheek, being red  
 By Nature, as in higher dames less hale 555  
 'Tis white – at least when they just rise from bed,<sup>105</sup>  
 Perhaps she was ashamed of seeming frail –  
 Poor Soul! – for she was country born and bred,  
 And knew no better, in her immorality,  
 Than to wax white – for blushes are for quality.<sup>106</sup> 560

<sup>99</sup>: *A Reel within a Bottle is a Mystery*: see Scott, *Waverley*, Chapter 45: "... he looked not unlike that ingenious puzzle called 'a reel in a bottle,' the marvel of children (and of some grown people too, myself for one), who can neither comprehend the mystery how it has got in or how it is to be taken out." See also Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Chapter 16: "One compared it to Robinson Crusoe's long-boat, too large to be removed; another thought it more resembled a reel in a bottle; some wondered how it could be got out, but still more were amazed how it ever got in." I am grateful to Itsuyo Higashinaka for these references. The image incorporates several indecencies.

<sup>100</sup>: *the Consistory*: a Church of England diocesan court.

<sup>101</sup>: *Scout / The Constable*: a rural functionary whose job – and capacity for corruption – had not changed since the days of Chaucer's Summoner. A more immediate predecessor is the corrupt official Mr Scout in Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*.

<sup>102</sup>: *this poacher upon Nature's manor*: ironically parallels the pregnant girl with the real poachers at ll.529-30 of this canto, above.

<sup>103</sup>: *Now Justices of Peace must judge of pieces*: implicative word-play, continuing B.'s current homage to Fielding, who, though himself a magistrate, had scant respect for the profession. See *Amelia*, Book I Chapter 2.

<sup>104</sup>: *those who've not a license for the same*: just as the poachers have no license to shoot, so the girl has none to have sex.

<sup>105</sup>: *'Tis white – at least when they just rise from bed*: implying their day-colouring to be artificial.

## 65.

Her black, bright, downcast, yet *espiègle* eye<sup>107</sup>  
 Had gathered a large tear into its corner,  
 Which the poor thing at times essayed to dry –  
 For she was not a sentimental mourner,  
 Parading all her Sensibility – 565  
 Nor insolent enough to scorn the scorner;  
 But stood – in trembling, patience, tribulation<sup>108</sup> –  
 To be called up for her examination.

## 66.

Of course, these groupes were scattered here and there –  
 Not nigh the gay Saloon of Ladies Gent<sup>109</sup> – 570  
 The Lawyers in the Study, and, in air,  
 The prize Pig, Ploughman, poachers; the Men sent  
 From town – viz., Architect and Dealer – were  
 Both busy (as a General in his tent  
 Writing dispatches) in their several stations – 575  
 Exulting in their brilliant lucubrations.<sup>110</sup>

## 67.

But this poor Girl was left in the great Hall  
 While Scout, the parish Guardian of the frail,  
 Discussed (he hated beer yclept “the small”)<sup>111</sup>  
 A mighty Mug of *moral* double Ale;<sup>112</sup> 580  
 She waited until Justice could recall  
 Its kind attentions to their proper Pale,  
 To name – a thing in nomenclature rather  
 Perplexing for most Virgins: a child’s father.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>106</sup>: *blushes are for quality*: a Marxist point. Only the rich can afford shame (but rarely feel, still less show it).

<sup>107</sup>: *Her ... espiègle eye*: her arch and mischievous eye.

<sup>108</sup>: *But stood – in trembling, patience, tribulation*: see Romans 12, 10-12: *Be ... patient in tribulation*.

<sup>109</sup>: *the gay Saloon of Ladies Gent*: E.H.Coleridge was the first editor to adduce Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, I, IX, 6, 1, as source for B.’s strange usage here: *Well worthy impe, said then the Lady gent, / And Pupil fit for such a Tutours hand*.

<sup>110</sup>: *lucubrations*: midnight creative musings. See *Beppo*, l.371.

<sup>111</sup>: *(he hated beer yclept “the small”)*: small beer was watered-down. Scout considers the estate-girl’s case to be beneath his notice.

<sup>112</sup>: *A mighty Mug of moral double Ale*: a weightier moral issue than that posed by the girl’s problem.

<sup>113</sup>: *a thing in nomenclature rather / Perplexing for most Virgins: a child’s father*: to name the father of her child would indeed *perplex* (l.584) the average virgin. B. may intend a covert reference to the statue of the Virgin and child (authentically at Newstead) – see above, XIII st.61. If Christ were born at Newstead, no-one would notice.

## 68.

You see, here was enough of occupation 585  
 For the Lord Henry, linked with dogs and horses;<sup>114</sup>  
 There was much bustle too, and preparation  
 Below stairs on the score of second courses,<sup>115</sup>  
 Because, as suits their rank and situation,  
 Those who in Counties have great land resources, 590  
 Have “public days”, when all men may carouse –  
 Though not exactly what’s called “Open House”.<sup>116</sup> –

## 69.

But once a week or fortnight – *uninvited* –  
 (Thus we translate a *General Invitation*)  
 All Country Gentlemen, Esquired or Knighted, 595  
 May drop in, without Cards, and take their station  
 At the full board, and sit, alike delighted  
 With fashionable wines and conversation;  
 And, as the Isthmus of the grand connection,<sup>117</sup>  
 Talk o’er themselves, the past, and next election. 600

## 70.

Lord Henry was a great Electioneerer,  
 Burrowing for boroughs like a Rat or Rabbit;  
 But County Contests cost him rather dearer,  
 Because the neighbouring Scotch Earl of Giftgabbit  
 Had English influence in the self-same sphere here – 605  
 His Son, the Honourable Dick Dicedrabbit,  
 Was Member for the “*Other Interest*” (meaning  
 The same Self-interest – with a different leaning.)<sup>118</sup>

<sup>114</sup>: *here was enough of occupation / For the Lord Henry, linked with dogs and horses*: implies Henry’s role of country gentleman to be a façade merely – rather like B.’s at Newstead.

<sup>115</sup>: *second courses*: recalls momentarily the preoccupations of Canto XV.

<sup>116</sup>: “*public days*”, *when all men may carouse* – / *Though not exactly what’s called “Open House”*: contrast Chaucer’s Franklyn, who keeps genuine open house all year round (*General Prologue*, ll.341-57).

<sup>117</sup>: *the Isthmus of the grand connection*: Norman Abbey is the narrow corridor through which all social life must flow.

<sup>118</sup>: *the “Other Interest” (meaning / The same Self-interest – with a different leaning)*: the supposed distinction is between Whig and Tory, but B. nowhere says which Sir Henry is, the essence of his satirical point being that the two are identical, offering voters no choice at all.

## 71.

Courteous and cautious therefore in his County,  
 He was all things to all men,<sup>119</sup> and dispensed 610  
 To some civility, to others bounty,  
 And promises to all, which last commenced  
 To gather to a somewhat large amount, he  
 Not calculating how much they condensed;  
 But, what with keeping some and breaking others, 615  
 His word had the same value as Another's.<sup>120</sup>

## 72.

A friend to Freedom and freeholders – yet  
 No less a friend to Government – he held<sup>121</sup>  
 That he exactly the just medium hit  
 'Twixt place and patriotism; albeit compelled, 620  
 Such was his Sovereign's pleasure (although unfit,  
 He added modestly, when rebels railed)<sup>122</sup>  
 To hold some sinecures he wished abolished<sup>123</sup> –  
 But that with them all law should be demolished.

## 73.

He was “free to confess” (whence came this phrase? 625  
 Is't English? – No – 'tis only parliamentary)  
 That Innovation's Spirit<sup>124</sup> nowadays  
 Had made more progress than for the last century;  
 He would not tread a factious path to praise,  
 Though for the Public weal disposed to venture high; 630  
 As for the place – he could not but say this of it –  
 That the fatigue was greater than the profit. –

<sup>119</sup>: *He was all things to all men*: above, at XIV, 31, 2, B. writes that *Juan* – in this respect at least like *Saints* – / *Was all things unto people of all sorts* ... the distinction is that the gift *Juan* possesses by nature, Henry tries to cultivate from political motives, but fails.

<sup>120</sup>: *His word had the same value as Another's*: that is, had none.

<sup>121</sup>: *A friend to Freedom and freeholders – yet / No less a friend to Government*: Henry has to claim friendship to freeholders, for they're the ones who have the vote: but he must also assert his friendship to government, or the freeholders may suspect him of wanting to extend the franchise beyond them.

<sup>122</sup>: *when rebels railed*: that is, when radicals, who wished to extend the franchise, agitated.

<sup>123</sup>: *compelled ...To hold some sinecures he wished abolished*: he admits the system to be corrupt, but says that to reform it would be to destroy it.

<sup>124</sup>: *Innovation's Spirit*: the spirit of radicalism, or perhaps (this being the early 1790s) of revolution.



## 74.

Heaven, and his friends, knew that a private life  
 Had ever been his sole and whole ambition –  
 But could he quit his king in times of Strife, 635  
 Which threatened the whole country with perdition?<sup>125</sup>  
 When Demagogues would, with a butcher's knife,  
 Cut through and through (Oh! damnable incision!)  
 The Gordian, or the *Geordi*—an knot, whose strings  
 Have tied together Commons – Lords – and Kings?<sup>126</sup> – 640

## 75.

Sooner “Come Place into the Civil list  
 And champion him to the utmost!”<sup>127</sup> he would keep it  
 Till duly disappointed or dismissed;  
 Profit he cared not for – let others reap it –  
 But – should the day come when Place cease to exist, 645  
 The country would have far more cause to weep it –  
 For how would it go on? Explain who can!  
*He* gloried in the name of Englishman.

## 76.

He was as independent – aye, much more –  
 Than those who were not paid for Independence, 650  
 As common soldiers, or a common – Shore<sup>128</sup> –  
 Have in their several arts – or parts – ascendance  
 O'er the irregulars in lust or gore,  
 Who do not give professional attendance;  
 Thus on the Mob all statesmen are as eager 655  
 To prove their pride – as footmen to a beggar.

<sup>125</sup>: ... *times of Strife*, / *Which threatened the whole country with perdition?*: places the action at the time just after the French Revolution.

<sup>126</sup>: *The Gordian, or the Geordi-an knot, whose strings / Have tied together Commons – Lords – and Kings?*: Henry puns on the Gordian knot – the un-untiable one cut impatiently in two by Alexander the Great – and the royal name of King George III. See also above, this canto, l.231 and n.

<sup>127</sup>: *Sooner “Come Place into the Civil list / And champion him to the utmost!”*: *Macbeth* III i 70-71: *Rather than so, come, Fate, into the list, / And champion me to th'utterance!* Uppercasing the first letter of “Place” permits a pun on the name of the radical Francis Place (1771-1854) who managed the Westminster campaigns of B.'s friend J.C.Hobhouse. Though not active at the time *Don Juan* is set, he was at the time it was published.

<sup>128</sup>: ... *common soldiers, or a common – Shore*: plays with the name of Jane Shore (???? - c.1527) mistress to Edward IV. B.'s original choice – *w—e* – was presumably rejected on the grounds that Henry would not have used the word in public.

## 77.

All this (Save the last stanza) Henry said –  
 And thought. I say no more – I've said too much –  
 For all of us have either heard, or read,  
*Off*, or *upon* the Hustings – some slight such 660  
 Hints from the independent heart or head  
 Of the official Candidate;<sup>129</sup> I'll touch  
 No more on this – the dinner bell hath rung –  
 And Grace is *said* – the Grace I *should* have *sung*<sup>130</sup> –

## 78.

But I'm too late, and therefore must make play; 665  
 'Twas a great banquet, such as Albion old  
 Was wont to boast, as if a glutton's tray  
 Were something very glorious to behold;<sup>131</sup>  
 But 'twas a public feast and public day –  
 Quite full – right dull – guests hot, and dishes cold; 670  
 Great plenty – much formality – small cheer –  
 And every body out of their own Sphere.<sup>132</sup> –

## 79.

The Squires familiarly formal, and  
 My Lords and Ladies proudly condescending;  
 The very Servants puzzling how to hand 675  
 Their plates – without it might be too much bending  
 From their high places by the sideboard's stand;  
 Yet, like their Masters, fearful of offending,  
 For any deviation from the graces  
 Might cost both man, and Master too, their *places*.<sup>133</sup> 680

<sup>129</sup>: *the official Candidate*: the one favoured by the local establishment.

<sup>130</sup>: *should have sung*: compare above, III, 87, 1-2: *Thus sung, or would, or could, or should have sung, / The modern Greek, in tolerable Verse ...*

<sup>131</sup>: *as if a glutton's tray / Were something very glorious to behold*: again recapitulates the theme of Canto XV.

<sup>132</sup>: *... every body out of their own Sphere*: no-one can feel at home in Henry's Open House.

<sup>133</sup>: *Might cost both man, and Master too, their places*: the men might lose their jobs; the masters, their positions of supposed influence (in fact, an alternative servility).

## 80.

There were some hunters bold, and Coursers keen,<sup>134</sup>  
 Whose hounds ne'er erred, nor Gray hounds deigned to lurch,<sup>135</sup>  
 Some deadly Shots too, Septembrizers,<sup>136</sup> seen  
 Earliest to rise and last to quit the search  
 Of the poor partridge through his stubble screen; 685  
 There were some massy Members of the Church<sup>137</sup> –  
 Takers of tithes, and makers of good matches –  
 And several who sang fewer psalms than catches.<sup>138</sup> –

## 81.

There were some Country wags too – and Alas!  
 Some Exiles from the Town, who had been driven 690  
 To gaze, instead of pavement, upon grass,  
 And rise at nine, in lieu of long eleven;  
 And lo! upon that day, it came to pass,  
 I sate next that o'erwhelming son of Heaven,  
 The very powerful parson Peter Pith<sup>139</sup> – 695  
 The loudest wit I e'er was deafened with. –

## 82.

I knew him in his livelier London days –  
 A brilliant diner out, though but a Curate –  
 And not a joke he cut but earned its praise,  
 Until Preferment coming at a sure rate 700  
 (Oh Providence! How wondrous are thy ways –  
 Who would suppose thy gifts sometimes obdurate?)  
 Gave him – to lay the devil who looks o'er Lincoln<sup>140</sup> –  
 A fat Fen vicarage, and naught to think on.<sup>141</sup>

<sup>134</sup>: ... *hunters* ... *Coursers*: hunters hunt on horseback, with hounds; coursers, on foot, with hounds.

<sup>135</sup>: *to lurch*: “to run cunning, and let the opponent do the work” (OED).

<sup>136</sup>: *Septembrizers*: the “septembriseurs” were the perpetrators of the September massacres in Paris in 1792. The partridge-shooting season opens in September.

<sup>137</sup>: ... *massy Members of the Church*: fat vicars.

<sup>138</sup>: *several who sang fewer psalms than catches*: were more fond of secular than of sacred music.

<sup>139</sup>: *Peter Pith*: identified by Wright (1832) as Sydney Smith (1771-1845) often a guest at Holland House. He was a Whig, a founder of the *Edinburgh Review*, and wrote in favour of Catholic Emancipation.

<sup>140</sup>: ... *the devil who looks o'er Lincoln*: one of the gargoyles of Lincoln Cathedral is so nick-named. However, the living Smith was given “by Providence” was nowhere near Lincoln (see next note).

<sup>141</sup>: *A fat Fen vicarage, and naught to think on*: Smith’s living was not in the fens either, but was that of All Saints, Foston-le-Clay, near Barton Hill in Yorkshire. From 1831 he was Canon of St. Paul’s.

## 83.

His jokes were sermons, and his Sermons jokes, 705  
 But both were thrown away amongst the fens,  
 For Wit hath no great friend in aguish folks;  
 No longer ready ears, and short-hand pens  
 Took down the gay bon mot or happy hoax –  
 The poor priest was reduced to common sense, 710  
 Or to coarse efforts, very loud and long,  
 To hammer a hoarse laugh from the thick throng.

## 84.

There *is* a difference, says the Song, “between  
 A beggar and a Queen”<sup>142</sup> or *was* (of late  
 The latter worst used of the two, we’ve seen<sup>143</sup> – 715  
 But – we’ll say nothing of affairs of state)  
 A difference “’twixt a Bishop and a dean”<sup>144</sup> –  
 A difference between Crockery ware and plate,  
 As between English Beef and Spartan broth –  
 And yet great heroes have been bred by both. 720

## 85.

But of all Nature’s discrepancies, none,  
 Upon the whole, is greater than the difference  
 Beheld between the Country and the town –  
 Of which the latter merits every preference,  
 From those who’ve few resources of their own,<sup>145</sup> 725  
 And only think, or act, or feel, with reference  
 To some small plan of Interest or Ambition –  
 Both which are limited to no Condition.

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<sup>142</sup>: ... the Song, “between / A beggar and a Queen”: the song is from about 1750: *There’s a difference between / A beggar and a queen; / And I’ll tell you the reason why; / A queen doesn’t swagger, / Nor get drunk like a beggar, / Nor be half so merry as I.*

<sup>143</sup>: *of late / The latter worst used of the two, we’ve seen*: a reference to Queen Caroline, publicly humiliated by her husband three years previously.

<sup>144</sup>: *A difference “’twixt a Bishop and a dean”*: the song continues (or is parodied) thus: *There’s a difference to be seen, / ’Twixt a Bishop and a Dean, / And I’ll tell you the reason why; A Dean cannot dish up / A supper like a Bishop, / And that’s the reason why!*

<sup>145</sup>: *those who’ve few resources of their own*: that is, most people, especially of the kind now visiting Norman Abbey.

## 86.

But “*En Avant!*”<sup>146</sup> the light Loves languish o’er  
 Long banquets and too many guests, although 730  
 A slight repast makes people love much more –  
 Bacchus and Ceres being, as we know,  
 Even from our Grammar upwards, friends of Yore  
 With vivifying Venus,<sup>147</sup> who doth owe  
 To these the invention of Champagne and truffles; 735  
 Temperance delights her, but long Fasting ruffles. –

## 87.

Dully past o’er the dinner of the day,  
 And Juan took his place, he knew not where –  
 Confused in the Confusion, and *distrain*,  
 And sitting as if nailed upon his chair,<sup>148</sup> 740  
 Though knives and forks clanged round as in a fray –  
 He seemed unconscious of all passing there,  
 Till Some one – with a groan – expresst a wish  
 (Unheeded twice) to have a fin of fish. –

## 88.

On which, at the *third asking* of the Banns,<sup>149</sup> 745  
 He started – and perceiving smiles around,  
 Broadening to grins, he coloured more than once,  
 And hastily – as nothing can confound  
 A wise man more than laughter from a dunce –  
 Inflicted on the dish a deadly wound, 750  
 And with such hurry, that e’er he could curb it –  
 He’d paid his Neighbour’s prayer with half a Turbot.

<sup>146</sup>: “En Avant!”, “Charge!” (French military command).

<sup>147</sup>: *Bacchus and Ceres being, as we know, / Even from our Grammar upwards, friends of Yore / With vivifying Venus*: the line which B. remembers from his Harrow Latin grammar is *Sine Cerere et Libero frigit Venus* (“without the help of Ceres and Bacchus, Venus freezes”) from Terence, *The Eunuch*, 1.748 (“IV v 6” in older editions). Compare above, II 1350-2:

... and some good lessons

*Are also learnt from Ceres and from Bacchus,*

*Without whom Venus will not long attack us.*

<sup>148</sup>: *sitting as if nailed upon his chair*: implies Juan as Christ crucified upon the meaningless yet haunted tedium of English upperclass society. B. makes the adjustment necessary for this reading in his draft.

<sup>149</sup>: *the third asking of the Banns*: there is no wedding in the offing, only a helping of fish: but dinner is in Lord Henry’s world (see previous canto) as vital a ritual as marriage.

## 89.

This was no bad mistake, as it occurred –  
 The Suppliant being an Amateur;<sup>150</sup>  
 But others, who were left with scarce a third, 755  
 Were angry – as they well might, to be sure;  
 They wondered how a young man so absurd  
 Lord Henry at his table should endure;  
 And this, and his not knowing how much oats<sup>151</sup>  
 Had fallen last market, lost his host three votes. – 760

## 90.

They little knew, or might have sympathized,  
 That he the night before had seen a Ghost –  
 A prologue which but slightly harmonized  
 With the substantial company, engrossed  
 By Matter, and so much materialized, 765  
 That one scarce knew at what to marvel most  
 Of two things, how (the question rather odd is)  
 Such Bodies could have Souls, or Souls such Bodies.<sup>152</sup> –

## 91.

But what confused him, more than smile or stare  
 From all the 'Squires or 'Squiresses around, 770  
 Who wondered at the abstraction of his air –  
 Especially as he had been renowned  
 For some vivacity among the fair,  
 Even in the County circle's narrow bound –  
 (For little things upon my Lord's estate 775  
 Were good small-talk for others still less great) –

## 92.

Was, that he caught Aurora's eye on his,  
 And something like a smile upon her cheek;  
 Now this he really rather took amiss –  
 In those who rarely smile, their smiles bespeak 780  
 A strong eternal motive – and in this  
 Smile of Aurora's there was naught to pique  
 Or Hope, or Love, with any of the wiles  
 Which some pretend to trace in Ladies' smiles.

<sup>150</sup>: *an Amateur*: Juan's neighbour at table was socially and gastronomically inexperienced.

<sup>151</sup>: ... *his not knowing how much oats / Had fallen last market*: it is not clear whether the ignorance was Henry's or Juan's. As Henry seems bound to have known such a fact, we may assume it was Juan's.

<sup>152</sup>: *how (the question rather odd is) / Such Bodies could have Souls, or Souls such Bodies*: A question which puzzled B. especially at meals. See above, V 391-2:

... *that all-softening, over-powering knell,*  
*The Tocsin of the Soul: the Dinnerbell.*

## 93.

'Twas a mere quiet smile of Contemplation, 785  
 Indicative of some surprize and pity;  
 And Juan grew Carnation with vexation,  
 Which was not very wise, and still less witty,  
 Since he had gained, at least, her observation –  
 A most important outwork of the City – 790  
 As Juan should have known, had not his Senses  
 By last Night's Ghost been driven from their defences.

## 94.

But what was bad, she did not blush in turn,  
 Nor seem embarrassed – quite the contrary;  
 Her aspect was, as usual, still – *not* stern – 795  
 And she withdrew, but cast not down, her eye –  
 Yet grew a little pale – with what? Concern?  
 I know not – but her Colour ne'er was high,  
 Though sometimes faintly flushed, and always Clear,  
 As deep Seas in a Sunny Atmosphere. 800

## 95.

But Adeline was occupied by Fame  
 This day – and watching, witching, condescending  
 To the Consumers of Fish, Fowl, and Game,  
 And dignity with courtesy so blending 805  
 As all must blend, whose part it is to aim  
 (Especially as the sixth year is ending)<sup>153</sup>  
 At their Lord's – Son's – or similar Connection's  
 Safe conduct through the rocks of re-elections. –

## 96.

Though this was most expedient on the whole –  
 And usual – Juan, when he cast a glance 810  
 On Adeline, while playing her grand role,  
 Which she went through as though it were a dance  
 (Betraying only now and then her soul  
 By a look scarce perceptibly askance  
 Of weariness, or scorn); began to feel 815  
 Some doubt how much of Adeline was *real*;

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<sup>153</sup>: *the sixth year is ending*: that is, the next election is only a year away.

## 97.

So well she acted – all and every part  
 By turns – with that vivacious versatility  
 Which many people take for want of heart;  
 They err;<sup>154</sup> 'tis merely what is called Mobility, 820  
 A thing of temperament and not of Art,  
 Though seeming so from its supposed facility –  
 And false – though true; for surely they're sincerest  
 Who are strongly acted on by what is nearest? –

\* In French, *Mobilité*. I am not sure that mobility is English – but it is expressive of a quality which rather belongs to other climates – though it is sometimes seen to a great extent in our own. It may be defined as an excessive susceptibility of *immediate* impressions, at the same time without *losing* the past, and is – though sometimes apparently useful to the possessor – a most painful and unhappy attribute.<sup>155</sup> – – –

## 98.

This makes your Actors, Artists, and Romancers; 825  
 Heroes sometimes, though seldom – Sages never;  
 But Speakers, Bards, diplomatists, and dancers;  
 Little that's great – but much of what is clever;  
 Most Orators, but very few financiers;  
 Though all Exchequer Chancellors endeavour, 830  
 Of late years, to dispense with Cocker's rigours,<sup>156</sup>  
 And grow quite figurative with their figures.

## 99.

The Poets of Arithmetic<sup>157</sup> are they,  
 Who, though they prove not two and two to be  
 Five – as they might do, in a modest way – 835  
 Have plainly made it out that four are three,  
 Judging by what they take, and what they pay;  
 The Sinking Fund's unfathomable Sea<sup>158</sup> –  
 That most unliquidating liquid – leaves  
 The debt unsunk, yet sinks all it receives. – 840

<sup>154</sup>: Echoes *Paradise Lost*, I, 746-7: *Thus they relate, / Erring ...*

<sup>155</sup>: CPW quotes both Moore, interpreting B.'s mobility as a weakness which made him try and be consistent at least in "great subjects", and E.H.Coleridge, who takes B. to be "defending the enthusiastic temperament from the charge of inconstancy and insincerity". Both versions are accurate. The challenge lies in trying to reconcile steadiness with a constant response to one's changing environment.

<sup>156</sup>: *Cocker's rigours*: Edward Cocker (1631-75) was a schoolmaster whose commercial book *Arithmetick* (1678) was proverbial for its accuracy.

<sup>157</sup>: *The Poets of Arithmetic*: B. concedes poetry to be as false and inaccurate as government economic statistics.

<sup>158</sup>: *The Sinking Fund's unfathomable Sea*: the Sinking Fund was set up in 1717 with a view to the complete elimination of the National Debt. It failed, was liable to gross manipulation and corruption, and was abolished in 1823 (the year this canto was written) having cost England twenty million pounds.



## 100.

While Adeline dispensed her airs and graces,  
 The fair FitzFulke seemed very much at ease;  
 Though too well bred to quiz men to their faces,  
 Her laughing blue eyes with a glance could seize  
 The ridicules of people in all places – 845  
 That honey of your fashionable bees –  
 And store it up for mischievous enjoyment;  
 And this at present was her kind employment. –

## 101.

However, the day closed, as days must close;  
 The Evening also waned – and Coffee came; 850  
 Each Carriage was announced – and ladies rose,  
 And, curtseying off as curtsies Country dame,  
 Retired: – with most unfashionable bows,  
 Their docile Esquires also did the same,  
 Delighted with the dinner and their host – 855  
 But with the Lady Adeline the most.

## 102.

Some praised her beauty; others, her great grace;  
 The warmth of her politeness, whose sincerity  
 Was obvious in each feature of her face,  
 Whose traits were radiant with the rays of Verity – 860  
 Yes! *she* was truly worthy *her* high place –  
 No-one could envy *her* deserved prosperity –  
 And then her *dress* – what beautiful Simplicity! –  
 Draperied her form with curious felicity. – \*

\* “Curiosa felicitas.” – PETRONIUS ARBITER.<sup>159</sup>

## 103.

Meanwhile, sweet Adeline deserved their praises, 865  
 By an impartial indemnification  
 For all her past exertion and soft phrases,  
 In a most edifying conversation –  
 Which turned upon the late Guests’ miens and faces  
 And families, even to the last relation – 870  
 Their hideous wives, their horrid selves and dresses,  
 And truculent distortion of their tresses.

<sup>159</sup>: The full phrase, *Et Horatii curiosa felicitas*, is from Petronius, *The Satyricon*, 118, and refers to the ingenuity and taste of Horace – B.’s favourite Latin poet, who, asserts Eumolpus (the speaker) should stand with Homer and Virgil as a model for poets. As Adeline is a walking work of art, the idea is apt.

## 104.

True, *she* said little – ’twas the rest that broke  
 Forth into universal epigram;  
 But then ’twas to the purpose what she spoke – 875  
 Like Addison’s “faint praise”, so wont to damn,<sup>160</sup>  
 Her own but served to set off every joke,  
 As Music chimes in with a Melodrame –  
 How sweet the task to shield an absent friend!<sup>161</sup>  
 I ask but this of mine, to — *not* defend. 880

## 105.

There were but two exceptions to this keen  
 Skirmish of wits o’er the departed; one,  
 Aurora, with her pure and placid mien;  
 And Juan, too, in general behind none  
 In gay remark on what he’d heard or seen, 885  
 Sate silent now, his usual spirits gone;  
 In vain he heard the others rail or rally –  
 He would not join them in a single sally.

## 106.

’Tis true, he saw Aurora look as though  
 She approved his Silence; she perhaps mistook 890  
 Its motive; for that Charity we owe,  
 But seldom pay, the absent, nor would look  
 Further; it might or it might not be so;  
 But Juan, sitting silent in his nook,  
 Observing little in his reverie, 895  
 Yet saw this much, which he was glad to see. –

<sup>160</sup>: Like Addison’s “faint praise”, so wont to damn: Pope’s description of Addison’s two-facedness at *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, 201-2: *Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer, / And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer ...*

<sup>161</sup>: *How sweet the task to shield an absent friend!*: compare Sheridan, *The Critic*, I, i, 161-74:

DANGLE: But, egad, he [Sir Fretful Plagiary] allows no merit to any author but himself, that’s the truth on’t – tho’ he’s my friend.

SNEER: Never. – He is as envious as an old maid verging on the desperation of six-and-thirty: and then the insidious humility with which he seduces you to give a free opinion of any of his works, can be exceeded only by the petulant arrogance with which he is sure to reject your observations.

DANGLE: Very true, egad – tho’ he is my friend.

SNEER: Then his affected contempt of all newspaper strictures; tho, at the same time, he is the sorest man alive, and shrinks like scorch’d parchment from the fiery ordeal of true criticism: yet is he so covetous of popularity, that he had rather be abused than not mentioned at all.

DANGLE: There’s no denying it – tho’ he is my friend.

## 107.

The Ghost, at least, had done him this much good,  
 In making him as silent as a Ghost;  
 If, in the circumstances which ensued,  
 He gained esteem where it was worth the most – 900  
 And certainly Aurora had renewed  
 In him some feelings he had lately lost,  
 Or hardened – feelings which, perhaps ideal,  
 And so divine, that I must deem them real:

## 108.

The Love of higher things and better days – 905  
 The unbounded hope, and heavenly ignorance  
 Of what is called the World, and the World's ways –  
 The moments when we gather from a glance  
 More joy than from all future pride or praise  
 Which kindle Manhood, but can ne'er entrance 910  
 The heart in an existence of its own –  
 Of which another's bosom is the Zone.

## 109.

Who would not sigh *Αι Αι των Κυθηρειαν!*<sup>162</sup>  
 That *hath* a memory, or that *had* a heart?  
 Alas! *her* star must wane like that of Dian,<sup>163</sup> 915  
 Ray fades on ray, as years on years depart;  
 Anacreon only had the soul to tie an  
 Unwithering Myrtle round the unblunted dart  
 Of Eros; but though thou hast played us many tricks,<sup>164</sup>  
 Still we respect thee, “Alma Venus Genetrix!” \* 920

\* Mem. Alma Venus Genetrix.<sup>165</sup>

<sup>162</sup>: *Αι Αι των Κυθηρειαν!*: (“Ai, ai, tan Kytherian! – Woe, woe for Kytheria!”) B. quotes his near-namesake, the Greek poet Bion (fl. 100 B.C.) First Idyll, *The Lament for Adonis*, line 28. Kytheria is Aphrodite, the goddess of love. When her lover, Adonis, is killed by a boar, she runs frantic with grief.

<sup>163</sup>: *Alas! her star must wane like that of Dian*: Kytheria will endure no longer than Diana, the goddess of chastity.

<sup>164</sup>: *Anacreon only had the soul to tie an / Unwithering Myrtle round the unblunted dart / Of Eros*: only Anacreon had the genius to create work about love which would survive love's decay.

<sup>165</sup>: Refers to the praise for Venus put by Lucretius at the opening of *De Rerum Natura* (I, 1-2): *Aeneadum genetrix, hominum divomque voluptas, / Alma Venus!* (“Mother of Aeneas and his race, darling of men and gods, nurse of Venus!”). See BLJ III 210 (journal entry for November 17 1813): *I remember, last year, [Lady Oxford] said to me, at [Eywood], “Have we not passed our last month like the gods of Lucretius?” And so we had. She is an adept in the text of the original, (which I like too) ...*

## 110.

And full of sentiments sublime as billows,  
 Heaving between this world and worlds beyond,  
 Don Juan, when the Midnight hour of Pillows  
 Arrived, retired to his, but to despond  
 Rather than rest; instead of Poppies, Willows 925  
 Waved o'er his Couch;<sup>166</sup> he meditated, fond  
 Of those sweet bitter thoughts which banish Sleep,  
 And make the Worldling sneer, the Youngling weep. –

## 111.

The Night was as before; he was undrest,  
 Saving his Night-gown, which is an undress; 930  
 Completely *Sans Culotte*,<sup>167</sup> and without Vest;  
 In short, he hardly could be cloathed with less;  
 But, apprehensive of his Spectral guest,  
 He sate with feelings awkward to express  
 (By those who have not had such visitations) 935  
 Expectant of the Ghosts's fresh Operations.

## 112.

And not in vain he listened – Hush! – what's that? –  
 I see – I see – – Ah No! – 'tis not – yet – 'tis –  
 Ye Powers! – it is the – the – – the – Pooh! The Cat –  
 The Devil may take that stealthy pace of his – – 940  
 So like a spiritual pit-a-pat,  
 Or tiptoe of an amatory Miss,  
 Gliding the first time to a rendezvous –  
 And dreading the Chaste echoes of her Shoe. –

<sup>166</sup>: ... *instead of Poppies, Willows / Waved o'er his Couch*: he was unable to sleep because of his sad thoughts of love.

<sup>167</sup>: *Sans Culotte*: without his breeches. The *sans-culottes* were the popular party in the French Revolution; though it is hard to see the nervous Juan in such a perspective at this moment.

## 113.

Again! – what is't? – the Wind? – no – no; this time 945  
 It is the sable Friar as before,  
 With awful footsteps regular as rhyme –  
 Or (as rhymes may be in these days) much more;  
 Again, through shadows of the Night sublime,  
 When deep Sleep fell on Men,<sup>168</sup> and the World wore<sup>950</sup>  
 The starry darkness round her like a girdle  
 Spangled with gems – the Monk made his blood curdle. –

## 114.

A noise like to wet fingers drawn o'er glass – \*  
 Which sets the teeth on edge – and a slight clatter  
 Like showers which on the Midnight gusts will pass, 955  
 Sounding like very supernatural water,  
 Came over Juan's ear – which throbb'd, alas!  
 For Immaterialism's a serious Matter,<sup>169</sup>  
 So that even those whose Faith is the most great  
 In Souls immortal, shun them *tête-à-tête*. – 960

\* See the account of the Ghost of the Uncle of Prince Charles of Saxony, raised by Schroeffer:  
 “Karl – Karl – was – walt wolt mich?”<sup>170</sup> – – –

## 115.

Were his Eyes open? – yes, and his mouth too;  
 Surprise has this effect – to make one dumb,  
 Yet leave the gate which Eloquence slips through  
 As wide as if a long Speech were to come;  
 Nigh, and more nigh, the awful echoes drew, 965  
 Tremendous to a mortal tympanum<sup>171</sup> –  
 His eyes were open, and (as was before  
 Stated) his mouth; what opened next? – the door.

<sup>168</sup>: *When deep Sleep fell on Men*: an allusion to Job, 4 12-17: *Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof. In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men. Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up: It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying, Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker?*

<sup>169</sup>: *For Immaterialism's a serious Matter*: repeats the word-play above, at XI, 1-2: *When Bishop Berkeley said “there was no matter”, / And proved it, 'twas no matter what he said ...*

<sup>170</sup>: Johann Georg Schrepfer (sic: 1730??-74) German freemason and spiritualist. Prince Charles of Saxony (in fact of Courland) was one of his believers. B. had little or no German (BLJ VIII 25-6) and E.H.Coleridge corrects the meaningless line to “Karl – Karl – was willst du mit mir?”

<sup>171</sup>: *a mortal tympanum*: an eardrum.

## 116. –

It opened with a most infernal Creak –  
 Like that of Hell – “Lasciate ogni Speranza 970  
 “Voi che entrate!”<sup>172</sup> the Hinge seemed to speak,  
 Dreadful as Dante’s Rima, or this Stanza,  
 Or – but all words upon such themes are weak –  
 A single Shade’s sufficient to entrance a  
 Hero – for what is Substance to a Spirit? 975  
 Or how is’t *Matter* trembles to come near it?<sup>173</sup> –

## 117.

The Door flew wide – not swiftly – but as fly  
 The Sea Gulls, with a steady, sober flight –  
 And then swung back – nor closed, but stood awry –  
 Half letting in long shadows on the light, 980  
 Which still in Juan’s Candlesticks burnt high –  
 For he had two, both tolerably bright;  
 And, in the doorway, darkening Darkness, stood –  
 The sable Friar in his solemn hood. –

## 118.

Don Juan shook – as erst he had been shaken 985  
 The Night before – but, being sick of shaking,  
 He first inclined to think he’d been mistaken,  
 And then to be ashamed of such mistaking –  
 His own internal Ghost began to awaken<sup>174</sup>  
 With him, to quell his corporal quaking – 990  
 Hinting that Soul and Body on the whole  
 Were odds against a disembodied Soul. –

## 119.

And then his dread grew wrath, and his wrath fierce,  
 And he arose – advanced – the Shade retreated;  
 But Juan, eager now the truth to pierce, 995  
 Followed – his veins no longer cold, but heated –  
 Resolved to thrust the Mystery, *carte and tierce*,<sup>175</sup>  
 At whatsoever risk of being defeated;  
 The Ghost stopped – menaced – then retired until  
 He reached the ancient wall – then stood stone still. – 1000

<sup>172</sup>: “*Lasciate ogni Speranza* / “*Voi che entrate!*”: the last line of the inscription over the gate of Hell at Dante, *Inferno*, III 9 (should be *ch’entrate*, but that would spoil B.’s scansion).

<sup>173</sup>: ... *what is Substance to a Spirit? / Or how is’t Matter trembles to come near it?*: the fact that what Juan is faced with is not spirit at all is part of B.’s philosophical joke. Matter convinces him that it is spirit.

<sup>174</sup>: *to awaken*: has to be read “t’awaken”.

<sup>175</sup>: ... *carte and tierce*: as DJP has it, “The fourth (*quarte*) and third (*terce*) positions for thrusting or parrying in fencing”.

## 120.

Juan put forth one arm – Eternal Powers! –  
 It touched no soul – no body – but the wall,  
 On which the Moonbeams fell in silvery showers,  
 Checquered with all the tracery of the hall;<sup>176</sup>  
 He shuddered – as no doubt the bravest cowers 1005  
 When he can't tell what 'tis that doth appall;  
 How odd – a single Hob-Goblin's non-entity \*  
 Should cause more fear than a whole Host's identity! –

\* “Shadows tonight have, &c. &c. &c., than could the Substance of, &c. &c. &c.” – Richard 3<sup>d</sup>.<sup>177</sup>

## 121.

But still the Shade remained – the blue eyes glared –  
 And rather variably for stoney Death – 1010  
 Yet one thing rather good the Grave had spared –  
 The Ghost had a remarkably sweet breath;  
 A struggling curl showed he had been fair-haired –  
 A red lip, with two rows of pearls beneath,  
 Gleamed forth, as through the Casement's ivy Shroud 1015  
 The Moon peeped just escaped from a grey Cloud. –

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<sup>176</sup>: *On which the Moonbeams fell in silvery showers, / Checquered with all the tracery of the hall*: recalls Keats, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, XXIV-XXV, in which the moon, shining unrealistically through stained glass, illuminates the heroine, and convinces the hero that she is *a splendid angel, newly drest, / Save wings, for heaven ...* B. inverts his model, and has the hero convinced that the heroine is a damned spook, only to find that she is a randy duchess. See also commentary to l.1029 of this canto, below.

<sup>177</sup>: *Richard III*, V iii 216-19: *By the apostle Paul, shadows tonight / Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard / Than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers / Armed in proof and led by shallow Richmond*. See also above, this canto, ll.201-3 and n.

## 122 –

And Juan, puzzled but still curious, thrust  
 His other arm forth – wonder upon wonder! –  
 It pressed upon a hard but glowing bust,<sup>178</sup>  
 Which beat as if there was a warm heart under;                   1020  
 He found, as people on most trials must,  
 That he had made at first a silly blunder –  
 And that in his confusion he had caught  
 Only the wall, instead of what he sought.

## 123.

The Ghost, if Ghost it were, seemed a sweet soul                   1025  
 As ever lurked beneath a holy hood;  
 A dimpled chin – a neck of ivory – stole  
 Forth into something much like flesh and blood –  
 Back fell the sable frock and dreary cowl –  
 And they revealed – Alas! that ere they should –                   1030  
 In full, voluptuous, but *not o'ergrown* bulk,  
 The Phantom of her frolic Grace – Fitzfulke! –

End of Canto 16<sup>th</sup>. – – –

/

/NB/

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May 6<sup>th</sup>. 1823.

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<sup>178</sup>: ... *wonder upon wonder!* – / *It pressed upon a hard but glowing bust*: the idea of a seeming monk revealed, by moonlight, to possess a real bosom, is from Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*, when the disguised Matilda, hitherto thought of as masculine by Ambrosio, offers to stab herself in front of him: *The friar's eyes followed with dread the course of the dagger. She had torn open her habit, and her bosom was half exposed. The weapon's point rested upon her left breast: and, oh! that was such a breast! The moon-beams darting full upon it enabled the monk to observe its dazzling whiteness: his eye dwelt with insatiable avidity upon the beauteous orb: a sensation till then unknown filled his heart with a mixture of anxiety and delight; a raging fire shot through every limb; the blood boiled in his veins, and a thousand wild wishes bewildered his imagination. / 'Hold!' he cried, in an hurried, faltering voice; 'I can resist no longer! Stay then, enchantress! Stay for my destruction!' (The Monk, Chapter II). B.'s style is economical in comparison.*