THE AGE OF BRONZE

edited by Peter Cochran

Byron is unsure of his audience here (as opposed to being indifferent about his audience, as he is in Don Juan). He is not able to write in couplets with the point, wit, conversational tone, and mesmeric way with allusions, that he shows in ottava rima. Either that, or, by the time he came to write The Age of Bronze and The Island, he’s decided that he doesn’t have to write as well, because he has a lower opinion of his audience now that he’s writing for publication by John Hunt. On January 10th 1823 he wrote to his publisher’s brother, Leigh Hunt:

I have sent to Mrs. S[helley] for the benefit of being copied – a poem of about seven hundred and fifty lines hight – the Age of Bronze – or Carmen Seculare et Annus mirabilis – with this epigraph – “Impar Congressus Achilli”.– it is calculated for the reading part of the Million – being all politics &c. &c. &c. and a review of the day in general – in my early English Bards style – but a little more stilted and somewhat too full of “epithets of war” and classical allusions[;] if notes are necessary they can be added.

“… in my early English Bards style” gives the game away; for that early poem is written, after the manner of William Gifford, in the de haut en bas style of Juvenal – as Byron’s quotations in its notes advertise. He seems nevertheless to expect from “the Million” a high level of sophistication: to know, for example, who “Henry, the Forest born Demosthenes,” is (Patrick Henry: line 384), “Dog the Great” (Can Grande della Scala: lines 416-7), or “Triptolemus” (Demeter’s seed-sower: line 578). A degree of cultural elitism can be inferred: he is defying his ignorant audience to follow him. If he seems, in The Age of Bronze, to be less agreeable than he is in Don Juan, and more arrogant even in his libertarian rhetoric, it may be because he has taken as his model the harsh Juvenal, rather than, as in Don Juan, the self-satirising Horace. He was writing Don Juan XII back-to-back with The Age of Bronze.

The Age of Bronze makes us grateful for Don Juan.

Several ideas and figures occur more than once, showing that Byron is not bothering to censor himself for repetition: they include “Swords and ploughshares” (467, 618); Moloch (238, 347); Kosciusko (159, 167); Bolivar (253, 383); Washington and Franklin (249, 383: 245, 386); and Pizarro (252, 266).

It could be – see the poem’s last lines – that he intended The Age of Bronze as the first of many, perhaps annual, reviews of European and English politics. But events dictated otherwise: a year later, he was in Greece, and a year after that, dead.

I have annotated below passages which seem to me to echo The Vanity of Human Wishes, Johnson’s version of Juvenal’s Tenth Satire, and a much greater poem than The Age of Bronze. I have also tried to keep most of my notes no longer than one line long each unless they are quotations from Byron’s prose sources, particularly those from Barry O’Meara’s Napoleon in Exile. This book relates many anecdotes about Napoleon on St Helena; and though none of them date from the Emperor’s last two years on the island, more of them seem to me to be sub-textually present in the poem than a reading merely of its “Napoleonic” sections would indicate. Also relevant here, though less detailed, is the Memoir of Count Las Cases, published in London in 1818. Byron always felt close to Napoleon; in The Age of Bronze, Napoleon being dead, he is viewing the world and commenting on it for both Napoleon and for himself.

For English and world affairs, the importance to Byron of the Annual Register, edited and in great part written by the despised radical William Cobbett, is hard to exaggerate. For Byron’s theoretical opinion of Cobbett, see the following, from an 1820 letter to Moore:

In digging up your bones, Tom Paine,
Will. Cobbett has done well:
You visit him on earth again.

I: BLJ X 81.
He’ll visit you in hell.2

… or see the following expostulation to Hobhouse, also from 1820: “... why lend yourself to Hunt and Cobbett – and the bones of Tom Paine? ‘Death and fiends’ – You used to be thought a prudent man ...”3

Yet Byron shared Cobbett’s radicalism, as long as he was able to keep his mentor anonymous. I am not able to duplicate all the sections of the Register on which he relied, but have instead drawn attention to them in brief notes. Much of the trouble in Britain during 1822 centred on Irish problems, of which Byron makes little mention.

The Age of Bronze was, with The Island, intended initially by Byron for The Liberal; but he changed his mind and demanded that they be published separately. He even tried, as John Hunt understood, to prevent The Liberal passing its second number. On February 25th 1823 John wrote to Leigh:

On Monday week I received a note from M’ Kinnaird, stating that [Lord Byron had written to him to say that] the Age of Bronze was to be published by itself, and that the 3d No. of the Liberal was not to appear. When I got Mr K[innaird]’s note, I should have waited upon him, but he had left town for a week … This intelligence from M’ Kinnaird, that the 3d No. is not to appear, of course embarrasses me greatly, for many reasons; but till I hear further, I forbear to dwell upon it.4

Kinnaird exceeded his remit here. On February 1st Byron had written to him, with, we have to concede, a certain enigmatic quality:

By the way – this poem [The Age of Bronze] was intended for a third number of H[unt]’s publication – but as that will not be published – and this is a temporary hit at Congress &c. – (as you will have seen by the poem if you have received it) perhaps it had better be published now alone …5

What evidence Byron has for saying that Vol. III won’t come out isn’t clear – but he doesn’t forbid it to come out, as John Hunt gathers from Kinnaird that he did. On March 10th Byron chastised Kinnaird, in a passage full of disclaimers that he had anything to do with running the magazine:

Mr. [John] H[unt] writes to his brother that you desired him to stop the Liberal. – You forget that we have no power to stop the publication of a work over which we have no control – there is the Pulci translation for his next number if he pleases. The things I sent to you – are not to be inserted in the Liberal – but it does not follow – that that Journal is to cease – and L[eigh] H[unt] says that it will do him great harm if that Journal stops. – If there must be a sacrifice – I would rather risk myself than other people.6

It looks as if Kinnaird had the right attitude, but had in this case gone a bit too far, leaving it easy for Byron – whose intentions, Byron now claims, he had misread – to deny responsibility. We know Kinnaird disliked Byron’s radical connection as much as did Moore, Hobhouse or Murray. On December 5th 1822 he’d written to Byron:

I pretend not to judge, or obtrude any opinion of my own between you & M’ Hunt – But I certainly have not heard a good word of the liberal – The Vision is not felt as it deserves – I mean its talent

2: BLJ VII 17.
3: BLJ VII 50.
5: BLJ X 94.
6: BLJ X 121.
– The reason of this I really believe to be that the Public is sick of religious disputes – & – blasphemy & all that stuff –7

Thus Byron, finding his association with the periodical an embarrassment, sabotaged it in part, and left his colleagues in London to try and sabotage it completely. Of The Island he wrote, “It is too long for ‘the Liberal’”:8 The Island is 94 pages long as printed by John Hunt: The Liberal N° III, 204 pages, and N° IV, 185 pages. With friends like these, The Liberal didn’t need enemies.

Byron may have sabotaged The Liberal, but he kept faith with John Hunt. On May 21st 1823 he suggested that Hunt take more of the profits from their publications:

Your letter does you great Credit – but the 15 per Cent is not enough for yr. portion – if you positively decline the half – you may at least accept a fourth which would be 25 per Cent – or a third rather better than thirty per Cent – think again.9

Hunt was duly grateful:

I hardly know how to reply to your Lordship’s offer respecting the terms of publication. The grateful sense I entertain of it, I must endeavour to evince by a careful discharge of my duty. Gratitude I know, is not a silent virtue, but I wish to have time to prove by actions, as well as words, that your Lordship’s countenance has not been altogether ill-bestowed. For the present, therefore, I wish to receive the percentage named by Messrs. Simkin and Marshall as my remuneration for the trouble of publishing your Lordship’s Works. As the business is new to me, I shall know more and more about it daily.10

Simkin and Marshall seem to have named fifteen per cent.11 And when, on June 19th 1824 – after Byron’s death – Hunt was fined a hundred pounds for publishing The Vision of Judgement, Kinnaird made sure that Byron’s estate reimbursed him.

For this text, I have consulted the rough draft of The Age of Bronze in the Bodleian, and restored and systematised much uppercasing which Mary Shelley and the printer lost, as they usually did. The word “Isle” is consistently uppercased by Byron. Meteorological and zoological nouns (see line 210) receive their capitals again, as well as standard abstractions such as “Spirit,” “Empire,” and “Glory;” so, sometimes, do verbs in the imperative (see line 426).

I have also elided some definite articles to assist scansion.

7: John Murray Archive (National Library of Scotland).
8: BLJ X 117.
9: BLJ X 182.
11: BLJ X 182n1.
THE AGE OF BRONZE

or,

Carmen Seculare et Annus haud Mirabilis. – –

“Impar Congressus Achilli.”

10bre 2-17th. 1822 –

1.

The “Good Old times” – all times, when old, are good –
Are gone; the present might be, if they would;
Great things have been, and are, and greater still
Want little of mere mortals but their will;
A wider space, a greener field is given
To those who play their “tricks before high heaven.”
I know not if the Angels weep, but Men
Have wept enough – for what? – to weep again. –

2.

All is exploded – be it good or bad.
Reader! remember when thou wert a lad,
Then Pitt was all; or, if not all, so much,
His very Rival almost deemed him such.
We, we have seen the intellectual race
Of Giants stand, like Titans, face to face –
Athos and Ida, with a dashing Sea
Of eloquence between, which flowed all free,
As the deep billows of the Ægean roar
Betwixt the Hellenic and the Phrygian Shore.
But where are they – the rivals? – a few feet
Of sullen earth divide each winding sheet.
How peaceful, and how powerful is the Grave
Which hushes all! A calm, unstormy wave
Which oversweeps the World; the theme is old
Of “Dust to Dust;” but half its tale untold.
Time tempers not its terrors – still the worm
Winds its cold forms, the tomb preserves its form –
Varied above, but still alike below;
The Urn may shine, the Ashes will not glow.
Though Cleopatra’s Mummy cross the Sea,
O’er which from Empire she lured Anthony;

12: The title is from Ovid, Metamorphoses, I, 125-7: “Tertia post illam successit aenea proles, / saevior ingenii et ad horrida promptior arma, / non scelerata tamen; de duro est ultima ferro.” Dryden Englishes this as “To this came next in course, the brazen age: / A warlike offspring, prompt to bloody rage, / Not impious yet ...” The sub-title means “Secular song for an unwonderful year”; and the epigraph is from Virgil, Aeneid, Book I, 475: “Ill-matched to fight Achilles” (the line refers to Troilus).
13: Measure for Measure, II ii 121-2. Isabella pleads before Angelo.
14: B. refers to the Tory Prime Minister William Pitt (1759-1806) and his Whig rival, Charles James Fox (1749-1806).
15: Mount Athos is on mainland Greece; Mount Ida on Crete, with the Aegean between them.
16: Pitt and Fox are buried next to one another in Westminster Abbey.
Though Alexander’s Urn a show be grown
On shores he wept to conquer, though unknown –
How vain, how worse than vain at length appear
The Madman’s wish, the Macedonian’s tear.
He wept for worlds to conquer – half the earth
Knows not his name, or but his death and birth
And desolation, while his native Greece
Hath all of desolation, save its peace.
He “wept for worlds to conquer!” he who ne’er
Conceived the Globe, he panted not to spare!
With even the busy Northern Isle unknown,
Which holds his Urn, and never knew his throne.

3.

But where is he, the Modern, mightier far,
Who, born no king, made Monarchs draw his Car,
The new Sesostris, whose unharnessed Kings,
Freed from the bit, believe themselves with wings,
And spurn the dust o’er which they crawled of late,
Chained to the Chariot of the Chieftains’ state?
Yes! where is he, the Champion and the Child,
Of all that’s great or little, wise or wild?
Whose Game was Empire? and whose stakes were thrones?
Whose table, Earth? whose dice were human bones?
Behold the grand result in yon lone Isle,
And, as thy Nature urges, weep or smile.
Sigh to behold the Eagle’s lofty rage
Reduced to nibble at his narrow cage;
Smile to survey the Queller of the Nations
Now daily squabbling o’er disputed rations;
Weep to perceive him mourning, as he dines,
O’er curtailed dishes, and o’er stinted wines;
O’er petty quarrels upon petty things –
Is this the Man who scourged or feasted Kings?
Behold the scales in which his Fortune hangs,
A Surgeon’s statement, and an Earl’s harangues!
A bust delayed, a book refused, can shake

17: The Cleopatra whose mummy was in the British Museum is not Antony’s Cleopatra.
18: The tomb in the British Museum about which B. is thinking was not that of Alexander.
19: Valerius Maximus (De Dictis VIII, xiv, 2) is source for the idea of Alexander weeping. See also
Juvenal, Satire X, 168-9: “unhappily he chafed at this world’s narrow confines” (tr. Peter Green).
Johnson adapts this to “Think Nothing gained … till naught remain” (TVOHW, 202)
20: Napoleon, who had died on St Helena two days before Byron started TVOJ – on May 5th 1821.
21: Sesostris was a Pharaoh of the early second millenium B.C.; he harnessed kings to his chariot.
22: “Napoleon himself had a small narrow bed-room on the ground-floor, a writing-room of the same
dimensions, and a sort of small ante-chamber, in which a bath was put up” (O’Meara, I, 15).
23: On St Helena, Napoleon had to be self-sufficient: “Received an answer from Mr. Fowler, clerk to the
purveyors, informing me that they had been ordered to send no more vegetables, which, they had been
informed by Major G., were in future to be furnished from the honorable company’s garden”
(O’Meara, I 86).
24: “… a sculptor at Leghorn had made a bad bust of young Napoleon, and which he had forwarded to
St. Helena … Napoleon then asked me if I knew any thing about the statue? I replied, that I had heard
of it some days before. ‘Why did you not tell me?’ asked the emperor” (O’Meara, II, 98-9). The
following day the bust, described as “beautiful,” is sent up to Longwood (O’Meara, II, 102).
The Sleep of Him who kept the world awake.
Is this indeed the Tamer of the Great,
Now Slave of all could tease or irritate –
The paltry Jailor and the prying Spy,
The staring stranger with his note-book nigh?
Plunged in a dungeon, he had still been great;
How low, how little was this middle State,
Between a prison and a palace, where
How few could feel for what he had to bear!
Vain his complaint – my Lord presents his bill,
His food and wine were doled out duly still;
Vain was his sickness – never was a Clime
So free from Homicide – to doubt’s a crime;
And the stiff Surgeon, who maintained his cause,
Hath lost his place, and gained the World’s applause.
But Smile – though all the pangs of brain and heart
Disdain, defy the tardy aid of Art;
Though, save the few fond friends, and imaged face,
Of that fair boy his Sire shall ne’er embrace,
None stand by his low bed – though even the Mind
Be wavering, which long awed and awes Mankind; –
Smile – for the fettered Eagle breaks his Chain,
And higher Worlds than this are his again.

25: The book which Lowe would not allow Napoleon to see was Hobhouse’s Letters from Paris. “… he [Lowe] spoke about Mr. Hobhouse’s book, observed, that he could not sent it to Longwood, as it had not been forwarded through the channel of the secretary of state; moreover, that Lord Castlereagh was extremely ill spoken of, and that he had no idea of allowing General Bonaparte to read a book in which a British minister was treated in such a manner, or even to know that a book containing such reflections could be published in England ” (O’Meara, I, 87).

26: Compare CHP IV, opening.

27: ‘‘Veramente,’ said he [Napoleon], ‘it requires great resolution and strength of mind to support such an existence as mine is in this horrible abode. Every day fresh colpi di stilo al cuore da questo boja, che ha piacere a far di male. It appears to be his [Lowe’s] only amusement. Daily he imagines modes of annoying, insulting, and making me undergo fresh privations. He wants to shorten my life by daily irritations. By his last restrictions, I am not permitted to speak to any one I may meet. To people under sentence of death, this is not denied. A man may be ironed, confined in a cell, and kept on bread and water, but the liberty of speaking is not denied to him. It is a piece of tyranny unheard-of, except in the instance of the man in the iron mask” (O’Meara, I, 151-2). “… it is certain that we are sighing here continually, notwithstanding the sense and the express words of the English laws, under the tyranny and arbitrary conduct of a single man; a man who for twenty years has been solely employed in placing the criminals and deserters of Italy in English regiments, and preserving discipline among them; a man, whose heart is hardened, and whose imagination is in a state of continual alarm, and knows no bounds for his apprehensions and cautionary measures. / This dreadful state is the fatal result of our present residence at the extremity of the globe, in the midst of the wilderness of ocean. How long is our punishment to continue? When will the truth find its way to the English people? when will they succeed in putting an end to those excesses by which they are disgraced? (Las Cases, 154).

28: Last phrase ironical. O’Meara writes, “St Helena … has … local and peculiar causes for being particularly unhealthy, as the great mortality, to be hereafter described, amply proves. The most trifling cold or irregularity is frequently succeeded by a violent attack of dysentery, inflammation of the bowels or fever proving fatal in a few days, if the most active and efficacious practice is not instantly adopted” (O’Meara II, 438).

29: Barry O’Meara (1786-1836) Irish military surgeon, in 1815 accompanied Napoleon to St. Helena, where Hudson Lowe, the governor, asked him to spy on Napoleon. He grew to dislike Lowe, and was eventually dismissed (though not by Lowe) in July 1818. His Napoleon in Exile, B.’s source for the St. Helena passage here, was published in 1822, and made him popular.

30: Napoleon’s son by Maria Louisa, the King of Rome.
How, if that soaring Spirit still retain
A conscious twilight of his blazing reign,
How must he smile, on looking down, to see
The little that he was and sought to be!
What though his Name a wider Empire found
Than his Ambition, though with scare a bound;
Though first in Glory, deepest in reverse,
He tasted Empire’s blessings, and its curse;
Though kings, rejoicing in their late escape
From chains, would gladly be their Tyrant’s ape;
How must he smile, and turn to yon lone grave,
The proudest Sea Mark that o’er tops the wave!
What though his Jailor, duteous to the last,
Scarce deemed the Coffin’s lead could keep him fast,
Refusing one poor line along the lid
To date the birth and death of all it hid,
That name shall hallow the ignoble shore,
A Talisman to all save him who bore;
The fleets that sweep before the Eastern blast
Shall hear their Sea boys hail it from the Mast;
When Victory’s Gallic column shall but rise,
Like Pompey’s pillar, in a desert’s skies,
The rocky Isle that holds or held his dust
Shall crown the Atlantic like the Hero’s bust,
And mighty Nature o’er his obsequies
Do more than niggard Envy still denies. –
But what are these to him? Can Glory’s lust
Touch the free Spirit of the fettered dust?
Small care hath he of what his tomb consists,
Nought if he sleeps – no more if he exists –
Alike the better-seeing Shade will smile
On the rude cavern of the rocky Isle,
As if his ashes found their latest home
In Rome’s Pantheon, or Gaul’s mimic dome.

31: Hudson Lowe. Compare Don Juan, XI, stanza 56 (written October 1822):
But Juan was my Moscow, and Faliero
My Leipsic, and my Mont Saint Jean seems Cain;
“La Belle Alliance” of dances down at zero,
Now that the Lion’s fall’n, may rise again;
But I will fall at once as fell my Hero,
Nor reign at all, or as a Monarch reign,
Or to some lonely Isle of Jailors go,
With turncoat Southey as my turnkey Lowe.

32: O’Meara’s last page (II, 528) has, “NAPOLEON. / né à Ajaccio le 15 Août, 1769. / Mort à Ste. Hélène le 5 Mai, 1821. / Cette plaque d’argent destinée a être placée sur le cercueil de L’Empereur Napoléon, a été ordonné à M. Darling par le Comte de Montholon. Le gouverneur de Ste. Hélène en ayant été instruit, a déclaré au Comte de Montholon qu’il s’y opposait, et que d’après les instructions de son gouvernement, s’il y avait une inscription sur le cercueil, elle serait le Général Buonaparte. / (Signé) LE CTE. DE MONTHOLON / Londres, le 2d Oct. 1821.”

33: Compare Henry IV II 19, where the phrase is in fact “ship-boy”.

34: The Colonne Vendôme in central Paris, erected to commemorate Napoleon’s victory at Austerlitz.

35: The remotely-situated column then known as Pompey’s Pillar was in fact erected to Diocletian.

36: Napoleon was buried on St Helena in a garden in a rocky cavern.

37: B. expects Napoleon to be buried in the Panthéon; in fact he is buried in the Invalides.
He wants not this; but France shall feel the want
Of this last consolation, though so scant;
Her Honour, Fame, and Faith, demand his bones,
To rear above a Pyramid of thrones;
Or carried onward in the Battle’s van
To form, like Guesclin’s dust, her Talisman.
But be it as it is, the time may come
His Name shall beat th’alarm like Ziska’s drum. —

* Guesclin died during the siege of a city; it surrendered, and the keys were brought and laid upon his bier, so that the place might appear rendered to his ashes.

5.

Oh Heaven! of which he was in power a feature,
Oh Earth! of which he was a noble creature!
Thou Isle! to be remembered long and well,
That sawst the unfledged Eaglet chip his shell!
Ye Alps, which viewed him in his dawning flights
Hover, the Victor of an hundred fights!
Thou Rome, who saw’st thy Cæsar’s deeds outdone!
Alas! why passed he too the Rubicon?
The Rubicon of Man’s awakened rights,
To herd with vulgar kings and parasites?
Ægypt! from whose all dateless tombs arose
Forgotten Pharaohs from their long repose,
And shook within their pyramids to hear
A new Cambyses thundering in their ear;
While the dark Shades of forty ages stood
Like startled Giants by Nile’s famous flood;
Or from the Pyramid’s tall pinnacle
Beheld the desert peopled, as from Hell,
With clashing hosts, who strewed the barren sand
To re-manure th’uncultivated land!
Spain! which, a moment mindless of the Cid,
Beheld his banner flouting thy Madrid!
Austria! which saw thy twice-ta’en Capital
Twice spared, to be the traitress of his fall!
Yea race of Frederic! – Frederics but in name
And falsehood — heirs to all except his fame;
Who, crushed at Jena, crouched at Berlin, fell
First, and but rose to follow; ye who dwell
Where Kosciusko dwelt, remembering yet
Th’unpaid amount of Catherine’s bloody debt!
Poland! o’er which the Avenging Angel past,
But left thee as he found thee, still a waste;
Forgetting all thy still enduring claim,
Thy lotted people, and extinguished name;
Thy Sigh for freedom, thy long-flowing tear,
That sound that crashes in the tyrant’s ear;
Kosciusko! On – on – on – the thirst of War
Glops for the Gore of Serfs and of their Czar;
The half Barbaric Moscow’s minarets
Gleam in the Sun, but ’tis a Sun that sets! –
Moscow! thou limit of his long Career.
For which rude Charles had wept his frozen tear
To see in vain – He saw thee – how? with Spire
And palace fuel to one common fire.
To this the Soldier lent his kindling match,
To this the peasant gave his Cottage thatch,
To this the Merchant flung his hoarded store,
The Prince his hall – and Moscow was no more!
Sublimest of Volcanos! Ætna’s flame
Pales before thine, and quenchless Hecla’s tame;
Vesuvius’ shows his blaze, an usual sight
For gaping tourists, from his hackneyed height;
Thou stand’st alone unrivalled, till the Fire
To come, in which all Empires shall expire.
Thou other Element! as strong and stern
To teach a lesson Conquerors will not learn,
Whose icy wing flapped o’er the faltering foe,
Till fell a hero with each flake of Snow;
How did thy numbing beak, and silent fang,
Pierce, till hosts perished with a single pang!
In vain shall Seine look up along his banks
For the gay thousands of his dashing ranks;
In vain shall France recall beneath her Vines
Her Youth; their blood flows faster than her Wines;
Or stagnant in their human ice remains
In frozen Mummies on the Polar plains. –
In vain will Italy’s broad Sun awaken
Her offspring chilled; its beams are now forsaken.

50: “Catherine’s bloody debt” is the first Partition of Poland, planned 1770 between Catherine the Great and Prince Henry of Prussia.
51: “The avenging angel” is Napoleon, who passed through Polish territory on his way to Moscow in 1812, promised the Poles much for when he returned, but returned defeated. See Mickiewicz, Pan Tadeusz, final pages. Napoleon told O’Meara, “The two grand objects of my policy were, first, to re-establish the kingdom of Poland, as a barrier against the Russians, that I might save those Europe from those barbarians of the north; and next, to expel the Bourbons from Spain, and establish a constitution which would have rendered the nation free (O’Meara II, 120).
52: Napoleon made the mistake of invading Russia in 1812; he reached Moscow but had to retreat.
53: B. refers to Charles XII, King of Sweden, who was defeated by Peter the Great of Russia at Poltava: see Mazeppa, and Johnson, TVOHW, 189-222, a passage B. is thinking of here.
54: Vesuvius: volcano near Naples; Hecla: volcano in Iceland; Ætna: volcano in Sicily. All inferior to Moscow, which was burned by its inhabitants rather than allow Napoleon to take it (line 178).
Of all the trophies gathered from the War,
What shall return? The Conqueror’s broken car!
The Conqueror’s yet unbroken Heart! Again
The Horn of Roland sounds, and not in vain. 55
Lutzen, where fell the Swede of Victory,
Beholds him conquer, but, alas! not die;
Dresden surveys three despots fly once more
Before their Sovereign, – Sovereign as before;
But there exhausted Fortune quits the field,
And Leipsic’s treason bids th’unvanquished yield;
The Saxon Jackal leaves the Lion’s side
To turn the Bear’s, and Wolf’s, and Fox’s guide,
And backward to the den of his despair
The Forest Monarch shrinks, but finds no lair! 58
Oh Ye! and each, and all! Oh, France! who found
Thy long fair fields ploughed up as hostile ground,
Disputed foot by foot, till Treason, still
His only Victor, from Montmartre’s hill
Looked down o’er trampled Paris; and thou, Isle,
Which see’st Etruria from thy ramparts smile,
Thou momentary Shelter of his pride,
Till wooed by danger, his yet weeping Bride;
Oh, France! retaken by a single march,
Whose path was through one long triumphal Arch!
Oh, bloody and most bootless Waterloo,
Which proves how fools may have their fortune too
Won, half by blunder, half by treachery;
Oh, dull St. Helen! with thy Jailor nigh –
* Hear! hear! Prometheus from his rock appeal
To Earth, Air, Ocean, all that fear or feel
His power and Glory, all who yet shall hear
A name eternal as the rolling Year;
He teaches them the lesson taught so long,
So oft, so vainly – learn to do no wrong!
A single step into the right had made
This Man the Washington of Worlds betrayed;
A single step into the wrong has given

55: For The horn of Roland, see Don Juan, X, final line. The original Roland’s horn did sound in vain.
56: Gustavus Adolphus was defeated at Lutzen in 1632; Napoleon beat the Prussians and Russians there in 1813.
57: Napoleon beat the Prussians, Russians and Austrians at Dresden in June 1813.
58: B. refers to the climactic Battle of Leipzig (October 1813) when Napoleon was deserted by his Saxon allies and defeated by the combined Austrians, Prussians, and Russians.
59: Compare Henry V, V ii 23-67 (Burgundy’s speech).
60: The coast of Etruria (north-west Italy) can be seen from the island of Elba, to which Napoleon was at first banished.
61: O’Meara reports Napoleon (hardly a disinterested party) as saying, “Those English … who are lovers of liberty, will one day lament with tears having gained the battle of Waterloo. It was as fatal to the liberties of Europe in its effects as that of Philippi was to those of Rome; and like it, has precipitated Europe into the hands of triumvirs, associated together for the oppression of mankind, the suppression of knowledge, and the restoration of superstition” (O’Meara, II, 385).
62: Prometheus is one of B.’s favourite mythical figures; here, Napoleon is the Bringer of Fire to Men.
63: Washington was for B. the reverse of Napoleon: a patriot who always put country before ambition.
His name a doubt to all the winds of heaven;\(^{64}\)
The reed of Fortune and of Thrones the Rod,
Of Fame the Moloch or the Demigod;\(^{65}\)
His country’s Caesar, Europe’s Hannibal,
Without their decent dignity of fall.
Yet Vanity herself hath better taught
A surer path even to the Fame he sought,
By pointing out on History’s fruitless page
Ten thousand Conquerors for a single sage.
While Franklin’s quiet Memory climbs to Heaven,
Calming the Lightning which he thence hath riven,\(^{66}\)
Or drawing from the no less kindled Earth
Freedom and Peace to that which boasts his birth;
While Washington’s a Watchword, such as ne’er
Shall sink while there’s an Echo left to air,
While even the Spaniard’s thirst of Gold and War
Forgets Pizarro to shout Bolivar! –\(^{67}\)
Alas! why must the same Atlantic wave,
Which wafted Freedom, gird a tyrant’s grave –
The King of Kings, and yet of Slaves the Slave?
Who burst the chains of Millions to renew
The very fetters which his arm broke through,
And crushed the rights of Europe and his own
To flit between a dungeon and a throne?

* I refer the reader to the first address of Prometheus in Æschylus, when he is left alone by his attendants, and before the arrival of the Chorus of Sea-nymphs.\(^{68}\)

6.

But ‘twill not be – the Spark’s awakened – lo!
The swarthy Spaniard feels his former glow,
The same high Spirit which beat back the Moor
Through eight long ages of alternate Gore,
Revives – and where? in that avenging Clime,
Where Spain was once Synonymous with Crime,
Where Cortes’ and Pizarro’s Banner flew;\(^{69}\)
The Infant World redeems her name of “New.”\(^{70}\)
’Tis the old Aspiration breathed afresh,
To kindle Souls within degraded flesh,
Such as repulsed the Persians from the Shore
Where Greece was – No! she still is Greece once more.\(^{71}\)

\(^{64}\): Compare Hamlet I ii 141, the first of three echoes of Hamlet’s first soliloquy.
\(^{65}\): “Moloch, horrid King besmear’d with blood / Of human sacrifice, and parents tears” (Paradise Lost, I 391-2).
\(^{66}\): B. refers to the experiments with lightning-conductors made by Benjamin Franklin (1706-90).
\(^{67}\): That is, forget conquerors, such as Francisco Pizarro (1478-1541), and embrace liberators, such as Simon Bolivar (1783-1830). For the South American revolutions, see the 1822 Annual Register, pp. 257-68 and 281-8.
\(^{68}\): Æschylus, Prometheus Bound, first soliloquy. Prometheus bewails his punishment for giving man fire – crucifixion on a rocky mountain-top – but is determined to bear it. The speech is quoted as epigraph to O’Meara’s Napoleon in Exile.
\(^{69}\): Hernando Cortez (1485-1547) and Pizarro, conquerors of Mexico and Peru.
\(^{70}\): Chile was freed from Spain in 1818, Venezuela and Peru in 1821.
One common Cause makes Myriads of one breast,
Slaves of the East, or Helots of the West;
On Andes’ and on Athos’ peaks unfurled,
The Selfsame Standard streams o’er either World;
The Athenian wears again Harmodius’ Sword; 275
The Chili Chief abjures his foreign Lord;
The Spartan knows himself once more a Greek
Young Freedom plumes the Crest of each Cacique; 73
Debating despots, hemmed on either shore,
Shrink vainly from the roused Atlantic’s roar;
Through Calpe’s 74 strait the rolling tides advance,
Sweep slightly by the half-tamed land of France,
Dash o’er th’old Spaniard’s Cradle, and would fain
Unite Ausonia 75 to the mighty Main;
But driven from thence awhile, but not for aye,
Break o’er the Ægean, mindful of the day
Of Salamis 76 – there, there, the waves arise,
Not to be lulled by Tyrant Victories. –
Lone, lost, abandoned in their utmost need
By Christians unto whom they gave their Creed,
The desolated lands, the ravaged Isle,
The fostered feud encouraged to beguile,
The Aid evaded, and the cold delay,
Prolonged but in the hope to make a prey; –
These, these shall tell the tale, and Greece can shew
The false friend worse than the infuriate foe.
But this is well; Greeks only should free Greece,
Not the Barbarian, with his Masque of Peace. 77
How should the Autocrat of Bondage be
The king of Serfs, and set the Nations free?
Better still serve the haughty Mussulman,
Than swell the Cossaque’s prowling Caravan;
Better still toil for Masters, than await,
The Slave of Slaves, before a Russian Gate – 79
Numbered by hordes, a human Capital,
A live Estate, existing but for thrall,
Lotted by thousands, as a meet reward
For the first Courtier in the Czar’s regard;
While their immediate Owner never tastes
His sleep, sans dreaming of Siberia’s wastes;
Better succumb even to their own despair,
And drive the Camel – than purvey the Bear.

71: The Greek War of Independence had started in 1821.
72: Harmodius (d. 514 B.C.) Greek freedom fighter.
73: A cacique is a Latin American tribal chieftain. See EBSR 222.
74: Calpe is Gibraltar. See EBSR 1019 and n.
75: Ausonia is Italy: see EBSR 618.
76: Salamis was a sea-battle, 480 B.C., in which the Athenians defeated a larger Persian force. See Don Juan III, The Isles of Greece, 4, 2.
77: “mask of peace” (CPW). “Masque” (the draft reading) prepares us for the Congress of Verona.
78: The Tsar of Russia.
79: This couplet echoes TVOHW, 213-4: “Condemn’d a needy Supplicant to wait, / While Ladies interpose, and Slaves debate.”
7.

But not alone within the hoariest Clime,
Where Freedom dates her birth with that of Time,
And not alone where, plunged in Night, a Crowd
Of Incas darken to a dubious Cloud,
The dawn revives; renowned, romantic Spain
Holds back the Invader from her Soil again. 80

Not now the Roman tribe nor Punic horde
Demand her fields as lists to prove the Sword;
Not now the Vandal or the Visigoth
Pollute the plains alike abhorring both;
Nor old Pelayo 81 on his mountain rears
The warlike fathers of a thousand years.

That Seed is sown and reaped, as oft the Moor
Sighs to remember on his dusky shore.

Long in the peasant’s song or poets page
Has dwelt the memory of Abencerrage,
The Zegri, 83 and the captive Victors, flung
Back to the barbarous realm from whence they sprung.
But these are gone – their faith, their swords, their sway,
Yet left more Antichristian foes than they –
The bigot Monarch and the butcher priest,
The Inquisition, with her burning Feast,
The Faith’s red “Auto,” fed with human fuel,
While sate the Catholic Moloch, calmly cruel,
Enjoying, with inexorable eye,
That fiery festival of Agony! –
The stern or feeble Sovereign, one or both
By turns; the haughtiness whose pride was Sloth;
The long degenerate noble, the debased
Hidalgo, and the peasant less disgraced
But more degraded; the unpeopled realm;
The once proud Navy which forgot the helm;
The once impervious Phalanx disarrayed;
The idle forge that formed Toledo’s blade; 84
The foreign Wealth that flowed on ev’ry shore,
Save hers who earned it with the Natives’ gore;
The very language, which might vie with Rome’s,
And once was known to Nations like their home’s,
Neglected or forgotten – Such was Spain;
But such she is not, nor shall be again.

These worst, these home Invaders, felt and feel
The new Numantine 85 Soul of Old Castile.
Up! up again! undaunted Tauridor! 86

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80: French royalist troops invaded Spain in 1822. See the 1822 Annual Register, iii-viii and 222-56.
81: First Christian Spanish king, who defeated the Moors. Died app. 737 A.D.
82: B. refers to Boabdil, or Mohammed XI, last Moorish King of Granada, defeated and dethroned in 1491. The spot where this occurred is called el último sospiro del Moro, “The last sigh of the Moor”. See Don Juan I, 56, 6.
83: The Abencerrages and the Zegri were warring Moorish tribes in fifteenth-century Spain.
84: Toledo was famous for the excellence of its swords. See Webster, The White Devil, V vi 238.
85: Numantia was a Spanish fighter against the Romans.
86: Tauridor – toreador.
The Bull of Phalaris\textsuperscript{87} renews his roar;
Mount, chivalrous Hidalgo!\textsuperscript{88} not in vain
Revive the Cry – “Iago! and Close Spain!”\textsuperscript{*}\textsuperscript{89}
Yes, Close her with your armed bosoms round,
And form the barrier which Napoleon\textsuperscript{90} found, –
Th’exterminating war, the desert plain,
The Streets without a tenant, save the Slain;
The wild Sierra, with its wilder troop
Of vulture-plumed Guerillas, on the stoop
For their incessant prey; the desperate wall
Of Saragossa, mightiest in her fall;
The Man nerved to a Spirit, and the Maid
Waving her more than Amazonian blade;
The Knife of Aragon, † Toledo’s steel;
The famous lance of chivalrous Castile;
The Unerring rifle of the Catalan;
The Andalusian Courser in the van;
The torch to make a Moscow of Madrid;
And in each heart the Spirit of the Cid –
Such have been, such shall be, such are. Advance!
And win – not Spain, but thine own freedom, France!\textsuperscript{93}

\textsuperscript{*} “St. Iago! and close Spain!” the old Spanish war-cry.

\textsuperscript{†} The Arragonians are peculiarly dextrous in the use of this weapon, and displayed it particularly in former French wars.

8.

But lo! a Congress!\textsuperscript{94} What, that hallowed name
Which freed the Atlantic? May we hope the same
For outworn Europe? with the Sound arise,
Like Samuel’s shade to Saul’s monarchical eyes,
The Prophets of young Freedom, summoned far
From climes of Washington and Bolivar;
Henry, the Forest born Demosthenes,

\textsuperscript{87}: Phalaris was an ancient Greek tyrant who roasted his victims alive inside a brazen bull.
\textsuperscript{88}: An Hidalgo was a man of pure Spanish blood, with no admixture of Moorish or Jewish. See Don Juan I, 9, 2, or 154, 1.
\textsuperscript{89}: Sant’ Iago (St. James) is Spain’s patron saint. The Spanish is, “Santiago y serra España!”
\textsuperscript{90}: “Napoleon” has to be trisyllabic.
\textsuperscript{91}: For Augustina, the Maid of Saragossa, see CHP I stanzas 54-7.
\textsuperscript{92}: The second reference to Toledo steel in twenty-three lines.
\textsuperscript{93}: The rhymes echo Henry V, II ii 192-3 (“Cheerly to sea! The signs of war advance! / No king of England, if not King of France!”).
\textsuperscript{94}: B. now reaches his main contemporary theme, the Congress of Allied Powers which met at Verona in November 1822. Russia, Prussia, and Austria were all represented by their monarchs. George IV and Louis XVIII were both too obese to travel. The immediate worry was a revolution in Spain; France, which felt threatened by it, wanted to invade, but no agreement was reached on this point (Wellington was against the idea) so France invaded Spain anyway. The Powers refused to stop the slave trade between Africa and America; and they would not back the Greek insurgents against the Porte. Much elaborate partying and entertainment was laid on. B. was in Genoa at the time and was told about it all by the elderly Signor Giambattista Giuliani.
\textsuperscript{95}: See I Samuel, 7-20. Also Saul from Hebrew Melodies; and Don Juan, Dedication, 11, 1-4.
\textsuperscript{96}: Patrick Henry (1736-99) first Governor of Virginia. Spokesman for the American colonists.
Whose thunder shook the Philip of the Seas;
And Stoic Franklin's energetic shade
Robed in the Lightnings which his hand allayed;
And Washington, the Tyrant-tamer, wake,
To bid us blush for these old chains, or break.

But who compose this Senate of the Few
That should redeem the Many? who renew
This consecrated name, till now assigned
To Councils held to benefit Mankind?
Who now assemble at the holy call?
The blest Alliance, which says three are all!
An earthly Trinity!\(^97\) which wears the Shape
Of Heaven's, as Man is mimicked by the Ape.
A pious Unity! in purpose one –
To melt three fools to a Napoleon.

Why, \(\ddot{A}\)gypt's Gods were rational to these;
Their Dogs and Oxen knew their own degrees,\(^98\)
And, quiet in their kennel or their shed,
Cared little, so that they were duly fed;
But these, more hungry, must have something more,
The power to bark and bite to toss and gore.

Ah, how much happier were good \(\ddot{A}\)sop's Frogs\(^99\)
Than we! for ours are animated Logs,
With ponderous malice swaying to and fro,
And crushing nations with a stupid blow,
All dully anxious to leave little work
Unto the revolutionary Stork.

9.

Thrice blest Verona! since the holy three
With their imperial presence shine on thee;
Honoured by them, thy treacherous Site forgets
The vaunted tomb of "all the Capulets;"
Thy Scaligers\(^100\) – for what was "Dog the Great,"
"Can Grande"\(^101\) (which I venture to translate)
To these sublimer Pugs? thy poet too,
Catullus,\(^102\) whose old Laurels yield to new;
Thy Amphitheatre, where Romans sate;
And Dante's exile, sheltered by thy Gate?
Thy good old Man, * whose world was all within
Thy wall, nor knew the Country held him in –
Would that the royal Guests it girds about
Were so far like, as never to get out!
Aye! Shout! Inscribe! rear monuments of shame,
To tell Oppression that the World is tame!
Crowd to the Theatre\(^103\) with loyal rage,

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\(^{97}\) B. speaks ironically of the Holy Alliance (Russia, Prussia, and Austria).

\(^{98}\) Compare Macbeth, III iv 1.

\(^{99}\) In Aesop, the frogs send to Jupiter for a king. He sends them, firstly a log, then an eel, and finally, when they are dissatisfied with his first two choices, a heron, which eats them all up.

\(^{100}\) The Scaligers were lords of Verona at the time Dante first found refuge there.

\(^{101}\) Dante's Veronese patron Can Grande della Scala; see Paradiso XVII 75-93.

\(^{102}\) Catullus, the Roman poet (c.84–c.54 BC), was born at Verona.
The Comedy is not upon the Stage;
The Show is rich in ribbonry and stars,
Then Gaze upon it through thy Dungeon bars;
Clap thy permitted palms, kind Italy!
For thus much still thy fettered hands are free!

* The famous old man of Verona.  

10.

Resplendent Sight! behold the Coxcomb Czar,
The Autocrat of Waltzes and of War!
As eager for a plaudit as a realm,
And just as fit for flirting as the helm;
A Calmuck Beauty with a Cossack wit,
And generous Spirit, when 'tis not frost-bit;
Now half dissolving to a liberal thaw,
But hardened back whene'er the morning's raw;
With no objection to true Liberty,
Except that it would make the Nations free.
How well th' Imperial Dandy prates of peace,
How fain, if Greeks would be his Slaves, free Greece!
How nobly gave he back the Poles their diet,
Then told pugnacious Poland to be quiet! –
How kindly would he send the mild Ukraine,
With all her peasant Pulks, to lecture Spain;
How royally shew off in proud Madrid
His goodly person, from the South long hid;
A blessing cheaply purchased, the world knows,
By having Muscovites for friends or foes.
Proceed, thou namesake of Great Philip’s Son!
La Harpe, thine Aristotle, beckons on;
And that which Scythia was to him of yore,
Find with thy Scythians on Iberia’s shore.
Yet think upon, thou somewhat aged Youth!
Thy Predecessor on the banks of Pruth –
Thou hast to aid thee, should his lot be thine,
Many an old woman, but no Catherine.
Spain too hath rocks, and rivers, and defiles –
The Bear may rush into the Lion's toils.
Fatal to Goths are Xeres' sunny fields,

103: “Theatre” requires stressing on the first syllable.
104: Claudian (Roman poet, fourth century AD), wrote De sene Veronensi qui Suburbium numquam egressus est, praising the life of a man who had never once moved from the suburbs of Verona.
105: Tsar Alexander I (1777-1825), insulted by B. at Don Juan VI stanza 93 (written earlier in 1822.).
106: B. makes racist jokes about Scythians, Calmucks, Cossacks, and Bashkirs (all non-European subjects of Tsar Alexander) all through this section. On St Helena, Napoleon said, “When they see the finest countries in Europe overrun and a prey to those northern barbarians, they will say, ‘Napoleon was right!’” (O’Meara, II, 71). B. would be glad to know that Bonaparte shared his Russophobia.
107: “Pulk” is Polish for “regiment.”
108: Alexander the Great was son to Philip of Macedon.
109: Frédéric César La Harpe (1754-1838) was Alexander’s tutor, just as Aristotle is alleged to have been tutor to Alexander the Great
110: At the battle of Xeres (711 AD) Roderick, last of the Visigothic kings of Spain, was defeated by the Saracens. See Southey’s 1814 poem, Roderick, Last of the Goths.
Think’st thou to thee Napoleon’s victor yields? Better reclaim thy desarts, turn thy Swords
To ploughshares, \(^{111}\) shave and wash thy Bashkir hordes,
Redeem thy lands from Slavery and the knout,
Than follow headlong in the fatal route,
To infest the clime whose skies and laws are pure
With thy foul legions. Spain wants no manure,
Her soil is fertile, but she feeds no foe;
Her Vultures, too, were gorged long ago:
And wouldst thou furnish them with fresher prey?
Alas! thou wilt not conquer, but purvey.
I am Diogenes, though Russ and Hun
Stand between mine and many a Myriad’s Sun; \(^{112}\)
But were I not Diogenes, I’d wander
Rather a worm than such an Alexander!
Be slaves who will, the Cynic shall be free;
His tub hath tougher walls than Sinope; \(^{113}\)
Still will he hold his lanthorn up to scan
The face of monarchs for an “honest man.” \(^{114}\)

* The dexterity of Catherine extricated Peter the first (called the Great by courtesy) when surrounded by the Mussulmans on the banks of the river Pruth. \(^{115}\)

11.

And what doth Gaul, \(^{116}\) the all-prolific land
Of ne plus Ultra Ultras and their band
Of mercenaries? \(^{117}\) and her noisy Chambers
And Tribune, which each Orator first clambers
Before he finds a voice, and when ’tis found,
Hears “the Lie” echo for his answer round!
Our British Commons sometimes deign to hear;
A Gallic Senate hath more tongue than ear;
Even Constant, \(^{118}\) their sole Master of debate,
Must fight next day his speech to vindicate.
But this costs little to true Franks, who’d rather
Combat than listen, were it to their father.
What is the simple standing of a shot,
To listening long, and interrupting not?
Though this was not the Method of old Rome,
When Tully \(^{119}\) fulmined o’er each vocal dome,

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\(^{111}\): See Isaiah 2, 4: “they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks.”

\(^{112}\): Diogenes was a Cynic philosopher who lived in a barrel. Asked by Alexander the Great if there was anything he wanted, he replied, “Yes – get out of my sunlight.” B. is Diogenes to Tsar “Alexander”.

\(^{113}\): Sinope was where Diogenes was born.

\(^{114}\): Diogenes went about with his lantern in broad daylight, “searching for an honest man.”

\(^{115}\): B. refers to the Treaty of Pruth in 1711, when Peter the Great was saved, so legend had it, by his wife Catherine, who intrigued with the Turks.

\(^{116}\): “Gaul” is B.’s pretentious word for France, as “Albion” (line 529) is for England. Compare Ode to Napoleon, line 146.

\(^{117}\): Ultras are royalists; ne plus ultras are ultra-royalists (“Royalists, more royalist than whom you cannot get”).

\(^{118}\): Benjamin Constant (1767-1830) liberal French politician, ex-lover of Madame de Staël.
Demosthenes\textsuperscript{120} has sanctioned the transaction,  
In saying Eloquence meant “Action, Action!” – – 

12.

But where’s the Monarch?\textsuperscript{121} Hath he dined? or yet 
Groans beneath Indigestion’s heavy debt?
Have revolutionary Patés risen,  
And turned the royal entrails to a prison?  
Have discontented movements stirred the troops? 
Or have no movements followed traitorous soups?\textsuperscript{122} 
Have Carbonaro\textsuperscript{123} Cooks not bastinadoed  
Each course enough? or doctors dire dissuaded 
Repletion? Ah! in thy dejected looks  
I read all France’s treason in her Cooks! 
Good Classic Louis\textsuperscript{124} is it, canst thou say,  
Desirable to be the “Desiré”\textsuperscript{125}  
Why wouldst thou leave calm Hartwell’s green abode, \textsuperscript{126} 
Apician table\textsuperscript{127} and Horatian Ode,\textsuperscript{128}  
To rule a people who will not be ruled, 
And love much rather to be scourged than schooled?  
Ah! thine was not the temper or the taste  
For thrones, the table sees thee better placed;  
A mild Epicurean, formed, at best,  
To be a kind host and as good a guest,  
To talk of Letters, and to know by Heart  
One half the Poet’s, all the Gourmand’s art;  
A Scholar always, now and then a wit,  
And gentle when Digestion may permit –  
But not to govern lands enslaved or free; 
The Gout was Martyrdom enough for thee!

13.

Shall noble Albion pass without a phrase  
From a bold Briton in her wonted praise? 
“Arts – Arms – and George – and Glory and the Isles –  
And happy Britain – wealth and Freedom smiles –  
White Cliffs – that held Invasion far aloof – 
Contented Subjects, all alike tax-proof – 
Proud Wellington, with Eagle beak so curled,

\textsuperscript{119}: Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC) Roman orator and politician.  
\textsuperscript{120}: Demosthenes (c.383-322 BC) Greek orator and politician. Line 501 is another way of saying “words are things” (\textit{Don Juan} III, 88, 2).  
\textsuperscript{121}: Louis XVIII, brother of the guillotined Louis XVI, King of France; famous for his obesity.  
\textsuperscript{122}: Implies Louis’ constipation (“movements” – bowel movements). Napoleon told O’Meara, “He [Louis] gorges to that degree every day, that they are obliged to give him God knows what to disencumber himself of his load. Some morning he will be found dead in his bed” (O’Meara, I 487).  
\textsuperscript{123}: The Carbonari were Italian freedom fighters; Byron was one of their leaders.  
\textsuperscript{124}: B. plays with the names of Louis XVIII and Louis Eustache Ude, famous cook, one of whose recipes features at \textit{Don Juan}, canto XV, stanzas 62-74.  
\textsuperscript{125}: One of Louis’ nicknames was “Louis le Desiré,” i.e., the king desired by the French.  
\textsuperscript{126}: While exiled in England, Louis had lived at Hartwell in Buckinghamshire.  
\textsuperscript{127}: Apicius was a famous Roman gourmet. See \textit{TVOJ} 364, or \textit{Don Juan} XV 65, 5-6.  
\textsuperscript{128}: Horace was court-poet to the Emperor Augustus. B.’s signals that \textit{AoS} is not an Horatian poem.
That nose, the hook where he suspends the world! *
And Waterloo – and Trade – and — (Hush! not yet
A syllable of impost or of debt) —
And ne’er (enough) lamented Castlereagh,
Whose Penknife slit a goose-quill t’other day —
And “Pilots who have weathered every storm” —
(But, no, not even for Rhyme’s sake, name Reform).
These are the themes thus sung so oft before,
Methinks we need not sing them any more;
Found in so many volumes far and near,
There’s no occasion you should find them here.
Yet Something may remain perchance to chime
With reason, and, what’s stranger still, with rhyme;
Even this thy Genius, Canning! may permit,
Who, bred a Statesman, still was born a wit,
And never, even in that dull house, couldst tame
To unleavened prose thine own poetic flame;
Our last, our best, our only Orator,
Even I can praise thee – Tories do no more,
Nay, not so much; – they hate thee, Man, because
Thy Spirit less upholds them than it awes. –
The hounds will gather to their Huntsman’s hollo,
And where he leads the duteous pack will follow;
But not for Love mistake their yelling cry,
Their yelp for Game is not an Eulogy;
Less faithful far than the four-footed pack,
A dubious Scent would lure the bipeds back.
Thy saddle Girths are not yet quite secure,
Nor royal Stallion’s feet extremely sure;
Th’unwieldy old White Horse is apt at last
To stumble, kick, and now and then stick fast
With his great Self and rider in the Mud;
But what of that? the Animal shows blood.

* “Naso suspendit adunco.” – HORACE. The Roman applies it to one who merely was
imperious to his acquaintance. 134

14.

Alas, the Country! how shall tongue or Pen
Bewail her now uncountry Gentlemen? 135
The last to bid the Cry of warfare cease,
The first to make a malady of peace. 136

129: Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh, Foreign Secretary, cut his throat on August 12th 1822.
130: A reference to Canning’s famous song, written for Pitt, The Pilot that Weathered the Storm.
131: Parliamentary Reform was the main political issue of B.’s day, but he never commits himself to
any specific statements about it except in his Roman Catholic Claims speech. We never know what, if
any, franchise extension he favoured. For a relevant debate, see the 1822 Annual Register, pp. 68-81.
132: George Canning (1770-1827) Foreign Secretary admired by B. even though he was a Tory. See
Don Juan, Preface to Cantos VI, VII and VIII.
133: Hamlet, I ii 138; the second echo in the poem of Hamlet’s first soliloquy.
134: Horace, Satire I, vi, 5. B. misquotes and misreads the line (“naso suspendis adunco”), which
compliments Maecenas on not turning his nose up at freedmen like Horace.
135: For the agitation in the Commons by the landed interest, and the following debates, see the 1822
Annual Register, pp. 1-4 and 98-107.
136: English farmers had profited by the Napoleonic wars.
For what were all these Country patriots born?
To hunt, and vote, and raise the price of Corn?
But Corn, like every Mortal thing, must fall,
Kings, Conquerors, and Markets, most of all
And must ye fall with every ear of Grain?
Why would you trouble Buonaparte’s reign?
He was your great Triptolemus;137 his vices
Destroyed your realms, and still maintained your prices;
He amplified to every lord’s content
The grand Agrarian Alchymy hight Rent.
Why did the tyrant stumble on the Tartars?138
And lower Wheat to such desponding quarters?
Why did you chain him on yon Isle so lone?
The Man was worth much more upon his throne.
True, blood and treasure boundlessly were spilt,
But what of that? the Gaul may bear the guilt;
But bread was high, the farmer paid his way,
And Acres told upon th’appointed day.
But where is now the goodly Audit Ale?139
The purse-proud tenant never known to fail?
The farm which never yet was left on hand?
The Marsh reclaimed to most improving land?
The impatient hope of the expiring lease?
The doubling rental! What an Evil’s peace!
In vain the Prize excites the ploughman’s skill,140
In vain the Commons pass their patriot bill;
The landed interest – (you may understand
The phrase much better leaving out the land) –
The land Self-Interest groans from shore to shore,
For fear that plenty should attain the poor.
Up! Up again! ye Rents, exalt your notes,
Or else the Ministry will lose their votes,
Up! up again ye Rents! On to “Reform”
They grant as their sole plank in such a storm,
And Patriotism, so delicately nice,
Her loaves will lower to the Market price;
For ah! “the loaves and fishes,” once so high,141
Are gone – their oven closed, their Ocean dry,
And nought remains of all the Millions spent,
Excepting to grow moderate and Content.
They who are not so, had their turn – and turn
About still flows from Fortune’s equal urn;
Now let their Virtue be its own reward,
And share the blessings which themselves prepared.
See these inglorious Cincinnatti swarm,
Farmers of war, dictators of the farm!142
Their ploughshare was the sword in hireling hands,

137: Triptolemus sowed seeds for Ceres, goddess of the Harvest; see Ovid, Metamorphoses, V.
138: Refers to Napoleon’s invasion of Russia.
139: An ale, still brewed at Oxford and Cambridge, for the day when the year’s financial accounts have been passed by the college’s governing body.
140: Fletcher, B.’s valet, had been a Nottinghamshire ploughman.
141: For the miracle of loaves and fishes, see Matthew 14, 16-21.
142: Cincinnatus (519-438 BC) farmer called from the plough to rule Rome.
Their fields manured by gore of other lands;
Safe in their barns, these Sabine tillers sent Their brethren out to battle – why? for Rent!
Year after year they voted cent. per cent.
Blood, sweat, and tear-rung Millions – why? for Rent!
They roared, they dined, they drank, they swore they meant To die for England! – why then live? for Rent!
The peace has made one general Malcontent Of these high-market Patriots; war was Rent!
Their love of Country, Millions all mis-spent, How reconcile? by reconciling Rent.
And will they not repay the treasures lent? No – down with everything, and up with Rent!
Their good, ill, health, wealth, joy, or discontent, Being, end, aim, religion – Rent, Rent, Rent!
Thou soldst thy birthright, Esau, for a mess Thou shouldst have gotten more, or eaten less;
Now thou hast swilled thy pottage, thy demands Are idle; Israel says the bargain stands.
Such, landlords! was your appetite for war, And, gorged with blood, you grumble at a scar! What, would they spread their birthright even o’er Cash?
And when land crumbles, bid firm paper crash?
So rent may rise, bid bank and nation fall, And found on Change a Fundling Hospital?
Lo, Mother Church, while all religion writhes, Like Niobe, weeps o’er her offspring, Tithes; The Prelates go to – where the saints have gone, And proud pluralities subside to one; Church, state, and faction, wrestle in the dark, Tossed by the Deluge in their common ark.
Shorn of her Bishops, bank, and dividends, Another Babel soars – but Britain ends.
And why? to pamper the self-seeking wants, And prop the hill of these agrarian ants.
“Go to these ants, thou sluggard, and be wise;”
Admire their patience through each sacrifice,
Till taught to feel the lesson of their pride, The price of taxes and of homicide;
Admire their justice, which would fain deny The debt of nations – pray, who made it high?

Or turn to sail between those shifting rocks,
The new Symplegades — the crushing Stocks,
Where Midas might again his wish behold
In real paper or imagined Gold.
That magic Palace of Alcina shows
More wealth than Britain ever had to lose,
Were all her atoms of unleavened Ore,
And all her pebbles from Pactolus' shore.
There Fortune plays, while Rumour holds the Stake,
And the World trembles to bid brokers break.
How rich is Britain! not indeed in Mines,
Or peace, or plenty, coal, or oil, or wines;
No land of Canaan, full of Milk and Honey,
Nor (save in paper Shekels) ready Money —
But let us not to own the truth refuse,
Was ever Christian land so rich in Jews?
Those parted with their teeth to good King John,
And now, ye kings! they kindly draw your own;
All States, all things, all Sovereigns they controul,
And waft a loan “from Indus to the Pole.”
The banker – broker – Baron – Brethren, speed
To aid these bankrupt Tyrants in their need.
Nor these alone; Columbia feels no less
Fresh Speculations follow each Success;
And Philanthropic Israel deigns to drain
Her mild percentage from exhausted Spain.
Not without Abraham’s Seed can Russia march,
’Tis Gold, not Steel, that rears the Conqueror’s arch.
Two Jews, a chosen people, can command
In every realm their Scripture-promised land –
Two Jews keep down the Romans, and uphold
The accursed Hun, more brutal than of old;
Two Jews – but not Samaritans – direct
The world, with all the Spirit of their sect.
What is the happiness of earth to them?
A Congress forms their “New Jerusalem,”
Where Baronies and Orders both invite –
Oh, holy Abraham! dost thou see the sight?
Thy followers mingling with these royal swine,
Who spit not “on their Jewish gaberdine,”
(Where now, oh, Pope! is thy forsaken toe?
Could it not favour Judah with some kicks?)

149: The Symplegades are the rocks where the Bosphorus meets the Black Sea; they are a useful sexual metaphor. See Don Juan, V, 5, 2, Martial, XI, 95; VII, 19, Ovid, Tristia, I, 10; Metamorphoses, XV 335-55; or Medea’s words at Heroïdes, XII 121-2. Compare also Childe Harold IV, Stanzas 175-6.
150: For Midas, see Ovid, Metamorphoses Book XI.
151: For Alcina’s magic palace, see Ariosto, Orlando Furioso, VII, 10.
152: Pactous was a golden river in Lydia: see Ovid, Metamorphoses Book XI.
153: See Mazeppa, B.’s note to 157.
154: See Exodus, 3, 8; Leviticus, 20, 24; Numbers, 13, 27; Deuteronomy, 6, 3; Joshua, 5, 6, etc.
155: Walter Scott tells in Ivanhoe, VI, how King John tortured a Jew named Abraham by pulling one of his teeth daily until he paid an imposition. See Roger de Wendover, Flores Historiarum.
156: Pope, Eloisa to Abelard, 58: “And waft a sigh from Indus to the Pole.”
157: Alludes to the assistance the Rothschilds gave to the restored European monarchies, post-1815.
158: The Merchant of Venice, I iii 107.
Or has it ceased to “kick against the pricks?”)\textsuperscript{159}
On Shylock’s shore behold them stand afresh,
To cut from Nations’ hearts their “pound of Flesh.”\textsuperscript{160}

16.

Strange Sight this Congress! destined to unite
All that’s incongruous, all that’s opposite.
I speak not of the Sovereigns – they’re alike,
A common coin as ever Mint could strike;
But those who sway the puppets, pull the strings,
Have more of Motley than their heavy kings.
Jews, Authors, Generals, Charlatans, combine,
While Europe wonders at the vast design –
There Metternich, Power’s foremost parasite,\textsuperscript{161}
Cajoles; there Wellington forgets to fight;
There Chateaubriand forms new books of Martyrs, *
And subtle Greeks intrigue for stupid Tartars;\textsuperscript{162}
There Montmorency,\textsuperscript{163} the sworn foe to Charters,
Turns a Diplomatist of grand Eclât,
To furnish articles for the “Debâts;”\textsuperscript{164}
Of War so certain – yet not quite so sure
As his dismissal in the “Moniteur.”\textsuperscript{165}
Alas! how could his Cabinet thus err?
Can Peace be worth an Ultra Minister?
He falls indeed, perhaps to rise again
“Almost as quickly as he conquered Spain.”\textsuperscript{166}

* Monsieur Chateaubriand who has not forgotten the author in the minister, received a handsome compliment at Verona from a literary sovereign: “Ah! Monsieur C——, are you related to that Chateaubriand who – who – who has written something?” (écrit quelque chose!) It is said that the author of Atala repented him for a moment of his legitimacy. – – \textsuperscript{167}

17

Enough of this – a sight more mournful woos
The averted eye of the reluctant Muse.
The Imperial daughter, the Imperial bride,\textsuperscript{168}

\textsuperscript{159}: Acts, 9, 5: “… it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.”
\textsuperscript{160}: \textit{The Merchant of Venice}, I iii 144-5; IV i 294, 302, etc.
\textsuperscript{161}: Clemens Lothar Wenzel von Metternich (1773-1859) Austrian Foreign Minister.
\textsuperscript{162}: Alludes to John Capodistrias (1776-1831) first President of Greece, who tried without success to persuade Tsar Alexander to support the Greek War of Independence.
\textsuperscript{163}: Matthieu Jean Félicité Montmorency (1767-1826) French Royalist diplomat.
\textsuperscript{164}: \textit{The Journal des Débâts}, a Parisian newspaper.
\textsuperscript{165}: The \textit{Moniteur}, another Parisian newspaper; referred to at \textit{Don Juan}, I, 2, 8.
\textsuperscript{166}: B. quotes Pope, \textit{Imitations of Horace}, II i, line 132.
\textsuperscript{167}: In 1809 Chateaubriand had written \textit{Les Martyrs}, about the Christians under Diocletian. This is one of only two references to Chateaubriand in all of Byron’s works: see also \textit{Ode from the French} (mock introduction). B. may have got the present anecdote from Signor Giuliani.
\textsuperscript{168}: B. refers to Maria Louisa, daughter to the Austrian Emperor, Napoleon’s second wife, now Arch-Duchess of Parma. After Waterloo she had been unfaithful to Napoleon, with Austrian encouragement, by yielding to the seductions of the one-eyed but handsome soldier, Count Neipperg. Napoleon said to O’Meara, “I believe … that Marie Louise is just as much a state prisoner as I am myself, except that more attention is paid to decorum in the restraints imposed on her. I have always had occasion to praise
The imperial Victim – Sacrifice to Pride,
The Mother of the Hero’s Hope, the boy,
The young Astyanax of modern Troy;\textsuperscript{169}
The still pale Shadow of the loftiest Queen
That Earth has yet to see, or e’er hath seen;
She flits amidst the phantoms of the hour,
The theme of Pity, and the Wreck of Power.
Oh, cruel Mockery! Could not Austria spare
A daughter? What did France’s widow there? –
Her fitter place was by St. Helen’s wave,
Her only throne is in Napoleon’s grave.
But, no, – she still must hold a petty reign,
Flanked by her formidable Chamberlain;
The Martial Argus, whose not hundred Eyes\textsuperscript{170}
Must watch her through these paltry pageantries.
What though she share no more, and shared in vain,
A Sway surpassing that of Charlemagne,
Which swept from Moscow to the Southern Seas,
Yet still she rules the pastoral realm of Cheese,\textsuperscript{171}
Where Parma views the traveller resort
To note the trappings of her mimic Court.
But she appears! Verona sees her shorn
Of all her beams – while Nations gaze and mourn –
Ere yet her husband’s Ashes have had time
To chill in their inhospitable clime;
(If e’er those awful Ashes can grow cold; –
But no, – their embers soon will burst the mould)
She comes! – the Andromache (but not Racine’s,
Nor Homer’s) – Lo! on Pyrrhus’ arm she leans!\textsuperscript{172}
Yes! the right arm, yet red from Waterloo,
Which cut her Lord’s half shatter’d Sceptre through,
Is offered and accepted? could a Slave
Do more? or less? – and he in his new Grave! –
Her eye, her cheek, betray no inward Strife,
And the Ex-Empress grows as Ex a wife!
So much for human ties in royal breasts!
Why spare Men’s feelings, when their own are jests?

18.

But, tired of foreign follies, I turn home,
And sketch the groupes – the picture’s yet to come.
My Muse ’gan weep, but, ere a tear was spilt,
She caught Sir William Curtis in a kilt!\textsuperscript{173}
While thronged the Chiefs of every Highland Clan
To hail their brother, Vich Ian Alderman! –
Guildhall grows Gael, and echoes with Erse roar,
While all the Common Council cry, “Claymore!”

To see proud Albyn’s Tartans as a belt
gird the gross Sirloin of a City Celt, 775
She burst into a laughter so extreme,
That I awoke – and lo! it was no dream!

Here, reader, will we pause; – if there’s no harm in
This first – you’ll have, perhaps, a second “Carmen.” 780

/ 781
/ NB J°. 18°th 1823. 782
/

173: Sir William Curtis (1752-1829) was at different times Lord Mayor of London and M.P. for the City. An intimate of George IV – whom he resembled both in Conservatism, physique and absurdity – he often played host to the King on his private yacht. Accompanying George to Edinburgh in August 1822, he too wore a kilt. See Don Juan, X, 86, 5-8.

174: The cultural invasion of England by Scotland – a fear here guyed – has haunted B. ever since EBSR.
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