

## 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 high – 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.<sup>1</sup>

“... 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,*

*He'll visit you in hell.*<sup>2</sup>

... 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 ..."<sup>3</sup>

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.

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*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<sup>r</sup> 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 3<sup>d</sup> 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<sup>r</sup> Kinnaird, that the 3<sup>d</sup> No. is not to appear, of course embarrasses me greatly, for many reasons; but till I hear further, I forbear to dwell upon it.<sup>4</sup>

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 ...<sup>5</sup>

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. J[ohn] H[unt] writes to his brother that you desired him to *stop* the *L[iberal]*. – 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.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>r</sup> 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

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2: BLJ VII 17.

3: BLJ VII 50.

4: BL.Add.Mss. 38108, f.257.

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 –<sup>7</sup>

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’”:<sup>8</sup> *The Island* is 94 pages long as printed by John Hunt: *The Liberal* N<sup>o</sup> III, 204 pages, and N<sup>o</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup>

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.<sup>10</sup>

Simkin and Marshall seem to have named fifteen per cent.<sup>11</sup> 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.

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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.

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7: John Murray Archive (National Library of Scotland).

8: BLJ X 117.

9: BLJ X 182.

10: Letter of June 6th 1823; JMA / NLS Acc 12604 / 4130: done from typescript.

11: BLJ X 182n1.

**THE AGE OF BRONZE**  
**or,**  
**Carmen Seculare et Annus haud Mirabilis. – –**

**“Impar Congressus Achilli.”<sup>12</sup>**

**10<sup>bre</sup> 2-17<sup>th</sup>. 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 5  
To those who play their “tricks before high heaven.”  
I know not if the Angels weep,<sup>13</sup> but Men  
Have wept enough – for what? – to weep again. –

**2.**

All is exploded – be it good or bad. 10  
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 –<sup>14</sup>  
Athos and Ida, with a dashing Sea 15  
Of eloquence between, which flowed all free,  
As the deep billows of the Ægean roar  
Betwixt the Hellenic and the Phrygian Shore.<sup>15</sup>  
But where are they – the rivals? – a few feet  
Of sullen earth divide each winding sheet.<sup>16</sup> 20  
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 25  
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;<sup>17</sup> 30

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**12:** The title is from Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, I, 125-7: “Tertia post illam successit aenea proles, / saevior ingeniis 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.



The Sleep of Him who kept the world awake.  
 Is this indeed the Tamer of the Great,  
 Now Slave of all could teaze or irritate –  
 The paltry Jailor and the prying Spy,  
 The staring stranger with his note-book nigh? 70  
 Plunged in a dungeon, he had still been great;  
 How low, how little was this middle State,  
 Between a prison and a palace,<sup>26</sup> where  
 How few could feel for what he had to bear!<sup>27</sup>  
 Vain his complaint – my Lord presents his bill, 75  
 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;<sup>28</sup>  
 And the stiff Surgeon, who maintained his cause,  
 Hath lost his place, and gained the World’s applause.<sup>29</sup> 80  
 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,<sup>30</sup>  
 None stand by his low bed – though even the Mind 85  
 Be wavering, which long awed and awes Mankind; –  
 Smile – for the fettered Eagle breaks his Chain,  
 And higher Worlds than this are his again. –

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**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.

4.

How, if that soaring Spirit still retain  
 A conscious twilight of his blazing reign, 90  
 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, 95  
 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'ertops the wave! 100  
 What though his Jailor,<sup>31</sup> 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,<sup>32</sup>  
 That name shall hallow the ignoble shore, 105  
 A Talisman to all save him who bore;  
 The fleets that sweep before the Eastern blast  
 Shall hear their Sea boys<sup>33</sup> hail it from the Mast;  
 When Victory's Gallic column<sup>34</sup> shall but rise,  
 Like Pompey's pillar,<sup>35</sup> in a desart's skies, 110  
 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 115  
 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,<sup>36</sup> 120  
 As if his ashes found their latest home  
 In Rome's Pantheon, or Gaul's mimic dome.<sup>37</sup>

**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 dunces 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, "NAPOLÉON. / né à Ajaccio le 15 Août, 1769. / Mort à Ste. Hélène le 5 Mai, 1821. / Cette plaque d'argent destinée à 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 declare au Comte de Montholon qu'il s'y opposait, et que d'après les instructions de son gouvernement, s'il y avoit une inscription sur le cercueil, elle seroit 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, 125  
 To rear above a Pyramid of thrones;  
 Or carried onward in the Battle's van  
 To form, like Guesclin's<sup>38</sup> \* dust, her Talisman.  
 But be it as it is, the time may come  
 His Name shall beat th'alarm like Ziska's drum. –<sup>39</sup> 130

\* 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 135  
 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?<sup>40</sup> 140  
 Ægypt! from whose all dateless tombs arose  
 Forgotten Pharaohs from their long repose,  
 And shook within their pyramids to hear  
 A new Cambyses<sup>41</sup> thundering in their ear;  
 While the dark Shades of forty ages stood 145  
 Like startled Giants by Nile's famous flood;<sup>42</sup>  
 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! 150  
 Spain! which, a moment mindless of the Cid,<sup>43</sup>  
 Beheld his banner flouting thy Madrid!<sup>44</sup>  
 Austria! which saw thy twice-ta'en Capital<sup>45</sup>  
 Twice spared, to be the traitress of his fall!<sup>46</sup>  
 Ye race of Frederic! – Frederics but in name 155  
 And falsehood<sup>47</sup> – heirs to all except his fame;  
 Who, crushed at Jena,<sup>48</sup> crouched at Berlin, fell  
 First, and but rose to follow; ye who dwell  
 Where Kosciusko<sup>49</sup> dwelt, remembering yet

**38:** Bertrand du Guesclin (1320-80) died besieging the English at Chateaufort-de-Randon.

**39:** John Zizka (1360-1424) Hussite leader who ordered at his death that his skin be made into a drum.

**40:** B. thinks Napoleon could have been a great liberator if he had not wished to be an absolute ruler.

**41:** Cambyses, sixth century BC King of Persia. See *PoD*, II 108.

**42:** As they stood before the Pyramids, Napoleon told his men, "Du haut de ses pyramides vingt siècles vous contemplant!" ("From the summits of these pyramids twenty centuries look down upon you!")

**43:** Rodrigo of Bivar, known as El Cid; legendary Spanish hero who fought the Moors.

**44:** Napoleon's troops took Madrid twice in 1808.

**45:** Vienna was taken by Napoleon's troops in 1805 and 1809.

**46:** B. refers to Maria Louisa's adultery with Count von Neipperg (see below, Section 17).

**47:** B. refers to Frederick the Great of Prussia (1712-86) and the feebleness of his successors.

**48:** Napoleon beat the Prussians at Jena in 1806.

Th'unpaid amount of Catherine's bloody debt!<sup>50</sup> 160  
 Poland! o'er which the Avenging Angel past,<sup>51</sup>  
 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, 165  
 That sound that crashes in the tyrant's ear;  
 Kosciusko! On – on – on – the thirst of War  
 Gasps 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! – 170  
 Moscow! thou limit of his long Career,<sup>52</sup>  
 For which rude Charles<sup>53</sup> 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, 175  
 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; 180  
 Vesuvius<sup>54</sup> 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 185  
 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! 190  
 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 195  
 In frozen Mummies on the Polar plains. –  
 In vain will Italy's broad Sun awaken  
 Her offspring chilled; its beams are now forsaken.

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**49:** B. refers to the polish patriot Tadeusz Kosciusko (1746-1817). See *Don Juan* X, 59 7.

**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! 200  
 The Conqueror's yet unbroken Heart! Again  
 The Horn of Roland sounds, and not in vain.<sup>55</sup>  
 Lutzen, where fell the Swede of Victory,  
 Beholds him conquer,<sup>56</sup> but, alas! not die;  
 Dresden surveys three despots fly once more 205  
 Before their Sovereign, – Sovereign as before;<sup>57</sup>  
 But there exhausted Fortune quits the field,  
 And Leipsic's treason bids th'unvanquished yield;  
 The Saxon Jackall leaves the Lion's side  
 To turn the Bear's, and Wolf's, and Fox's guide, 210  
 And backward to the den of his despair  
 The Forest Monarch shrinks, but finds no lair!<sup>58</sup>  
 Oh Ye! and each, and all! Oh, France! who found  
 Thy long fair fields ploughed up as hostile ground,<sup>59</sup>  
 Disputed foot by foot, till Treason, still 215  
 His only Victor, from Montmartre's hill  
 Looked down o'er trampled Paris; and thou, Isle,  
 Which see'st Etruria from thy ramparts smile,<sup>60</sup>  
 Thou momentary Shelter of his pride,  
 Till wooed by danger, his yet weeping Bride; 220  
 Oh, France! retaken by a single march,  
 Whose path was through one long triumphal Arch!  
 Oh, bloody and most bootless Waterloo,<sup>61</sup>  
 Which proves how fools may have their fortune too  
 Won, half by blunder, half by treachery; 225  
 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; 230  
 He teaches them the lesson taught so long,  
 So oft, so vainly – learn to do no wrong! –<sup>62</sup>  
 A single step into the right had made  
 This Man the Washington of Worlds betrayed;<sup>63</sup>  
 A single step into the wrong has given 235

**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;<sup>64</sup>  
 The reed of Fortune and of Thrones the Rod,  
 Of Fame the Moloch or the Demigod,<sup>65</sup>  
 His country's Cæsar, Europe's Hannibal,  
 Without their decent dignity of fall. 240  
 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, 245  
 Calming the Lightning which he thence hath riven,<sup>66</sup>  
 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, 250  
 While even the Spaniard's thirst of Gold and War  
 Forgets Pizarro to shout Bolivar! –<sup>67</sup>  
 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? 255  
 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.<sup>68</sup>

## 6.

But 'twill not be – the Spark's awakened – lo! 260  
 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, 265  
 Where Cortes' and Pizarro's Banner flew;<sup>69</sup>  
 The Infant World redeems her name of "New."<sup>70</sup>  
 'Tis the *old* Aspiration breathed afresh,  
 To kindle Souls within degraded flesh,  
 Such as repulsed the Persians from the Shore 270  
 Where Greece *was* – No! she still is Greece once more.<sup>71</sup>

**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; 275  
 The Athenian wears again Harmodius' Sword;<sup>72</sup>  
 The Chili Chief abjures his foreign Lord;  
 The Spartan knows himself once more a Greek  
 Young Freedom plumes the Crest of each Cacique;<sup>73</sup>  
 Debating despots, hemmed on either shore, 280  
 Shrink vainly from the roused Atlantic's roar;  
 Through Calpe's<sup>74</sup> 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<sup>75</sup> to the mighty Main; 285  
 But driven from thence awhile, but not for aye,  
 Break o'er the Ægean, mindful of the day  
 Of Salamis<sup>76</sup> – there, there, the waves arise,  
 Not to be lulled by Tyrant Victories. –  
 Lone, lost, abandoned in their utmost need 290  
 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; – 295  
 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.<sup>77</sup>  
 How should the Autocrat of Bondage<sup>78</sup> be 300  
 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 –<sup>79</sup> 305  
 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 310  
 His sleep, sans dreaming of Siberia's wastes;  
 Better succumb even to their own despair,  
 And drive the Camel – than purvey the Bear.

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**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 Suppliant 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, 315  
 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.<sup>80</sup>  
 Not now the Roman tribe nor Punic horde 320  
 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<sup>81</sup> on his mountain rears  
 The warlike fathers of a thousand years. 325  
 That Seed is sown and reaped, as oft the Moor  
 Sighs to remember on his dusky shore.<sup>82</sup>  
 Long in the peasant's song or poets page  
 Has dwelt the memory of Abencerrage,  
 The Zegri,<sup>83</sup> and the captive Victors, flung 330  
 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, 335  
 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 340  
 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; 345  
 The once impervious Phalanx disarrayed;  
 The idle forge that formed Toledo's blade;<sup>84</sup>  
 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, 350  
 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<sup>85</sup> Soul of Old Castile. 355  
 Up! up again! undaunted Tauridor!<sup>86</sup>

**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 suspiro 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<sup>87</sup> renews his roar;  
 Mount, chivalrous Hidalgo!<sup>88</sup> not in vain  
 Revive the Cry – “Iago! and Close Spain!”<sup>89</sup> \*  
 Yes, Close her with your armed bosoms round, 360  
 And form the barrier which Napoleon<sup>90</sup> 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 365  
 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;<sup>91</sup>  
 The Knife of Aragon, † Toledo’s steel;<sup>92</sup> 370  
 The famous lance of chivalrous Castile;  
 Th’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 – 375  
 Such have been, such shall be, such are. Advance!  
 And win – not Spain, but thine own freedom, France!<sup>93</sup>

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

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

## 8.

But lo! a Congress!<sup>94</sup> What, that hallowed name  
 Which freed the Atlantic? May we hope the same  
 For outworn Europe? with the Sound arise, 380  
 Like Samuel’s shade to Saul’s monarchic eyes,<sup>95</sup>  
 The Prophets of young Freedom, summoned far  
 From climes of Washington and Bolivar;  
 Henry, the Forest born Demosthenes,<sup>96</sup>

**87:** Phalaris was an ancient Greek tyrant who roasted his victims alive inside a brazen bull.

**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.

**89:** Sant’ Iago (St. James) is Spain’s patron saint. The Spanish is, “Santiago y serra España!”

**90:** “Napoleon” has to be trisyllabic.

**91:** For Augustina, the Maid of Saragosa, see CHP I stanzas 54-7.

**92:** The second reference to Toledo steel in twenty-three lines.

**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!”).

**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.

**95:** See I Samuel, 7-20. Also *Saul* from *Hebrew Melodies*; and *Don Juan*, Dedication, 11, 1-4.

**96:** Patrick Henry (1736-99) first Governor of Virginia. Spokesman for the American colonists.

Whose thunder shook the Philip of the Seas; 385  
 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 390  
 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! 395  
 An earthly Trinity!<sup>97</sup> 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, Ægypt's Gods were rational to these; 400  
 Their Dogs and Oxen knew their own degrees,<sup>98</sup>  
 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. 405  
 Ah, how much happier were good Æsop's Frogs<sup>99</sup>  
 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 410  
 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;" 415  
 Thy Scaligers<sup>100</sup> – for what was "Dog the Great,"  
 "Can Grande"<sup>101</sup> (which I venture to translate)  
 To these sublimer Pugs? thy poet too,  
 Catullus,<sup>102</sup> whose old Laurels yield to new;  
 Thy Amphitheatre, where Romans sate; 420  
 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! 425  
 Aye! Shout! Inscribe! rear monuments of shame,  
 To tell Oppression that the World is tame!  
 Crowd to the Theatre<sup>103</sup> with loyal rage,

**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, 430  
 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.<sup>104</sup>

10.

Resplendent Sight! behold the Coxcomb Czar,<sup>105</sup>  
 The Autocrat of Waltzes and of War! 435  
 As eager for a plaudit as a realm,  
 And just as fit for flirting as the helm;  
 A Calmuck Beauty with a Cossack wit,<sup>106</sup>  
 And generous Spirit, when 'tis not frost-bit;  
 Now half dissolving to a liberal thaw, 440  
 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! 445  
 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,<sup>107</sup> to lecture Spain;  
 How royally shew off in proud Madrid 450  
 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!<sup>108</sup>  
 La Harpe, thine Aristotle,<sup>109</sup> beckons on; 455  
 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, 460  
 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,<sup>110</sup>

**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? 465  
 Better reclaim thy deserts, turn thy Swords  
 To ploughshares,<sup>111</sup> 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 470  
 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. 475  
 I am Diogenes, though Russ and Hun  
 Stand between mine and many a Myriad's Sun;<sup>112</sup>  
 But were I not Diogenes, I'd wander  
 Rather a worm than *such* an Alexander!  
 Be slaves who will, the Cynic shall be free; 480  
 His tub hath tougher walls than Sinopè;<sup>113</sup>  
 Still will he hold his lanthorn up to scan  
 The face of monarchs for an "honest man."<sup>114</sup>

\* 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.<sup>115</sup>

## 11.

And what doth Gaul,<sup>116</sup> the all-prolific land  
 Of *ne plus Ultra* Ultras and their band 485  
 Of mercenaries?<sup>117</sup> 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; 490  
 A Gallic Senate hath more tongue than ear;  
 Even Constant,<sup>118</sup> 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. 495  
 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<sup>119</sup> fulminated o'er each vocal dome,

**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<sup>120</sup> has sanctioned the transaction, 500  
In saying Eloquence meant “Action, Action!” – –

## 12.

But where’s the Monarch?<sup>121</sup> Hath he dined? or yet  
Groans beneath Indigestion’s heavy debt?  
Have revolutionary Patés risen, 505  
And turned the royal entrails to a prison?  
Have discontented movements stirred the troops?  
Or have *no* movements followed traitorous soups?<sup>122</sup>  
Have Carbonaro<sup>123</sup> Cooks not bastinadoed  
Each course enough? or doctors dire dissuaded  
Repletion? Ah! in thy dejected looks 510  
I read all France’s treason in her Cooks!  
Good Classic Louis!<sup>124</sup> is it, canst thou say,  
Desirable to be the “Desiré”?<sup>125</sup>  
Why wouldst thou leave calm Hartwell’s green abode,<sup>126</sup>  
Apician table<sup>127</sup> and Horatian Ode,<sup>128</sup> 515  
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, 520  
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 – 525  
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 – 530  
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,

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**119:** Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC) Roman orator and politician.

**120:** Demosthenes (c.383-322 BC) Greek orator and politician. Line 501 is another way of saying “words are things” (*Don Juan* III, 88, 2).

**121:** Louis XVIII, brother of the guillotined Louis XVI, King of France; famous for his obesity.

**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).

**123:** The Carbonari were Italian freedom fighters; Byron was one of their leaders.

**124:** B. plays with the names of Louis XVIII and Louis Eustache Ude, famous cook, one of whose recipes features at *Don Juan*, canto XV, stanzas 62-74.

**125:** One of Louis’ nicknames was “Louis le Desiré,” i.e., the king desired by the French.

**126:** While exiled in England, Louis had lived at Hartwell in Buckinghamshire.

**127:** Apicius was a famous Roman gourmet. See *TVOJ* 364, or *Don Juan* XV 65, 5-6.

**128:** Horace was court-poet to the Emperor Augustus. B.’s signals that *AoB* is not an Horatian poem.

That nose, the hook where he suspends the world! \* 535  
 And Waterloo – and Trade – and — (Hush! not yet  
 A syllable of imposts or of debt) —  
 And ne'er (enough) lamented Castlereagh,  
 Whose Penknife slit a goose-quill t'other day –<sup>129</sup>  
 And “Pilots who have weathered every storm” –<sup>130</sup> 540  
 (But, no, not even for Rhyme's sake, name Reform).”<sup>131</sup>  
 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. 545  
 Yet Something may remain perchance to chime  
 With reason, and, what's stranger still, with rhyme;  
 Even this thy Genius, Canning! may permit,<sup>132</sup>  
 Who, bred a Statesman, still was born a wit,  
 And never, even in that dull house, couldst tame 550  
 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;<sup>133</sup> – they hate thee, Man, because  
 Thy Spirit less upholds them than it awes. – 555  
 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, 560  
 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 565  
 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.<sup>134</sup>

#### 14.

Alas, the Country! how shall tongue or Pen  
 Bewail her now uncountr'y Gentlemen?<sup>135</sup>  
 The last to bid the Cry of warfare cease, 570  
 The first to make a malady of peace.<sup>136</sup>

**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 575  
 And must ye fall with every ear of Grain?  
 Why would you trouble Buonaparte's reign?  
 He was your great Triptolemus;<sup>137</sup> his vices  
 Destroyed your realms, and still maintained your prices;  
 He amplified to every lord's content 580  
 The grand Agrarian Alchymy hight *Rent*.  
 Why did the tyrant stumble on the Tartars?<sup>138</sup>  
 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. 585  
 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?<sup>139</sup> 590  
 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! 600  
 In vain the Prize excites the ploughman's skill,<sup>140</sup>  
 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, 600  
 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, 605  
 And Patriotism, so delicately nice,  
 Her loaves will lower to the Market price;  
 For ah! "the loaves and fishes," once so high,<sup>141</sup>  
 Are gone – their oven closed, their Ocean dry,  
 And nought remains of all the Millions spent, 610  
 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. 615  
 See these inglorious Cincinatti swarm,  
 Farmers of war, dictators of the farm!<sup>142</sup>  
 Their ploughshare was the sword<sup>143</sup> 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<sup>144</sup> 620  
 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! 625  
 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? 630  
 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<sup>145</sup>  
 Thou shouldst have gotten more, or eaten less; 635  
 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? 640  
 And when land crumbles, bid firm paper crash?  
 So rent may rise, bid bank and nation fall,  
 And found on Change a *Foundling* Hospital?<sup>146</sup>  
 Lo, Mother Church, while all religion writhes,  
 Like Niobe,<sup>147</sup> weeps o'er her offspring, Tithes; 645  
 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, 650  
 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;”<sup>148</sup>  
 Admire their patience through each sacrifice, 655  
 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?*

## 15.

Or turn to sail between those shifting rocks, 660

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**143:** See above, 467n.

**144:** B. now writes a virtuoso passage, using the same rhyme fourteen consecutive times (this section is not in the rough draft). A Sabine farm was presented by Maecenas to Horace: see *Don Juan*, IX, 7, 7; and Horace, Odes, I xvii.

**145:** See Genesis 25, 29-end. Since he sold his own birthright, Newstead Abbey, B. has not depended on rent, but on the Funds, and on book sales, for his income. An Horatian poem would have acknowledged this.

**146:** Puns on the Foundling Hospitals, for orphans.

**147:** *Hamlet*, I ii 149: the third echo of Hamlet's first soliloquy.

**148:** Proverbs, 6, 6: “Go to the ant, thou sluggard, and be wise.”

The new Symplegades<sup>149</sup> – the crushing Stocks,  
 Where Midas might again his wish behold  
 In real paper or imagined Gold.<sup>150</sup>  
 That magic Palace of Alcina shows<sup>151</sup>  
 More wealth than Britain ever had to lose, 665  
 Were all her atoms of unleavened Ore,  
 And all her pebbles from Pactolus<sup>152</sup> 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,<sup>153</sup> 670  
 Or peace, or plenty, coal, or oil, or wines;  
 No land of Canaan, full of Milk and Honey,<sup>154</sup>  
 Nor (save in paper Shekels) ready Money –  
 But let us not to own the truth refuse,  
 Was ever Christian land so rich in Jews? 675  
 Those parted with their teeth to good King John,<sup>155</sup>  
 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.”<sup>156</sup>  
 The banker – broker – Baron – Brethren, speed 680  
 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. 685  
 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 690  
 The accursed Hun, more brutal than of old;  
 Two Jews – but not Samaritans – direct  
 The world, with all the Spirit of their sect.<sup>157</sup>  
 What is the happiness of earth to them?  
 A Congress forms their “New Jerusalem,” 695  
 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,”<sup>158</sup>  
 But honour them as portion of the Show – 700  
 (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 *Heroides*, 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:** Pactolus 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?”<sup>159</sup>  
 On Shylock’s shore behold them stand afresh,  
 To cut from Nations’ hearts their “pound of Flesh.”<sup>160</sup> 705

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; 710  
 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,<sup>161</sup>  
 Cajoles; there Wellington forgets to fight; 715  
 There Chateaubriand forms new books of Martyrs, \*  
 And subtle Greeks intrigue for stupid Tartars;<sup>162</sup>  
 There Montmorency,<sup>163</sup> the sworn foe to Charters,  
 Turns a Diplomatist of grand Eclât,  
 To furnish articles for the “Debâts;”<sup>164</sup> 720  
 Of War so certain – yet not quite so sure  
 As his dismissal in the “Moniteur.”<sup>165</sup>  
 Alas! how could his Cabinet thus err?  
 Can Peace be worth an Ultra Minister?  
 He falls indeed, perhaps to rise again 725  
 “Almost as quickly as he conquered Spain.”<sup>166</sup>

\* 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. – – <sup>167</sup>

17

Enough of this – a sight more mournful woos  
 The averted eye of the reluctant Muse.  
 The Imperial daughter, the Imperial bride,<sup>168</sup>

159: Acts, 9, 5: “... it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.”

160: *The Merchant of Venice*, I iii 144-5; IV i 294, 302, etc.

161: Clemens Lothar Wenzel von Metternich (1773-1859) Austrian Foreign Minister.

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.

163: Matthieu Jean Félicité Montmorency (1767-1826) French Royalist diplomat.

164: The *Journal des Débâts*, a Parisian newspaper.

165: The *Moniteur*, another Parisian newspaper; referred to at *Don Juan*, I, 2, 8.

166: B. quotes Pope, *Imitations of Horace*, II i, line 132.

167: In 1809 Chateaubriand had written *Les Martyrs*, about the Christians under Diocletian. This is one of only two references to Chateaubriand in all of Byron’s works: see also *Ode from the French* (mock introduction). B. may have got the present anecdote from Signor Giuliani.

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, 730  
 The Mother of the Hero's Hope, the boy,  
 The young Astyanax of modern Troy;<sup>169</sup>  
 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, 735  
 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. 740  
 But, no, – she still must hold a petty reign,  
 Flanked by her formidable Chamberlain;  
 The Martial Argus, whose not hundred Eyes<sup>170</sup>  
 Must watch her through these paltry pageantries.  
 What though she share no more, and shared in vain, 745  
 A Sway surpassing that of Charlemagne,  
 Which swept from Moscow to the Southern Seas,  
 Yet still she rules the pastoral realm of Cheese,<sup>171</sup>  
 Where Parma views the traveller resort  
 To note the trappings of her mimic Court. 750  
 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; – 755  
 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!<sup>172</sup>  
 Yes! the right arm, yet red from Waterloo,  
 Which cut her Lord's half shatter'd Sceptre through, 760  
 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! 765  
 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!<sup>173</sup> 770

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the conduct of my good Louise, and I believe that it is totally out of her power to assist me; moreover, she is young and timorous” (O'Meara, II, 159).

**169:** Astyanax is son to Hector and Andromache in the *Iliad*. B. alludes to Napoleon's son, the “King of Rome”.

**170:** Neipperg.

**171:** Parma, home of parmesan cheese.

**172:** According to some legends, not those used by Homer in the *Iliad*, Hector's widow, Andromache, eventually married (or became mistress to) Neoptolemus / Pyrrhus, who had killed Priam, her father-in-law. See *Hamlet*, III iii, and Berlioz, *Les Troyens*, IV, 2. In Racine's *Andromaque* she agrees unhappily to marry Pyrrhus, but he is assassinated at the altar by Orestes, working for Hermione, his previous wife.

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 775  
Gird the gross Sirloin of a City Celt,<sup>174</sup>  
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

/  
/NB/ J<sup>n</sup>. 18.<sup>th</sup> 1823.  
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**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 gayed – has haunted B. ever since *EBSR*.

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