

# Don Juan by Lord Byron

I

When Bishop Berkeley said "there was no matter,"

And proved it—'twas no matter what he said:

They say his system 'tis in vain to batter,

Too subtle for the airiest human head;

And yet who can believe it! I would shatter

Gladly all matters down to stone or lead,

Or adamant, to find the World a spirit,

And wear my head, denying that I wear it.

II

What a sublime discovery 'twas to make the

Universe universal egotism,

That all's ideal—all ourselves: I'll stake the

World (be it what you will) that that's no schism.

Oh Doubt!—if thou be'st Doubt, for which some take thee,

But which I doubt extremely—thou sole prism

Of the Truth's rays, spoil not my draught of spirit!

Heaven's brandy, though our brain can hardly bear it.

III

For ever and anon comes Indigestion

(Not the most "dainty Ariel") and perplexes

Our soarings with another sort of question:

And that which after all my spirit vexes,

Is, that I find no spot where Man can rest eye on,

Without confusion of the sorts and sexes,

Of beings, stars, and this unriddled wonder,

The World, which at the worst's a glorious blunder—

IV

If it be chance—or, if it be according  
To the Old Text, still better: lest it should  
Turn out so, we'll say nothing 'gainst the wording,  
As several people think such hazards rude.  
They're right; our days are too brief for affording  
Space to dispute what no one ever could  
Decide, and everybody one day will  
Know very clearly—or at least lie still.

V

And therefore will I leave off metaphysical

Discussion, which is neither here nor there:

If I agree that what is, is; then this I call

Being quite perspicuous and extremely fair.

The truth is, I've grown lately rather phthisical:

I don't know what the reason is—the air

Perhaps; but as I suffer from the shocks

Of illness, I grow much more orthodox.

VI

The first attack at once prov'd the Divinity

(But that I never doubted, nor the Devil);

The next, the Virgin's mystical virginity;

The third, the usual Origin of Evil;

The fourth at once establish'd the whole Trinity

On so uncontrovertible a level,

That I devoutly wish'd the three were four—

On purpose to believe so much the more.

VII

To our theme.—The man who has stood on the Acropolis,  
And look'd down over Attica; or he  
Who has sail'd where picturesque Constantinople is,  
Or seen Timbuctoo, or hath taken tea  
In small-ey'd China's crockery-ware metropolis,  
Or sat amidst the bricks of Nineveh,  
May not think much of London's first appearance—  
But ask him what he thinks of it a year hence!

VIII

Don Juan had got out on Shooter's Hill;  
Sunset the time, the place the same declivity  
Which looks along that vale of good and ill  
Where London streets ferment in full activity,  
While everything around was calm and still,  
Except the creak of wheels, which on their pivot he  
Heard, and that bee-like, bubbling, busy hum  
Of cities, that boil over with their scum—

IX

I say, Don Juan, wrapp'd in contemplation,  
Walk'd on behind his carriage, o'er the summit,  
And lost in wonder of so great a nation,  
Gave way to't, since he could not overcome it.  
"And here," he cried, "is Freedom's chosen station;  
Here peals the People's voice nor can entomb it  
Racks, prisons, inquisitions; resurrection  
Awaits it, each new meeting or election.

XI

These free-born sounds proceeded from four pads  
In ambush laid, who had perceiv'd him loiter  
Behind his carriage; and, like handy lads,  
Had seiz'd the lucky hour to reconnoitre,  
In which the heedless gentleman who gads  
Upon the road, unless he prove a fighter  
May find himself within that isle of riches  
Expos'd to lose his life as well as breeches.

XII

Juan, who did not understand a word  
Of English, save their shibboleth, "God damn!"  
And even that he had so rarely heard,  
He sometimes thought 'twas only their Salam,"  
Or "God be with you!"—and 'tis not absurd  
To think so, for half English as I am  
(To my misfortune) never can I say  
I heard them wish "God with you," save that way—

XIV

On which Jack and his train set off at speed,  
And Juan's suite, late scatter'd at a distance,  
Came up, all marvelling at such a deed,  
And offering, as usual, late assistance.  
Juan, who saw the moon's late minion bleed  
As if his veins would pour out his existence,  
Stood calling out for bandages and lint,  
And wish'd he had been less hasty with his flint.

XV

"Perhaps," thought he, "it is the country's wont

To welcome foreigners in this way: now

I recollect some innkeepers who don't

Differ, except in robbing with a bow,

In lieu of a bare blade and brazen front.

But what is to be done? I can't allow

The fellow to lie groaning on the road:

So take him up, I'll help you with the load."

XVI

But ere they could perform this pious duty,  
The dying man cried, "Hold! I've got my gruel!  
Oh! for a glass of max ! We've miss'd our booty—  
Let me die where I am!" And as the fuel  
Of life shrunk in his heart, and thick and sooty  
The drops fell from his death-wound, and he drew ill  
His breath, he from his swelling throat untied  
A kerchief, crying "Give Sal that!"—and died.

XVII

The cravat stain'd with bloody drops fell down

Before Don Juan's feet: he could not tell

Exactly why it was before him thrown,

Nor what the meaning of the man's farewell.

Poor Tom was once a kiddy upon town,

A thorough varmint, and a real swell,

Full flash, all fancy, until fairly diddled,

His pockets first and then his body riddled.

XVIII

Don Juan, having done the best he could  
In all the circumstances of the case,  
As soon as "Crown's 'quest" allow'd, pursu'd  
His travels to the capital apace;  
Esteeming it a little hard he should  
In twelve hours' time, and very little space,  
Have been oblig'd to slay a free-born native  
In self-defence: this made him meditative.

XIX

He from the world had cut off a great man,

Who in his time had made heroic bustle.

Who in a row like Tom could lead the van,

Booze in the ken, or at the spellken hustle?

Who queer a flat? Who (spite of Bowstreet's ban)

On the high toby-spice so flash the muzzle?

Who on a lark, with black-eyed Sal (his blowing),

So prime, so swell, so nutty, and so knowing?

XX

But Tom's no more—and so no more of Tom.

Heroes must die; and by God's blessing 'tis

Not long before the most of them go home.

Hail! Thamis, hail! Upon thy verge it is

That Juan's chariot, rolling like a drum

In thunder, holds the way it can't well miss,

Through Kennington and all the other "tons,"

Which make us wish ourselves in town at once;

XXI

Through Groves, so called as being void of trees,  
(Like lucus from no light); through prospects nam'd  
Mount Pleasant, as containing nought to please,  
Nor much to climb; through little boxes fram'd  
Of bricks, to let the dust in at your ease,  
With "To be let," upon their doors proclaim'd;  
Through "Rows" most modestly call'd "Paradise,"  
Which Eve might quit without much sacrifice;

XXII

Through coaches, drays, chok'd turnpikes, and a whirl  
Of wheels, and roar of voices, and confusion;  
Here taverns wooing to a pint of "purl,"  
There mails fast flying off like a delusion;  
There barbers' blocks with periwigs in curl  
In windows; here the lamplighter's infusion  
Slowly distill'd into the glimmering glass  
(For in those days we had not got to gas);

XXIII

Through this, and much, and more, is the approach  
Of travellers to mighty Babylon:

Whether they come by horse, or chaise, or coach,  
With slight exceptions, all the ways seem one.

I could say more, but do not choose to encroach  
Upon the guide-book's privilege. The sun

Had set some time, and night was on the ridge  
Of twilight, as the party cross'd the bridge.

XXIV

That's rather fine, the gentle sound of Thamis—  
Who vindicates a moment, too, his stream—  
Though hardly heard through multifarious "damme's":  
The lamps of Westminster's more regular gleam,  
The breadth of pavement, and yon shrine where Fame is  
A spectral resident—whose pallid beam  
In shape of moonshine hovers o'er the pile—  
Make this a sacred part of Albion's Isle.

XXV

The Druid's groves are gone—so much the better:  
Stonehenge is not—but what the devil is it?—  
But Bedlam still exists with its sage fetter,  
That madmen may not bite you on a visit;  
The Bench too seats or suits full many a debtor;  
The Mansion House too (though some people quiz it)  
To me appears a stiff yet grand erection;  
But then the Abbey's worth the whole collection.

XXVI

The line of lights too, up to Charing Cross,  
Pall Mall, and so forth, have a coruscation  
Like gold as in comparison to dross,  
Match'd with the Continent's illumination,  
Whose cities Night by no means deigns to gloss.  
The French were not yet a lamp-lighting nation,  
And when they grew so—on their new-found lantern,  
Instead of wicks, they made a wicked man turn.

XXVII

A row of Gentlemen along the streets  
Suspended may illuminate mankind,  
As also bonfires made of country seats;  
But the old way is best for the purblind:  
The other looks like phosphorus on sheets,  
A sort of ignis fatuus to the mind,  
Which, though 'tis certain to perplex and frighten,  
Must burn more mildly ere it can enlighten.

XXVIII

But London's so well lit, that if Diogenes  
Could recommence to hunt his honest man  
And found him not amidst the various progenies  
Of this enormous city's spreading spawn,  
'Twere not for want of lamps to aid his dodging his  
Yet undiscover'd treasure. What I can,  
I've done to find the same throughout life's journey,  
But see the World is only one attorney.

XXIX

Over the stones still rattling, up Pall Mall,  
Through crowds and carriages, but waxing thinner  
As thunder'd knockers broke the long seal'd spell  
Of doors 'gainst duns, and to an early dinner  
Admitted a small party as night fell,  
Don Juan, our young diplomatic sinner,  
Pursu'd his path, and drove past some hotels,  
St. James's Palace, and St. James's "Hells."

XXX

They reach'd the hotel: forth stream'd from the front door  
A tide of well-clad waiters, and around  
The mob stood, and as usual several score  
Of those pedestrian Paphians who abound  
In decent London when the daylight's o'er;  
Commodious but immoral, they are found  
Useful, like Malthus, in promoting marriage:  
But Juan now is stepping from his carriage

XXXI

Into one of the sweetest of hotels,  
Especially for foreigners—and mostly  
For those whom favour or whom fortune swells,  
And cannot find a bill's small items costly.  
There many an envoy either dwelt or dwells  
(The den of many a diplomatic lost lie),  
Until to some conspicuous square they pass,  
And blazon o'er the door their names in brass.

XXXII

Juan, whose was a delicate commission,  
Private, though publicly important, bore  
No title to point out with due precision  
The exact affair on which he was sent o'er.  
'Twas merely known, that on a secret mission  
A foreigner of rank had grac'd our shore,  
Young, handsome and accomplish'd, who was said  
(In whispers) to have turn'd his Sovereign's head.

XXXIII

Some rumour also of some strange adventures  
Had gone before him, and his wars and loves;  
And as romantic heads are pretty painters,  
And, above all, an Englishwoman's roves  
Into the excursive, breaking the indentures  
Of sober reason, wheresoe'er it moves,  
He found himself extremely in the fashion,  
Which serves our thinking people for a passion.

XXXIV

I don't mean that they are passionless, but quite  
The contrary; but then 'tis in the head;  
Yet as the consequences are as bright  
As if they acted with the heart instead,  
What after all can signify the site  
Of ladies' lucubrations? So they lead  
In safety to the place for which you start,  
What matters if the road be head or heart?

XXXV

Juan presented in the proper place,  
To proper placement, every Russ credential;  
And was receiv'd with all the due grimace  
By those who govern in the mood potential,  
Who, seeing a handsome stripling with smooth face,  
Thought (what in state affairs is most essential)  
That they as easily might do the youngster,  
As hawks may pounce upon a woodland songster.

XXXVI

They err'd, as aged men will do; but by  
And by we'll talk of that; and if we don't,  
'T will be because our notion is not high  
Of politicians and their double front,  
Who live by lies, yet dare not boldly lie:  
Now, what I love in women is, they won't  
Or can't do otherwise than lie, but do it  
So well, the very truth seems falsehood to it.

XXXVII

And, after all, what is a lie? 'Tis but  
The truth in masquerade; and I defy  
Historians, heroes, lawyers, priests, to put  
A fact without some leaven of a lie.  
The very shadow of true Truth would shut  
Up annals, revelations, poesy,  
And prophecy—except it should be dated  
Some years before the incidents related.

XXXVIII

Prais'd be all liars and all lies! Who now  
Can tax my mild Muse with misanthropy?  
She rings the World's "Te Deum," and her brow  
Blushes for those who will not: but to sigh  
Is idle; let us like most others bow,  
Kiss hands, feet, any part of Majesty,  
After the good example of "Green Erin,"  
Whose shamrock now seems rather worse for wearing.

XXXIX

Don Juan was presented, and his dress  
And mien excited general admiration;  
I don't know which was more admir'd or less:  
One monstrous diamond drew much observation,  
Which Catherine in a moment of "ivresse"  
(In love or brandy's fervent fermentation)  
Bestow'd upon him, as the public learn'd;  
And, to say truth, it had been fairly earn'd.

XL

Besides the ministers and underlings,  
Who must be courteous to the accredited  
Diplomatists of rather wavering kings,  
Until their royal riddle's fully read,  
The very clerks—those somewhat dirty springs  
Of Office, or the House of Office, fed  
By foul corruption into streams—even they  
Were hardly rude enough to earn their pay.

XLI

And insolence no doubt is what they are

Employ'd for, since it is their daily labour,

In the dear offices of peace or war;

And should you doubt, pray ask of your next neighbour,

When for a passport, or some other bar

To freedom, he applied (a grief and a bore),

If he found not this spawn of tax-born riches,

Like lap-dogs, the least civil sons of b{ }{ }{ }{ }{ }s.

XLII

But Juan was receiv'd with much "empressement" —  
These phrases of refinement I must borrow  
From our next neighbours' land, where, like a chessman,  
There is a move set down for joy or sorrow,  
Not only in mere talking, but the press. Man  
In islands is, it seems, downright and thorough,  
More than on continents—as if the sea  
(See Billingsgate) made even the tongue more free.

XLIII

And yet the British "Damme" 's rather Attic,  
Your continental oaths are but incontinent,  
And turn on things which no aristocratic  
Spirit would name, and therefore even I won't anent  
This subject quote; as it would be schismatic  
In politesse, and have a sound affronting in 't;  
But "Damme" 's quite ethereal, though too daring—  
Platonic blasphemy, the soul of swearing.

XLIV

For downright rudeness, ye may stay at home;  
For true or false politeness (and scarce that  
Now) you may cross the blue deep and white foam:  
The first the emblem (rarely though) of what  
You leave behind, the next of much you come  
To meet. However, 'tis no time to chat  
On general topics: poems must confine  
Themselves to Unity, like this of mine.

XLV

In the great world—which, being interpreted,  
Meaneth the West or worst end of a city,  
And about twice two thousand people bred  
By no means to be very wise or witty,  
But to sit up while others lie in bed,  
And look down on the Universe with pity—  
Juan, as an inveterate patrician,  
Was well receiv'd by persons of condition.

XLVI

He was a bachelor, which is a matter  
Of import both to virgin and to bride,  
The former's hymeneal hopes to flatter;  
And (should she not hold fast by love or pride)  
'Tis also of some moment to the latter:  
A rib's a thorn in a wed gallant's side,  
Requires decorum, and is apt to double  
The horrid sin—and what's still worse the trouble.

XLVII

But Juan was a bachelor—of arts,  
And parts, and hearts: he danc'd and sung, and had  
An air as sentimental as Mozart's  
Softest of melodies; and could be sad  
Or cheerful, without any "flaws or starts,"  
Just at the proper time; and though a lad,  
Had seen the world—which is a curious sight,  
And very much unlike what people write.

XLVIII

Fair virgins blush'd upon him; wedded dames  
Bloom'd also in less transitory hues;  
For both commodities dwell by the Thames  
The painting and the painted; Youth, Ceruse,  
Against his heart preferr'd their usual claims,  
Such as no gentleman can quite refuse;  
Daughters admir'd his dress, and pious mothers  
Inquir'd his income, and if he had brothers.

XLIX

The milliners who furnish "drapery Misses"  
Throughout the season, upon speculation  
Of payment ere the Honeymoon's last kisses  
Have wan'd into a crescent's coruscation,  
Thought such an opportunity as this is,  
Of a rich foreigner's initiation,  
Not to be overlook'd—and gave such credit,  
That future bridegrooms swore, and sigh'd, and paid it.

L

The Blues, that tender tribe, who sigh o'er sonnets,

And with the pages of the last Review

Line the interior of their heads or bonnets,

Advanc'd in all their azure's highest hue:

They talk'd bad French or Spanish, and upon its

Late authors ask'd him for a hint or two;

And which was softest, Russian or Castilian?

And whether in his travels he saw Ilion?

LI

Juan, who was a little superficial,  
And not in literature a great Drawcansir,  
Examin'd by this learned and especial  
Jury of matrons, scarce knew what to answer:  
His duties warlike, loving or official,  
His steady application as a dancer,  
Had kept him from the brink of Hippocrene,  
Which now he found was blue instead of green.

LII

However, he replied at hazard, with  
A modest confidence and calm assurance,  
Which lent his learned lucubrations pith,  
And pass'd for arguments of good endurance.  
That prodigy, Miss Araminta Smith  
(Who at sixteen translated "Hercules Furens"  
Into as furious English), with her best look,  
Set down his sayings in her common-place book.

LIII

Juan knew several languages—as well  
He might—and brought them up with skill, in time  
To save his fame with each accomplish'd belle,  
Who still regretted that he did not rhyme.  
There wanted but this requisite to swell  
His qualities (with them) into sublime:  
Lady Fitz-Frisky, and Miss M{ae}via Mannish,  
Both long'd extremely to be sung in Spanish.

LIV

However, he did pretty well, and was  
Admitted as an aspirant to all  
The coteries, and, as in Banquo's glass,  
At great assemblies or in parties small,  
He saw ten thousand living authors pass,  
That being about their average numeral;  
Also the eighty "greatest living poets,"  
As every paltry magazine can show it's .

LV

In twice five years the "greatest living poet,"  
Like to the champion in the fisty ring,  
Is call'd on to support his claim, or show it,  
Although 'tis an imaginary thing,  
Even I—albeit I'm sure I did not know it,  
Nor sought of foolscap subjects to be king—  
Was reckon'd, a considerable time,  
The grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme.

LVI

But Juan was my Moscow, and Faliero

My Leipsic, and my Mont Saint Jean seem Cain:

"La Belle Alliance" of dunces down at zero,

Now that the Lion's fall'n, may rise again,

But I will fall at least as fell my hero;

Nor reign at all, or as a monarch reign;

Or to some lonely isle of jailors go,

With turncoat Southey for my turnkey Lowe.

LVII

Sir Walter reign'd before me; Moore and Campbell  
Before and after; but now grown more holy,  
The Muses upon Sion's hill must ramble  
With poets almost clergymen, or wholly;  
And Pegasus has a psalmodic amble  
Beneath the very Reverend Rowley Powley,  
Who shoes the glorious animal with stilts,  
A modern Ancient Pistol—"by the hilts!"

LVIII

Still he excels that artificial hard  
Labourer in the same vineyard, though the vine  
Yields him but vinegar for his reward—  
That neutralis'd dull Dorus of the Nine;  
That swarthy Sporus, neither man nor bard;  
That ox of verse, who ploughs for every line:  
Cambyses' roaring Romans beat at least  
The howling Hebrews of Cybele's priest.

LIX

Then there's my gentle Euphues, who, they say,  
Sets up for being a sort of moral me;  
He'll find it rather difficult some day  
To turn out both, or either, it may be.  
Some persons think that Coleridge hath the sway;  
And Wordsworth has supporters, two or three;  
And that deep-mouth'd Boeotian "Savage Landor"  
Has taken for a swan rogue Southey's gander.

LX

John Keats, who was kill'd off by one critique,  
Just as he really promis'd something great,  
If not intelligible, without Greek  
Contriv'd to talk about the gods of late,  
Much as they might have been suppos'd to speak.  
Poor fellow! His was an untoward fate;  
'Tis strange the mind, that very fiery particle,  
Should let itself be snuff'd out by an article.

LXI

The list grows long of live and dead pretenders

To that which none will gain—or none will know

The conqueror at least; who, ere Time renders

His last award, will have the long grass grow

Above his burnt-out brain, and sapless cinders.

If I might augur, I should rate but low

Their chances; they're too numerous, like the thirty

Mock tyrants, when Rome's annals wax'd but dirty.

LXII

This is the literary lower empire,  
Where the praetorian bands take up the matter;  
A "dreadful trade," like his who "gathers samphire,"  
The insolent soldiery to soothe and flatter,  
With the same feelings as you'd coax a vampire,  
Now, were I once at home, and in good satire,  
I'd try conclusions with those Janizaries,  
And show them what an intellectual war is.

LXIII

I think I know a trick or two, would turn  
Their flanks; but it is hardly worth my while,  
With such small gear to give myself concern:  
Indeed I've not the necessary bile;  
My natural temper's really aught but stern,  
And even my Muse's worst reproof's a smile;  
And then she drops a brief and modern curtsy,  
And glides away, assur'd she never hurts ye.

LXIV

My Juan, whom I left in deadly peril  
Amongst live poets and blue ladies, pass'd  
With some small profit through that field so sterile,  
Being tir'd in time, and, neither least nor last,  
Left it before he had been treated very ill;  
And henceforth found himself more gaily class'd  
Amongst the higher spirits of the day,  
The sun's true son, no vapour, but a ray.

LXV

His morns he pass'd in business—which dissected,  
Was, like all business, a laborious nothing  
That leads to lassitude, the most infected  
And Centaur-Nessus garb of mortal clothing,  
And on our sofas makes us lie dejected,  
And talk in tender horrors of our loathing  
All kinds of toil, save for our country's good—  
Which grows no better, though 'tis time it should.

LXVI

His afternoons he pass'd in visits, luncheons,  
Lounging and boxing; and the twilight hour  
In riding round those vegetable puncheons  
Call'd "Parks," where there is neither fruit nor flower  
Enough to gratify a bee's slight munchings;  
But after all it is the only "bower"  
(In Moore's phrase) where the fashionable fair  
Can form a slight acquaintance with fresh air.

LXVII

Then dress, then dinner, then awakes the world!

Then glare the lamps, then whirl the wheels, then roar

Through street and square fast flashing chariots hurl'd

Like harness'd meteors; then along the floor

Chalk mimics painting; then festoons are twirl'd;

Then roll the brazen thunders of the door,

Which opens to the thousand happy few

An earthly Paradise of "Or Molu."

## LXVIII

There stands the noble hostess, nor shall sink  
With the three-thousandth curtsy; there the waltz,  
The only dance which teaches girls to think,  
Makes one in love even with its very faults.  
Saloon, room, hall, o'erflow beyond their brink,  
And long the latest of arrivals halts,  
'Midst royal dukes and dames condemn'd to climb,  
And gain an inch of staircase at a time.

LXIX

Thrice happy he who, after a survey  
Of the good company, can win a corner,  
A door that's in or boudoir out of the way,  
Where he may fix himself like small "Jack Horner,"  
And let the Babel round run as it may,  
And look on as a mourner, or a scorner,  
Or an approver, or a mere spectator,  
Yawning a little as the night grows later.

LXX

But this won't do, save by and by; and he  
Who, like Don Juan, takes an active share  
Must steer with care through all that glittering sea  
Of gems and plumes and pearls and silks, to where  
He deems it is his proper place to be;  
Dissolving in the waltz to some soft air,  
Or prouder prancing with mercurial skill,  
Where Science marshals forth her own quadrille.

LXXI

Or, if he dance not, but hath higher views  
Upon an heiress or his neighbour's bride,  
Let him take care that that which he pursues  
Is not at once too palpably descried.  
Full many an eager gentleman oft rues  
His haste; impatience is a blundering guide  
Amongst a people famous for reflection,  
Who like to play the fool with circumspection.

LXXII

But, if you can contrive, get next at supper;  
Or, if forestalled, get opposite and ogle:  
Oh, ye ambrosial moments! always upper  
In mind, a sort of sentimental bogle,  
Which sits for ever upon Memory's crupper,  
The ghost of vanish'd pleasures once in vogue! III  
Can tender souls relate the rise and fall  
Of hopes and fears which shake a single ball.

LXXIII

But these precautionary hints can touch  
Only the common run, who must pursue,  
And watch and ward; whose plans a word too much  
Or little overturns; and not the few  
Or many (for the number's sometimes such)  
Whom a good mien, especially if new,  
Or fame, or name, for wit, war, sense or nonsense,  
Permits whate'er they please, or did not long since.

LXXIV

Our hero, as a hero young and handsome,  
Noble, rich, celebrated, and a stranger,  
Like other slaves of course must pay his ransom  
Before he can escape from so much danger  
As will environ a conspicuous man. Some  
Talk about poetry, and "rack and manger,"  
And ugliness, disease, as toil and trouble—  
I wish they knew the life of a young noble.

LXXV

They are young, but know not youth—it is anticipated;  
Handsome but wasted, rich without a sou;  
Their vigour in a thousand arms is dissipated;  
Their cash comes from, their wealth goes to a Jew;  
Both senates see their nightly votes participated  
Between the tyrant's and the tribunes' crew;  
And having voted, din'd, drunk, gam'd and whor'd,  
The family vault receives another lord.

LXXVI

"Where is the World," cries Young, "at eighty? Where  
The World in which a man was born?" Alas!

Where is the world of eight years past? 'Twas there—  
I look for it—'tis gone, a Globe of Glass!

Crack'd, shiver'd, vanish'd, scarcely gaz'd on, ere  
A silent change dissolves the glittering mass.

Statesmen, chiefs, orators, queens, patriots, kings,  
And dandies—all are gone on the wind's wings.

LXXVII

Where is Napoleon the Grand? God knows:

Where little Castlereagh? The devil can tell:

Where Grattan, Curran, Sheridan, all those

Who bound the Bar or Senate in their spell?

Where is the unhappy Queen, with all her woes?

And where the Daughter, whom the Isles lov'd well?

Where are those martyr'd saints the Five per Cents?

And where—oh, where the devil are the Rents?

LXXVIII

Where's Brummell? Dish'd. Where's Long Pole Wellesley?  
Diddled.

Where's Whitbread? Romilly? Where's George the Third?  
Where is his will? (That's not so soon unriddled.)

And where is "Fum" the Fourth, our "royal bird"?

Gone down, it seems, to Scotland to be fiddled

Unto by Sawney's violin, we have heard:

"Caw me, caw thee"—for six months hath been hatching  
This scene of royal itch and loyal scratching.

LXXIX

Where is Lord This? And where my Lady That?

The Honourable Mistresses and Misses?

Some laid aside like an old Opera hat,

Married, unmarried, and remarried (this is

An evolution oft perform'd of late).

Where are the Dublin shouts—and London hisses?

Where are the Grenvilles? Turn'd as usual. Where

My friends the Whigs? Exactly where they were.

LXXX

Where are the Lady Carolines and Franceses?

Divorc'd or doing thereanent. Ye annals

So brilliant, where the list of routs and dances is,

Thou Morning Post, sole record of the panels

Broken in carriages, and all the phantasies

Of fashion, say what streams now fill those channels?

Some die, some fly, some languish on the Continent,

Because the times have hardly left them one tenant.

LXXXI

Some who once set their caps at cautious dukes,

Have taken up at length with younger brothers:

Some heiresses have bit at sharpers' hooks:

Some maids have been made wives, some merely

mothers:

Others have lost their fresh and fairy looks:

In short, the list of alterations bothers.

There's little strange in this, but something strange is

The unusual quickness of these common changes.

LXXXII

Talk not of seventy years as age! in seven

I have seen more changes, down from monarchs to

The humblest individuals under heaven,

Than might suffice a moderate century through.

I knew that nought was lasting, but now even

Change grows too changeable, without being new:

Nought's permanent among the human race,

Except the Whigs not getting into place.

LXXXIII

I have seen Napoleon, who seem'd quite a Jupiter,

Shrink to a Saturn. I have seen a Duke

(No matter which) turn politician stupider,

If that can well be, than his wooden look.

But it is time that I should hoist my "blue Peter,"

And sail for a new theme: I have seen—and shook

To see it—the King hiss'd, and then caress'd;

But don't pretend to settle which was best.

LXXXIV

I have seen the Landholders without a rap—

I have seen Joanna Southcote—I have seen

The House of Commons turn'd to a taxtrap—

I have seen that sad affair of the late Queen—

I have seen crowns worn instead of a fool's cap—

I have seen a Congress doing all that's mean—

I have seen some nations, like o'erloaded asses,

Kick off their burthens—meaning the high classes.

LXXXV

I have seen small poets, and great prozers, and  
Interminable—not eternal—speakers—

I have seen the funds at war with house and land—

I have seen the country gentlemen turn squeakers—

I have seen the people ridden o'er like sand

By slaves on horseback—I have seen malt liquors

Exchang'd for "thin potations" by John Bull—

I have seen John half detect himself a fool.

LXXXVI

But "carpe diem," Juan, "carpe, carpe!"

To-morrow sees another race as gay

And transient, and devour'd by the same harpy.

"Life's a poor player"—then "play out the play,

Ye villains!" and above all keep a sharp eye

Much less on what you do than what you say:

Be hypocritical, be cautious, be

Not what you seem, but always what you see.

LXXXVII

But how shall I relate in other cantos  
Of what befell our hero in the land,  
Which 'tis the common cry and lie to vaunt as  
A moral country? But I hold my hand—  
For I disdain to write an Atalantis;  
But 'tis as well at once to understand,  
You are not a moral people, and you know it,  
Without the aid of too sincere a poet.

LXXXVIII

What Juan saw and underwent shall be  
My topic, with of course the due restriction  
Which is requir'd by proper courtesy;  
And recollect the work is only fiction,  
And that I sing of neither mine nor me,  
Though every scribe, in some slight turn of diction,  
Will hint allusions never meant. Ne'er doubt  
This—when I speak, I don't hint, but speak out.

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XC

Is yet within the unread events of time.

Thus far, go forth, thou Lay, which I will back

Against the same given quantity of rhyme,

For being as much the subject of attack

As ever yet was any work sublime,

By those who love to say that white is black.

So much the better!—I may stand alone,

But would not change my free thoughts for a throne.