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help thinking, however, that vile puns and bad jokes are not only out of place, and in villanous taste, but totally unworthy of a poet of such high reputation. What can be more miserable, for example, than the following pun?

I wonder (although Mars, no doubt, 's a god I  
Praise) if a man's name in a *bulletin*,  
May make up for a *bullet* in his body?

or more quaint and drivelling than the following joke?

One of the valorous "Smiths" whom we shall miss,  
Out of those nineteen who late rhymed to "pith;"  
But 'tis a name so spread o'er "Sir" and "Madam,"  
That one would think the *FIRST* who bore it "ADAM."

But still there is no great falling off of power upon the whole, as a certain oracle of the South has sagely opined. From the Seventh and Eighth Canto, as fine passages may be extracted as from any of his Lordship's works; and but for that excess of mockery, of which we have already spoken, the whole description of the assault of Ismail, with its accompaniments, might safely be placed in competition with whatever is most powerful, vigorous, and striking, in English poetry.

We observe that this poem is now, to the utter ruin of all literary pirates, more especially Benbow and Hees, presented in one form for the rich, and another for the poor, to the latter of whom it is made accessible for the reasonable price of one shilling. We should certainly consider this a most extraordinary proceeding on the part of a publisher

of Lord Byron's Works, did we not recollect to what it ought, in fairness, to be ascribed, namely, that most extraordinary decision of the Lord Chancellor in the case of "Cain," and Professor Lawrence's "Lectures," according to which, a book calculated to sap the foundations of religion and morality, and poison the public mind by its grossness and indecency, may be pirated with impunity, disseminated without limit or restraint, and rendered productive of the worst consequences, which the author, however zealous in the cause of proselytism, could have desired. It is impossible to discover every cranny and crevice by which light may find its way to the mind of a great Luminary of the Law; but to persons who live and breathe in a humbler sphere than the Courts of Westminster Hall, this decision, both as it affects a certain kind of property, and influences the public welfare, certainly appears, to say the least, one of the most remarkable judgments ever pronounced from the Chancery Bench. Be this as it may, however, whatever there is of mischievous in the poem before us, must now find its way to almost every class of readers, in this reading age, and by consequence fall into the hands of many, whose passions it will inflame, whose inexperience it will betray, whose principles it will corrupt, whose religion it will dissipate; which effects are necessarily to be ascribed, in part, to the "Presiding Wisdom" which prosecutes the Hunts, the Hones, and the Carliles, and refuses a simple injunction to stop the issue of the poison concocted by the Byrons and the Lawrences. Out upon such "Wisdom," wherever it "presides!"

## September 1823

[Byron] *Don Juan*, IX-XI (1823);  
*Edinburgh [Scots] Magazine*,  
2nd Series, XIII (Sept. 1823),  
\*357-360.

1823.] *Don Juan. Cantos IX. X. and XI.*

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### DON JUAN. CANTOS IX. X. AND XI.

*Ecce iterum Crispinus!* in other words, Lord Byron, with three additional cantos of *Don Juan* at his back. "Hooly and fairly," my good Lord; three cantos a-month are a jot too much, unless, indeed, the reader be appeased by an incidental notice, that they were written before the death of the late Lord Londonderry, who, as usual, comes in for his modicum of Irish praise. Like another great writer, his Lordship seems to think, that while the public are in the humour to dance, he is bound to pipe, even though the instrument he plays on will no longer "discourse most eloquent music." How far such a resolution may be prudent in itself, inasmuch, at least, as his Lordship's reputation as a piper is concerned, is his affair, not ours; but of one thing we are certain, and that is, that, on the present occasion, like the angels in his own Vision of Judgment, he has been singing or piping wofully out of tune. These cantos are, in fact, nothing but measured prose, replete with bad puns, stale jests, small wit, indecency, and irreligion, and exhibiting none of those redeeming bursts of true poetical inspiration for which their predecessors were remarkable. From beginning to end, we could discover no trace of that lofty and fervid genius which produced Lambro's Song, and other passages of equal pith and moment; but we could perceive many indications of labour and effort, as well as of a spirit generally at war with the world and itself, and apparently susceptible of delight only when it dwells on the follies, miseries, or crimes of mankind. To this last charge there are, indeed, some exceptions; but they are too few in number to render it necessary to modify what we have stated. His Lordship plainly affects to become the modern Juvenal; and he is certainly a keen, and sometimes a powerful satirist; but he will never equal the terseness and vigour of the great original, however much he may surpass it in grossness and obscenity.

The story of these cantos is soon told. Juan is sent by Suvaroff with

his dispatches, announcing the fall of Ismail; and being a fresh-looking and vigorous youth, is soon promoted to the rank of man-mistress to the imperial harlot Catherine. This critical and dangerous office he held as long as could be expected; in short, till Catherine grew sated, or some of her regular paramours, jealous of a rival, found means to give him a dose, which nearly cost him his life. Be this as it may, however, Juan was taken ill, and the Empress, out of regard to the youth, sent him on a secret mission to this country, where he is just landed, and has barely time to blow out the brains of a highwayman, when the last canto closes.

The first passage we shall extract, is that in which his Lordship tenders the olive-branch to Mr Jeffrey, and forswears the hostility, originally excited by the review of the "Hours of Idleness." It is equally honourable to both parties: the end of all war is peace.

Old enemies who have become new friends  
Should so continue—'tis a point of honour;  
And I know nothing which could make amends  
For a return to Hatred: I would shun her  
Like garlick, howsoever she extends  
Her hundred arms and legs, and fain outrun her.  
Old flames, new wives, become our bitterest foes—  
Converted foes should scorn to join with those.

This were the worst desertion:—renegadoes,  
Even shuffling Southey, that incarnate lie,  
Would scarcely join again the "reformatives,"  
Whom he forsook to fill the Laureate's sty:  
And honest men from Iceland to Barbadoes,  
Whether in Caledon or Italy,  
Should not vere round with every breath,  
nor seize  
To pain, the moment when you cease to please.

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## Don Juan. Cantos IX., X., and XI.

[Sept.

The lawyer and the critic but behold  
The baser sides of literature and life,  
And nought remains unseen, but much  
untold,  
By those who scour those double vales  
of strife.

While common men grow ignorantly old,  
The lawyer's brief is like the surgeon's  
knife,  
Dissecting the whole inside of a question,  
And with it all the process of digestion.

A legal broom's a moral chimney-sweeper,  
And that's the reason he himself's so  
dirty ;  
The endless soot bestows a tint far deeper  
Than can be hid by altering his shirt ;  
he  
Retains the sable stains of the dark cree-  
per,

At least some twenty-nine do out of  
thirty,  
In all their habits ;—not so you, I own ;  
As Caesar wore his robe, you wear your  
gown.

And all our little feuds, at least all *mine*,  
Dear Jeffrey, once my most redoubted  
foe,  
(As far as rhyme and criticism combine  
To make such puppets of us things be-  
low)

Are over : Here's a health to "Auld  
Lang Syne !"

I do not know you, and may never know  
Your face—but you have acted, on the  
whole,  
Most nobly, and I own it from my soul.

The following is his Lordship's  
opinion of his own country :

I have no great cause to love that spot  
of earth,  
Which holds what *might have been* the  
noblest nation ;

But though I owe it little but my birth,  
I feel a mixed regret and veneration  
For its decaying fame and former worth.

Seven years (the usual term of trans-  
portation)  
Of absence, lay one's old resentments  
level,

When a man's country's going to the  
devil.

Alas ! could She but fully, truly know  
How her great name is now through-  
out abhorred ;

How eager all the earth is for the blow  
Which shall lay bare her bosom to the  
sword :

How all the nations deem her their worst  
foe,  
That worse than *worst of foes*, the once  
adored

False friend, who held out freedom to  
mankind,  
And now would chain them to the very  
mind ;—

Would she be proud, or boast herself the  
free,

Who is but first of slaves ? The na-  
tions are

In prison,—but the jailor, what is he ?  
No less a victim to the bolt and bar.  
Is the poor privilege to turn the key  
Upon the captive, freedom ? He's as  
far

From the enjoyment of the earth and air,  
Who watches o'er the chain, as they who  
wear.

Don Juan now saw Albion's earliest  
beauties,

Thy cliffs, dear Dover ! harbour, and  
hotel ;

Thy custom-house, with all its delicate  
duties ;

Thy waiters running mucks at every  
bell ;

Thy packets, all whose passengers are  
booties

To those who upon land or water  
dwell ;

And last, not least, to strangers unin-  
structed,

Thy long, long bills, whence nothing is  
deducted.

The next morceau we shall ex-  
tract is excellent of its kind.

"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 !

Cracked, shivered, vanished, scarcely ga-  
zed on ere

A silent change dissolves the glittering  
mass.

Statesmen, chiefs, orators, queens, pa-  
triot, kings,

And dandies, all are gone on the wind's  
wings.

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 loved well ?

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## Don Juan. Cantos IX., X., and XI.

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Where are those martyred Saints the  
Five per Cents ?  
And where—oh where the devil are the  
rents !

Where's Brummel ? Dished. 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 scratch-  
ing.

Where is Lord This ? And where my  
Lady That ?

The Honourable Mistresses and Mis-  
ses ?

Some laid aside, like an old Opera hat,  
Married, unmarried, and remarried :

(this is  
An evolution oft performed of late).

Where are the Dublin shouts—and  
London hisses ?

Where are the Grenvilles ? Turned, as  
usual. Where

My friends the Whigs ? Exactly where  
they were.

Where are the Lady Carolines and Fran-  
ceses ?

Divorced or doing thereabout. Ye an-  
nals

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

Thou Morning Post, sole record of the  
pannels

Broken in carriages, and all the phan-  
tasies

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.

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 some-  
thing strange is  
The unusual quickness of these common  
changes.

Talk not of seventy years as age ; in  
seven

I have seen more changes, down from  
monarchs to

The humblest individual under heaven,  
Than might suffice a moderate cen-  
tury 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.

I have seen Napoleon, who seemed quite  
a Jupiter,

Shrink to a Saturn. I have seen a  
Duke

(No matter which) turn politician stupi-  
der,

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 hissed, and then ca-  
rest ;

But don't pretend to settle which was  
best.

I have seen the landholders without a  
rap—

I have seen Johanna Southcote—I have  
seen

The House of Commons turned to a tax-  
trap—

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.

I have seen small poets, and great pro-  
sers, and

Interminable—*not eternal*—speakers—

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

I've seen the Country Gentlemen turn  
squeakers—

I've seen the people ridden o'er like  
sand

By slaves on horseback—I have seen  
malt liquors

\*360. *Don Juan. Cantos IX., X., and XI.* [Sept.

Exchanged for "thin potatoes" by John Bull—  
I have seen John half detect himself a fool—

We have reserved for the last place, the passage in which the noble bard speaks of his own productions, and of his reputation in connection with that of some of his contemporaries. The subject is too tender for us to venture an opinion upon it. One whole stanza, and part of another, appear to be omitted, out of deference, we presume, to the Constitutional Association, the probable operations of which cannot be a matter of indifference to the Publisher, Mr John Hunt.

In twice five years the "greatest living poet,"

Like the champion in the fisty ring, Is called 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 reckoned, a considerable time, The Grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme.

But Juan was my Moscow, and Faliero My Leipzig, 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 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.

Sir Walter reigned 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 ;

• • • • •  
• • • • •  
• • • • •  
• • • • •

Then there's my gentle Euphuus : 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-mouthed Bœotian, "Savage Landor,"

Has taken for a swan rogue Southey's gander.

John Keats, who was killed off by one critique,

Just as he really promised something great,

If not intelligible, without Greek

Contrived to talk about the gods of late,

Much as they might have supposed to speak.

Poor fellow ! His was an untoward fate ; 'Tis strange the mind, that very fiery

particle, Should let itself be snuffed out by an Article.

1824.] *The Deformed Transformed ; a Drama.* 353

THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED ; A DRAMA. BY LORD BYRON. LONDON. J. AND H. L. HUNT. 1824.

If there is any spectacle more peculiarly melancholy than another, it is the sight of a noble mind overthrown, and of genius sinking into a premature decay ; the view of a mighty intellect wasting its energies on ribaldry and absurdity,—conscious of declining popularity, yet struggling with fretful impatience to maintain its hold on the public mind, by flattering its worst passions, in the cheapest and most accessible form ; or endeavouring ambitiously to revive some trace of the spirit of other days, and yet only suggesting, by the comparison, the impotence of its present efforts. Were it not for the evident self-complacency and satisfaction with which Lord Byron has given to the world the late Cantos of his Don Juan, and this, his latest performance, we should have considered these publications as a series of experiments on the patience of the public, of which this last was to be considered the *ne plus ultra* ; but the tone in which his Lordship speaks of his efforts, leaves us no room to doubt, that, whatever may be the opinion of the public, he himself entertains a very comfortable conviction of their excellence, and that the supposition of his declining popularity being in any way owing to his declining powers, will be positively the last solution of the difficulty to which his Lordship will be likely to have recourse. We confess we have yielded reluctantly to the conviction that such is the case ; because we are hardly disposed to consider such *capricci* as Don Juan (the mere *de-lasemens* of a great mind) as affording any fair index of the rise or fall

of his poetical powers ; but the present publication, we think, has brought the question fairly to issue, and of the result we think no human being can entertain a doubt. In short, it seems as if his career was destined to end as it began ; and that the short-lived brilliancy, which succeeded the lowering morning of his poetical day, is likely to terminate in the gloom and silence of neglect.

We are inclined to consider the present work as peculiarly calculated to bring the point fairly to trial, because the subject, however objectionable in its tendencies, is obviously one that is particularly congenial to the feelings of the author ;—eminently calculated to call forth that melancholy and sarcastic eloquence that bound the public mind with its resistless spells, so long and so willingly—and that strange succession and contrast, of contempt and insensibility to the virtues and the sufferings of mankind, with occasional relentings, and involuntary abandonment to gentler themes and softer feelings. In the present Drama, he has adopted the idea of Goëthe ; and the Cæsar of the play, a reproduction of Mephistophilis, accompanies the hero through the varied scenes of human life, sneering at mankind, laughing down all generous and noble emotions, dissolving fair illusions, and exposing the weaknesses that alloy the purest displays of human virtue ; while the hero himself, yet in the first flush of youthful feeling, yields slowly and reluctantly to the deadening vices of his infernal instructor. To attempt such a delineation after

March 1824

Byron, *The Deformed Transformed* (1824); *Edinburgh [Scots] Magazine*, 2nd Series, XIV (March 1824), 353-356.

the State. At the very time that this Tay-Bill is making the grand tour of Parliament, another Bill has been introduced for amending and improving the Act of 1804, in relation to the fishings on the Solway, which are exempted from the operation of the Gothic Acts that affect the other Salmon-fisheries of Scotland, and in which stake-nets are not only not prohibited, but in full operation. These Bills are diametrically opposed to each other, in principle and in object ; and should both be carried into laws, Parliament will be placed in the strange predicament of declaring one and the same thing, at one and the same time, to be lawful and unlawful. "Is it possible," asks our author, "to deny, that there is urgent necessity for FULL INQUIRY into the state of that law under which such things can occur ?"

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