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but now we doubt them no longer. Nor do we now lament
to see the noble Lord

" Fall'n from his high estate,
And weltering in—the mud."

courting the society, aping the slang, and feeding the sordid necessities of persons, who in the pithy words of Gifford, " are fitter objects of castigation for the beadle than the muse; and encountering more self-humiliation for their sakes, than the best saint would willingly undergo for the sake of his religion. His fate can now excite no more compassion in the minds of his former admirers, than that of a vicious racer sold to drudge in a night-cart: or if the comparison be somewhat unsavoury, we might remark in its stead, that since the æra of the Liberal, and the publication of the three Cantos before us, he has sunk from the dignity of Milton's fallen angel, to the vulgar horned and tailed devil of a puppet shew; a pert and mischievous buffoon; the fellow-wit of Punch, Scaramouch, and other sordid ribalds. With a happy consistency, he now exhibits for the moderate price of one shilling, as the envelope of the little duodecimo before us indicates.

It is impossible to foresee the final bathos to which the Rimini school, like the muddy heroes of the Dunciad, may think proper to dive in prose or verse, or what Mr. John Hunt may think it expedient to publish. For Lord Byron however, individually we entertain just sufficient remains of interest, to warn him, that " in the lowest deep there is a lower deep," and that certain allusions still pass for very scurvy jests in England, to say the least of them. We do not choose to quote, but shall only remark that the note to the preface is repeated in a more offensive shape in the 8th Canto, and that if such jokes again occur in the three which are forthcoming, the unfortunate little duodecimo which may contain them, will probably be thrown out of the window along with the *Liber Amoris*, instead of being locked up with its predecessors.

November 1823

[Byron] *Don Juan*, IX-XI (1823); *British Critic*, 2nd Series, XX (Nov. 1823), 524-530. Note the critic's pride in his "English prejudices" (pp. 524-525) and his disgust with Byron for not sharing them.

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ART. XIII. *Don Juan. Cantos IX. X. XI.* 18mo. Pp. 72. 1s. Hunt. 1823.

WITH any appeal to the conscience of Lord Byron, to the common decency and common feeling which he has outraged, and the literary reputation which he has so materially diminished by his own wilful act, we have entirely done. Our present purpose is merely to inquire, and that in the shortest possible manner, how far he has in the present instance succeeded, or is likely to succeed, in serving the interests of the firm in which he has thought fit to become an active partner. Had the characteristic little specimen of the "cheap and nasty," which now lies before us, in the shape of three four-penny cantos, been concocted by any other member of that firm, its intrinsic talent would hardly have entitled it to the privilege of being criticised; but the public attention which Lord Byron's former works have engrossed, and the notice which has been already taken of the former parts of *Don Juan*, render it advisable to persevere in our nauseous task.

The three cantos under present discussion have only served to confirm us in the gratifying conviction which we before expressed, that Lord Byron's anxiety in the cause of mischief has been detrimental to his success. The meanest understanding cannot be imposed upon by such palpable bravadoes as the following:

Just now,

In taking up this paltry sheet of paper,
My bosom underwent a glorious glow,
And my internal spirit cut a caper." P. 25.
" 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!" P. 72.

Nor will such ungracious and wry-faced attempts at triumphant pleasantry, as the twenty-first stanza in the ninth canto exhibits, weigh against the internal evidence of rankling spleen and mortified pride, afforded by the whole seventy-two pages before us. The case is perfectly plain. Lord Byron has perceived too late that public opinion has connected him, more than he may approve, with the Riminalists, or Cocknico-Carbonari, or whatever name may rejoice the ears of the literary club which he has been pleased to found at Pisa: As obvious must it have become to his tact and observation, that these his chosen friends are scouted both by Whig and Tory as a gang of despicable Filgarlics,

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Don Juan.

insensible alike to English prejudices, English pursuits, English humour, and the comforts of an English fireside. Alike coarse, fluttering, and insignificant, their body collective has been roughly brushed away, like a nauseous flesh-fly, from the front of Whiggism on which it crawled for a while, and not even Lord Byron himself has escaped a portion of the disgrace. The temperate, keen, and gentlemanlike strictures, attributed to Mr. Jeffrey, representing, as they naturally do, the opinion of his party, on the conduct and writings of Lord Byron, have been the death-blow to his Lordship's self-love.

This was the most unkindly cut of all;

And the tone of good temper and moderation in which he appears (p. 28.) to receive the reproof, is falsified by the whole context. Aware that the remarks of the *Edinburgh Review* are as unanswerable as they are unassailable, and at a loss how to vent the mortified feelings which they have inspired, the noble bard starts from his fawning posture at the feet of Mr. Jeffrey, to fly with the undistinguishing fury of a mad dog at every other person and thing which can command the respect, claim the forbearance, or gratify the predilections of Englishmen. From the king to the humblest individual of this empire,

" Which 'tis the common cry and lie to vaunt as
A moral country;" P. 71.

from the Duke of Wellington to good-natured Sir William Curtis, from Shakspeare to "the gentle Ephraim," (Heaven knows who!) from Queen Elizabeth to the living "Lady Carolines and Frances's," "the drapery Misses," and "the Blues," nothing escapes him. The same wretched sarcasms on the memory of

" Carotid artery cutting Castlereagh,"

" That long spout
Of blood and water, leaden Castlereagh,"

which disgraced the former cantos of *Don Juan*, and the same dull declamations against the great Captain of the age, are repeated "usque ad nauseam;" enlivened, however, by a brainless French pun, which has grown stale in the mouth of the veriest *badaud* of the Palais Royal, and which stands as the frontispiece of this delectable farrago. His native country is designated,

Of those true sons the mother,
Who butchered half the earth, and bulled t'other." P. 46.

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Don Juan.

St. Paul's, as seen over London, is

"A huge dun cupola, like a foolscap crown
On a fool's head—"

In short, the same tone of rabid defiance is kept up throughout, excepting where the writer is betrayed into good humour by an opportunity of creating disgust. The amours of an antiquated virago, and the penalties of youthful dissipation, are dwelt upon with the vapid chuckle of a quack doctor, and the exploits of a foot-pad are commemorated in a professed plagiarism from Pierce Egan, or some other scribbler of P. C. anecdotes and highway slang.

As to the story, it is a mere thread, and totally destitute, thank Heaven! of those attractions by which vice knows how to recommend himself. John Johnson, though a bad husband, by his own confession, was a cool, whimsical, military philosopher, possessing a fund of eccentric humour in his way; Dudù and her companion were very sufficient decoy-ducks; and the escape from the seraglio, and flight across the frontier, offered a wide field for romantic and amusing adventure. Now mark the difference. The above personages are not once named, and the whole tale may be comprized as follows. Juan arrives at St. Petersburg with Suvaroff's dispatches; is presented to the Empress Catherine in "uncurled stockings," and

"Brilliant breeches, bright as a Cairn Gorme,"

is by her first taken into keeping, and next sent to England on a political mission, where the story leaves him in the character of Giovanni in London, and in the full enjoyment of ton and notoriety. Such is a full abstract of the three cantos before us. It would be difficult to quote any passage illustrative of the main argument, without insult to our female readers, and we shall therefore confine ourselves to the four first stanzas of each canto, as detached specimens of delicate sarcasm, sublime reflection, and clear reasoning.

CANTO IX.

I.

"Oh, Wellington! (or 'Vilainton'—for Fame
Sounds the heroic syllables both ways;
France could not even conquer your great name;
But punned it down to this facetious phrase—
Beating or beaten she will laugh the same)
You have obtained great pensions and much praise;
Glory like your's should any dare gainsay,
Humanity would rise, and thunder 'Nay'!"

* "Query—Ney? Printer's devil."

Don Juan.

II.

"I don't think that you used K—n—rd quite well
In Marinèt's affair—in fact 'twas shabby,
And like some other things won't do to tell
Upon your tomb in Westminster's old abbey.
Upon the rest 'tis not worth while to dwell,
Such tales being for the tea hours of some tabby;
But though your years as *man* tend fast to Zero,
In fact your Grace is still but a *young Hero*."

III.

"Though Britain owes (and pays you too) so much,
Yet Europe doubtless owes you greatly more;
You have repaired Legitimacy's crutch,
A prop not quite so certain as before:
The Spanish, and the French as well as Dutch,
Have seen, and felt, how strongly you *restore*;
And Waterloo has made the world your debtor,
(I wish your bards would sing it rather better.)"

IV.

"You are 'the best of cut-throats:'—do not start;
The phrase is Shakspeare's, and not misapplied:—
War's a brain-spattering, windpipe-slitting art,
Unless her cause by Right be sanctified.
If you have acted *once* a generous part,
The World, not the World's masters, will decide,
And I shall be delighted to learn who,
Save you and yours, have gained by Waterloo?" P. 3.

CANTO X.

I.

"When Newton saw an apple fall, he found
In that slight startle from his contemplation—
'Tis said (for I'll not answer above ground
For any sage's creed or calculation—)
A mode of proving that the earth turned round
In a most natural whirl, called 'Gravitation';
And this is the sole mortal who could grapple,
Since Adam, with a fall, or with an apple."

II.

"Man fell with apples, and with apples rose,
If this be true; for we must deem the mode
In which Sir Isaac Newton could disclose
Through the then unpaved stars the turnpike road,
A thing to counterbalance human woes:
For ever since immortal man hath glowed
With all kinds of mechanics, and full soon
Steam-engines will conduct him to the Moon."

Don Juan.

III.

" And wherefore this exordium?—Why, just now,
In taking up this paltry sheet of paper,
My bosom underwent a glorious glow,
And my internal spirit cut a caper:
And though so much inferior, as I know,
To those who, by the dint of glass and vapour,
Discover stars, and sail in the wind's eye,
I wish to do as much by Poesy.

IV.

" In the wind's eye I have sailed, and sail; but for
The stars, I own my telescope is dim
But at the least I have shunned the common shore,
And leaving land far out of sight, would skim
The Ocean of Eternity: the roar
Of breakers has not daunted my slight, trim,
But still sea-worthy skiff; and she may float
Where ships have foundered, as doth many a boat." P. 25.

CANTO XI.

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's all 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—

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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 hazard's rude.
They're right; our days are too brief for affording
Space to dispute what no one ever could
Decide, and every body one day will
Know very clearly—or at least lie still." P. 49.

Those curious readers who wish to explore still further, may learn the following undisputed truths; that England is famishing, that the Duke of Wellington loves potatoes, that Emperors fall with oats, that worlds pup, that men are maggots, that

"The eye

In love drinks all life's fountains, save tears, dry;" P. 19.

that thought clings "like a whelp to its teat," that Lord Byron's ancestors received eight-and-forty manors from William the Conqueror, that "the world is only one attorney;" and other well-expressed facts, whose importance will be duly appreciated. The puzzling want of connection in the reflective passages, is thus candidly accounted for by Lord Byron himself:

" 'The time is out of joint,—and so am I;
I quite forget this poem's merely quizzical;
And deviate into matters rather dry.
I ne'er decide what I shall say, and this I call
Much too poetical; Men should know why
They write, and for what end; but, note or text,
I never know the word which will come next.' P. 13.

How are the mighty fallen! We can hardly suppose that the author of Childe Harold and Sardanapulus has grown incurably dull; or that, contrary to the case of the Duke of Wellington, whom he tries to prove an elderly man and a young hero, Lord Byron himself is become superannuated in intellect, though young in years. Rather let us take him at his word, and supposing, as he asserts in p. 26,

"That he has more than one muse at a pinch,"

transfer the stigma to that non-descript goddess, who seems peculiarly to have presided over the composition of Don Juan. In the first canto we saw her elegant, highly talented, and graceful, and lamented her deflection from virtue. We can trace her subsequently through each stage of deterioration, till we find her a camp-follower at Ismail, still possessing allurements of a coarse and sensual sort, and though thoroughly depraved, full of anecdote and adventurous spirit

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In the present three cantos we behold her a reckless and desperate outcast from society, smarting under the sense of universal neglect, and venting it in the roar of scurrilous defiance against every one who comes in her way: her conversation a mixture of metaphysical scraps picked up in the course of her former education; with broader slang, and more unblushing indecency, than she had as yet ventured upon. Such is the history of the rise and progress, the decline and fall, of the tenth, or Juanic muse.

December 1823

[Byron] *Don Juan*, XII-XIV (1823); *British Critic*, 2nd Series, XX (Dec. 1823), 662-668. Don Giovanni was the protagonist of many stage farces and pantomimes.

ART. XII. *Don Juan. Cantos XII. XIII. XIV.*
12mo. 83 pp. 1s. Hunt. 1823.

"If I be not ashamed of my soldiers," says Falstaff, "I am a soused gurnet." It appears pretty plainly, in spite of all Lord Byron's bravados, that the repeated pousings which he has received from different quarters, and the diminution of his literary fame, as admitted even by himself in the present Cantos, and in former passages of *Don Juan*, have operated in disgusting him also with his ragged regiment of ex-English associates, and inspired him with the intention "purging and living cleanly."

"Wer't not for laughing, we could pity him." He can hardly be ignorant that his hero is sunk from the *Don Juan* of Moliere, into the "Giovanni in London" of the minor theatres, the humble second to Tom, Jerry, and Loggins; and that his works, banished from the polite sanctum of Bezarle-street, are gibbeted in effigy in every twopenny book-stall, side by side with grim wood-cuts of Hunt and Thurtell, and the features of our poor old friend Grimble (worthy, alas! of better company), grinning at the head of Fairburn's Songster.

The facetious association of

"Don Juan, three mops, and a pail,"

in the well-known song of Country Commissions, is