

DON JUAN

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649564439

Don Juan by George Gordon Byron

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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GEORGE GORDON BYRON

DON JUAN

DON JUAN.

"Difficile est proprie communia dicere."

HOR. Epist. ad Piscon.

A NEW EDITION.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

1819.



D O N J U A N.

CANTO I.



DON JUAN.

CANTO I.

I.

I WANT a hero: an uncommon want,

When every year and month sends forth a new one,
Till, after cloying the gazettes with cant,

The age discovers he is not the true one;
Of such as these I should not care to vaunt,

I'll therefore take our ancient friend Don Juan,
We all have seen him in the pantomime
Sent to the devil, somewhat ere his time.

II.

Vernon, the butcher Cumberland, Wolfe, Hawke,
Prince Ferdinand, Granby, Burgoyne, Keppel, Howe,
Evil and good, have had their tithe of talk,
And fill'd their sign-posts then, like Wellesley now;
Each in their turn like Banquo's monarchs stalk,
Followers of fame, "nine farrow" of that sow:
France, too, had Buonaparté and Dumourier
Recorded in the Moniteur and Courier.

III.

Barnare, Brissot, Condorcet, Mirabeau,
Petion, Cloutz, Danton, Marat, La Fayette,
Were French, and famous people, as we know;
And there were others, scarce forgotten yet,
Joubert, Hoche, Marceau, Lannes, Dessaix, Moreau,
With many of the military set,
Exceedingly remarkable at times,
But not at all adapted to my rhymes.

IV.

Nelson was once Britannia's god of war,
And still should be so, but the tide is turn'd;
There's no more to be said of Trafalgar,
'Tis with our hero quietly inurn'd;
Because the army's grown more popular,
At which the naval people are concern'd;
Besides, the Prince is all for the land-service,
Forgetting Duncan, Nelson, Howe, and Jervis.

V.

Brave men were living before Agamemnon⁽¹⁾
And since, exceeding valorous and sage,
A good deal like him too, though quite the same none;
But then they shone not on the poet's page,
And so have been forgotten:—I condemn none,
But can't find any in the present age
Fit for my poem (that is, for my new one);
So, as I said, I'll take my friend Don Juan.