

**DON JUAN.  
CANTOS XII. - XIII.  
- AND XIV**

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Don Juan. Cantos XII. - XIII. - And XIV by George Gordon Byron

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**GEORGE GORDON BYRON**

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# DON JUAN.

CANTOS XII.—XIII.—AND XIV.

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“Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more  
Cakes and Ale?”—“Yes, by St. Anne; and Ginger shall be hot i' the  
mouth too!”—*Twelfth Night, or What you Will.*

SHAKESPEARE.

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# **DON JUAN.**

**CANTO XII.**

## DON JUAN.

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### CANTO XII.

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#### I.

Of all the barbarous Middle Ages, that  
Which is the most barbarous is the middle age  
Of man ; it is—I really scarce know what ;  
But when we hover between fool and sage,  
And don't know justly what we would be at,—  
A period something like a printed page,  
Black letter upon foolscap, while our hair  
Grows grizzled, and we are not what we were,—

## II.

Too old for youth,—too young, at thirty-five,  
To herd with boys, or hoard with good threescore,—  
I wonder people should be left alive ;  
But since they are, that epoch is a bore :  
Love lingers still, although 'twere late to wive ;  
And as for other love, the illusion's o'er ;  
And money, that most pure imagination,  
Gleams only through the dawn of its creation.

## III.

Oh Gold ! Why call we misers miserable ?  
Theirs is the pleasure that can never pall ;  
Theirs is the best bower-anchor, the chain cable  
Which hold fast other pleasures great and small.  
Ye who but see the saving man at table,  
And scorn his temperate board, as none at all,  
And wonder how the wealthy can be sparing,  
Know not what visions spring from each cheese-paring.

## IV.

Love or lust makes man sick, and wine much sicker;  
Ambition rends, and gaming gains a loss;  
But making money, slowly first, then quicker,  
And adding still a little through each cross  
(Which *will* come over things) beats love or liquor,  
The gamester's counter, or the statesman's *dross*.  
Oh Gold! I still prefer thee unto paper,  
Which makes bank credit like a bark of vapour.

## V.

Who hold the balance of the world? Who reign  
O'er Congress, whether royalist or liberal?  
Who rouse the shirtless patriots of Spain?  
(That make old Europe's journals squeak and gibber all.)  
Who keep the world, both old and new, in pain  
Or pleasure? Who make politics run glibber all?  
The shade of Bonaparte's noble daring?—  
Jew Rothschild, and his fellow Christian Baring.

## VI.

Those, and the truly liberal Lafitte,  
Are the true lords of Europe. Every loan  
Is not a merely speculative hit,  
But seats a nation or upsets a throne.  
Republics also get involved a bit ;  
Columbia's stock hath holders not unknown  
On 'Change ; and even thy silver soil, Peru,  
Must get itself discounted by a Jew.

## VII.

Why call the miser miserable ? as  
I said before : the frugal life is his,  
Which in a saint or cynic ever was  
The theme of praise : a hermit would not miss  
Canonization for the self-same cause,  
And wherefore blame gaunt Wealth's austerities ?  
Because, you'll say, nought calls for such a trial ;—  
Then there's more merit in his self-denial.

## VIII.

He is your only poet ;—passion, pure  
And sparkling on from heap to heap, displays  
*Possess'd*, the ore, of which *mere hopes* allure  
Nations athwart the deep : the golden rays  
Flash up in ingots from the mine obscure ;  
On him the diamond pours its brilliant blaze,  
While the mild emerald's beam shades down the dyes  
Of other stones, to soothe the miser's eyes.

## IX.

The lands on either side are his : the ship  
From Ceylon, Inde, or far Cathay, unloads  
For him the fragrant produce of each trip ;  
Beneath his cars of Ceres groan the roads,  
And the vine blushes like Aurora's lip ;  
His very cellars might be kings' abodes ;  
While he, despising every sensual call,  
Commands—the intellectual lord of all.