

Don Juan: Cantos 13 -16 By George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788-1824)

These are the last four Cantos of his mock epic that Byron completed in the year before his death at the age of 36 in Messolonghi, Greece, where he had gone to fight for the nationalists against the Ottoman Empire. Juan, now in England, is invited to spend the autumn with a hunting party at the ancient country seat of Lord Henry and Lady Adeline Amundeville. There, he meets the most intriguing of the Byronic heroines, Aurora Raby, and is visited by a ghost with ample breasts (!). That is the narrative outline but hardly the focus of the last Cantos. Byron is more interested satirizing the frailty of faith, the fecklessness of the English aristocracy, the futility of English pastimes and the fawning of elected Members of Parliament over their middle-class constituents. Booze, banquets, belles and bishops are given the Byronic treatment, while his spleen is reserved for his critics and for "tyranny". (Summary by Peter Gallagher)

Read by Peter Gallagher; total running time: 03:13:32. Dedicated Proof-Listener: Betty M. Meta-Coordinator/Cataloging: Barry Eads.

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