

Wilson, ‘Cockney School of Poetry. No. VIII. Hunt’s Bacchus in Tuscany’

1. *We purged him ... we blistered him*] Purging (the use of emetics or laxatives), bleeding (with leaches or a lancet) and blistering (with hot cups) were all recognized medical treatments at this period.
2. *ordered him to Italy*] Hunt travelled to Italy in 1822 to join Byron and Shelley as a collaborator on *The Liberal*. Z. imagines that Hunt has gone to Italy (as Keats did) for the health benefits of its mild climate.
3. *MY DEAR JOHN ... 1825*] Dedication to *Bacchus in Tuscany, A Dithyrambic Poem, From the Italian of Francesco Redi, with Notes Original and Select by Leigh Hunt* (London, J. Hunt & H. L. Hunt, 1825), p. iii.
4. *saloop*] A hot drink made by infusing powdered salep or saffron chips (both root preparations), accompanied with milk and sugar and sold by London street vendors.
5. *he abjured all potent potations*] A glancing allusion to ‘If I had a thousand sons, the first human principle I would teach them should be, to forswear thin potations’. Shakespeare, *2 Henry IV*, IV.iii.133. Z. had already invoked this maxim of Falstaff in the sixth Cockney School article (see Volume 5, p. 343).
6. *the finest shives*] The thinnest slices.
7. *Lisson Grove*] Hunt’s house was at 13 Lisson Grove, West London.
8. *a bolus emetic*] A preparation designed to induce vomiting.
9. *“O for a blast of that dread horn”*] Walter Scott, *Marmion*, VI.xxiii.7.
10. *Cassandra-like*] Cassandra was one of the daughters of King Priam of Troy. In the second book of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, she tries to warn the Trojans against the Wooden Horse, but her prophecy is ignored.
11. *the New-River*] The New River is, in fact, a man-made water course which has supplied London with fresh water from Hertfordshire since 1613.
12. *thrice-distilled bohea*] An infusion of low-quality black tea. ‘Thrice-distilled’ plays on the triple distillation process employed for fine whisky and the repeated infusions used to eke out a limited supply of tea.
13. *perking up his little finger*] ‘Perked up’ was one of the Huntian expressions that Z. most enjoyed ridiculing. He had mocked it already in ‘Letter from Z. to Leigh Hunt, King of the Cockneys’, and in the sixth Cockney School article. Cf. ‘And are ye haunted of no lovelier trips / Than the poor stag’s, who startled, as he sips, / Perks up with timid mouth, from which the water drips?’ (Leigh Hunt, ‘The Nymphs’, I.28–30). The reference to Hunt’s elevated little finger is intended first to suggest ironically that Hunt is so powerful that he need only raise his little finger to banish the *Blackwood’s* crew, and second to suggest his social pretensions; extending the little finger while drinking tea was supposedly a sign of refinement. Hunt himself, in the guise of Bacchus, mocked tea-drinking ‘fops whose little fingers ache ’em’ in a passage from *Bacchus in Tuscany* quoted later in this review.
14. *a crisp brooch containing a lock of Milton’s hair*] ‘Crisp’ was another Huntian word that Z. liked to mock. Cf., for example, ‘like bands of hair that spread / Across a brow with parted tress / In a crisp auburn waviness’ (Leigh Hunt, ‘The Nymphs’, II.191–3). Z. had already ridiculed this word in the sixth Cockney School article. The reference to Milton’s hair recalls Hunt’s three sonnets on the subject of receiving

- a lock of Milton's hair from Dr Robert Batty, which Z. had already referred to in the sixth Cockney School article.
15. *that severe practitioner sent him first to Coventry ... Florence*] To be 'sent to Coventry' is to be sent into disgrace, and not at all like being sent to Pisa or Florence. The Hunts lived with Byron in the Casa Lanfranchi in Pisa from July to October 1822, before moving to Florence in 1823.
 16. *"In medio tutissimus ibis"*] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, II.137: 'In the middle is the safest path'.
 17. *"Wine – wine – generous wine"*] Possibly an allusion to a drinking song beginning 'When man is fatigu'd with the toils of the day', from Sir James Bland Burges's collection *Tricks Upon Travellers* (1810), which includes the lines: 'Give water to those who, like water, are cold; / 'Tis wine, generous wine, that can make my heart bold. / I leave to your sneakers potatoes so weak, / And stick to old sheries that crimson my cheek' (ll. 5–8).
 18. *slokening*] Usually slockening, meaning slaking or quenching a thirst.
 19. *three-bottle toper*] Heavy drinker.
 20. *praying for another dish ... king of all wine*] A bumper is a large drinking vessel. Cf. 'Nor Montepulciano, though king of all wine' (Leigh Hunt, *The Feast of the Poets*, l. 198).
 21. *"Cups of Chocolate ... the man extremely"*] Hunt, *Bacchus in Tuscany*, ll. 179–99, pp. 11–12. Hunt highlights this passage in his preface to the poem (p. xv).
 22. *hear it ... thou Earth!*] 'Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me', Isaiah 1:2.
 23. *within sound of Bow-Bell*] Within the kingdom of Cockaigne. Cockneys are supposedly born within earshot of the bells of Bow, in London.
 24. *"Down ... in Erebus"*] Hunt, *Bacchus in Tuscany*, ll. 191–2, p. 12.
 25. *poories*] Variant spelling of pouries, i.e. cream jugs.
 26. *Tims the Avenger*] Both a pun on the commonplace phrase 'Time the Avenger' and a reiteration of 'Tims' as Maga's generic nickname for the Cockneys. 'Tims' becomes a character in 'The Tent' and occasionally elsewhere in the magazine.
 27. *"I would sooner ... Talk of by the name of coffee!"*] Hunt, *Bacchus in Tuscany*, ll. 183–6, p. 11.
 28. *King Lud*] The imaginary leader of the Luddites, a loose group of weavers and spinners in the north of England who broke newly introduced weaving frames in a period of industrial unrest beginning in 1812.
 29. *Cheapside*] Notoriously rough and disreputable district of London, associated with criminals, prostitutes and hack writers. It is the favourite haunt of Falstaff and his companions in Shakespeare's *Henriad*.
 30. *"Apollar in Cockaigne"*] Z. mocked Hunt for pronouncing Apollo with a final r in the sixth Cockney School article (see Volume 5, p. 346).
 31. *Jupiter Tonans*] Jupiter the Thunderer.
 32. *"with such an air"*] Probably a reference to Hunt's ironic description of his new tea urn in the second part of his essay 'A Day by the Fire' from *The Round Table*

- (1817). The urn is not as efficient as its predecessor the tea-kettle, but Hunt consoles himself with its superior appearance: ‘there is such an air with it!’.
33. *Bagman ... the Hen and Chickens*] A Bagman is a commercial traveller or a tramp. The Hen and Chickens is the name of an imaginary public house.
 34. *affidavy*] An affidavit, or sworn legal statement.
 35. *in the character of Cloud-compeller ... ODoherty with a cigar*] That is to say, that *Blackwood's* pseudonymous contributor Morgan Odoherty would make more clouds (of smoke) with his cigar than Leigh Hunt could in his guise as Jupiter the ‘Cloud-compeller’. In a match between the two, it would be best to bet on (‘back’) Odoherty. *Blackwood's* normally printed the contributor’s name as Odoherty, but in this review it appears as ODoherty, and this capitalization has been retained here.
 36. *a car drawn by tigers, or lions, or panthers*] Bacchus is traditionally represented with a chariot drawn by leopards, for example in Titian’s painting *Bacchus and Ariadne*. Compare Keats’s line ‘Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards’ in ‘Ode to a Nightingale’, l. 32.
 37. *a sort of shandry-dan*] ‘A kind of chaise with a hood. In later use, a jocular designation for any rickety old-fashioned vehicle’ (*OED*).
 38. *the kennel*] The gutter or shallow drain in the street.
 39. *the poor starved apothecary*] John Keats, whose apprenticeship as an apothecary had drawn Z.’s ridicule in the fourth Cockney School article.
 40. “*God’s my life ... the deed is done*”] Hunt, *Bacchus in Tuscany*, p. 3. A tun is a large barrell.
 41. *Adjutant*] The speaker addresses Odoherty by his supposed rank.
 42. *shamming Abraham*] Feigning illness in order to avoid working.
 43. *bouzy*] Drunken.
 44. *Thou pimpled spirit of Drunken Barnaby!*] Richard Brathwaite (1587/8–1673; *DNB*) published *Drunken Barnaby’s Four Journeys to the North of England* in Latin verse under the pseudonym Corymbaeus in 1638. The English translation was repeatedly republished, including in an illustrated edition from 1822. ‘Pimpled’ was, of course, a favourite term of abuse for the Cockneys.
 45. *to set the table in a snore*] Cf. Hamlet’s memory, when talking to Yorick’s skull, of ‘Your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar?’. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, V.i.176–7.
 46. *sconce him*] To be sconced is to be punished for some neglect of courtesy or infraction of protocol by being compelled to drink a tankard of ale or similar. Z. suggests that Hunt is so drunk he should instead be made to drink a tumbler of salt water in order to sober him up.
 47. “*Let me ... In the grounds there of my Redi*”] Hunt, *Bacchus in Tuscany*, ll. 242–61, pp. 15–16.
 48. *rebel against the chair*] Refuse to recognize the authority of the ‘chairman’ of the drinking session.
 49. “*See how it runs down his gizzern ... Ye ho, ye ho, ye ho!!*”] An anonymous drinking song, supposedly sung by the assembled company as Hunt drinks his salt water.

50. “*What wine ... Prince of Tuscany*”] Hunt, *Bacchus in Tuscany*, ll. 357–68, pp. 21–2. The word ‘me’ in the antepenultimate line of this quotation is missing in the first edition of Hunt’s poem, having dropped out during printing.
51. *Never mind the Aspirates*] Aspirates are sounds of, or containing, the letter h. The implication is that Hunt is too uneducated to know the proper pronunciation of words in classical languages, and vulgarly drops the h in a Cockney fashion when he speaks English.
52. *Bacchus! my worthy fellow, have you forgot Ariadne?*] Ariadne was the daughter of Minos, King of Crete, who guided Theseus through the labyrinth after he killed the Minotaur. After Theseus abandoned her, she became the lover of the god Bacchus. Z. had already compared Hunt and his wife to Bacchus and Ariadne in the sixth Cockney School article, and Hunt had published a poem called ‘Bacchus and Ariadne’ in 1819.
53. “*The ruby dew ... and venomous bliss*”] Hunt, *Bacchus in Tuscany*, ll. 629–54, pp. 36–8.
54. “*He who drinks water ... to act like a gentleman*”] Hunt, *Bacchus in Tuscany*, ll. 735–94, pp. 42–6. The passage is notable for including a number of Huntian features that *Blackwood’s* had earlier mocked, including the following: Bacchus’s ‘followers’ recall *Blackwood’s* image of Hunt entertaining his ‘followers’ (including the ‘meagre doctorlings’, recalling the ‘bardlings’ who admire Hunt (Volume 5, p. 349) and the apprentice apothecary John Keats) with ‘luke-warm negus’ (Volume 5, p. 58). Hunt’s ‘mincing ladies’ recall Z. comparing Hunt to a ‘little mincing boarding school mistress’ (Volume 5, p. 58); the word ‘washery’, apart from being a characteristic cockneyism, recalls Hunt’s essay on washerwomen, which Z. had mocked (Volume 5, p. 143); the word ‘petrify’ recalls Hunt’s claim in *The Examiner* that the name of his correspondent was as safe ‘as if it had been petrified inside a rock’, which Z. had alluded to (Volume 5, p. 141); and Bacchus’s claim ‘I, for my part, take my can, / Solely to act like a gentleman’ draws attention to Z.’s basic and often reiterated point that Hunt was continually trying to act like a gentleman and failing.
55. *Somnus*] The god of sleep, who should not be anywhere near when Bacchus, the god of revelry, is in charge.
56. *another stave*] Another verse of song, a stave being the five horizontal lines on which music is notated.
57. *I’ll give thee ... the coocooroocoo*] Hunt, *Bacchus in Tuscany*, ll. 861–72, p. 50. The missing ‘t’ in ‘toast’ is clearly intended to indicate Bacchus’s slurred speech, and is reproduced from the original.
58. Enter MR AMBROSE] The review here moves into the dialogic form of the *Noctes Ambrosianae* with the entrance of the tavern-keeper Mr Ambrose, who removes the disorderly Hunt.
59. *more oysters*] This review appeared in the August issue, and August is the start of the season for oysters in England and Scotland. Folk wisdom holds that oysters should only be eaten when there is the letter r in the month (i.e. from September to April). Odoherly’s healthy appetite has been building during a long abstinence over the summer months.