

Views his broad belt, and steals a pattern from it
Then stops to warm her fingers
The concert of the spheres she next attends,
Hears half an overture and then descends.

Trade too, as well as love and dissipation,
Shall profit by this airy navigation:

Herschell may now with telescopes provide us,
Just fresh imported from his Georgium Sidus.

Smart milleners shall crowd the stage-balloon,
To bring new fashions weekly from the moon:

Gardeners in shoals from Battersea will run,
To raise their kindlier hot-beds in the sun:

And all our city fruitshops in a trice
From Saturn daily be supplied with ice.

Albion once more her drooping head shall rear,
And roll her thunders through each distant sphere;

Whilst, led by future Rodneys, British tars
Shall pluck bright honor from the twinkling stars.

NOTES:

Subtitle *Montgolfier* One of the Montgolfier brothers; Joseph-Michel (1740-1810) and Jacques-Étienne Montgolfier (1745-1799) were pioneer developers of the hot-air balloon and they conducted the first untethered flights (*Britannica*).

1 *pillions* a type of saddle (*QED*).

2 *postillions* a person who rides the (leading) nearside (left-hand side) horse drawing a coach or carriage, especially when one pair only is used and there is no coachmen (*QED*).

14 A slight variation of line 58 from Alexander Pope's *Eloisa to Abelard*.

21 *Gretna* Gretna Green, a Scottish town very close to the border with England, and famously the goal for young English couples seeking a quick marriage without their parents' permission, due to the difference in Scottish marriage laws (*Britannica*).

22 *ton* Fashion; the vogue (*QED*).

37 *Herschell* William Herschel (1738-1822), a German-British astronomer who, in 1781, discovered the planet Uranus (*Britannica*).

38 *Georgium Sidus* Latin for George's Star; Herschel's initial name for planet Uranus, named for

then King of England, George III (*Britannica*).

39 milleners – A person who designs, makes, or sells women’s hats (*OED*).

41 shoal – A place where the water is of little depth; a shallow; a sandbank or bar (*OED*); *Battersea* A neighborhood in south London, much of which extends directly along the River Thames.

43 in a trice – Instantly, forthwith; without delay (*OED*).

45 Albion – The nation of Britain or England, often with references to past times, or to a romanticized concept of the nation (*OED*).

47 Rodney – George Bridges Rodney (1718-1792), a famous British naval officer (*Britannica*); *tars* Sailors (*OED*).

– SOURCE: *The Gentleman’s Magazine* (May 1784), p. 367. [J. Paul Leonard Library]

– Edited by Gregory McCulloh