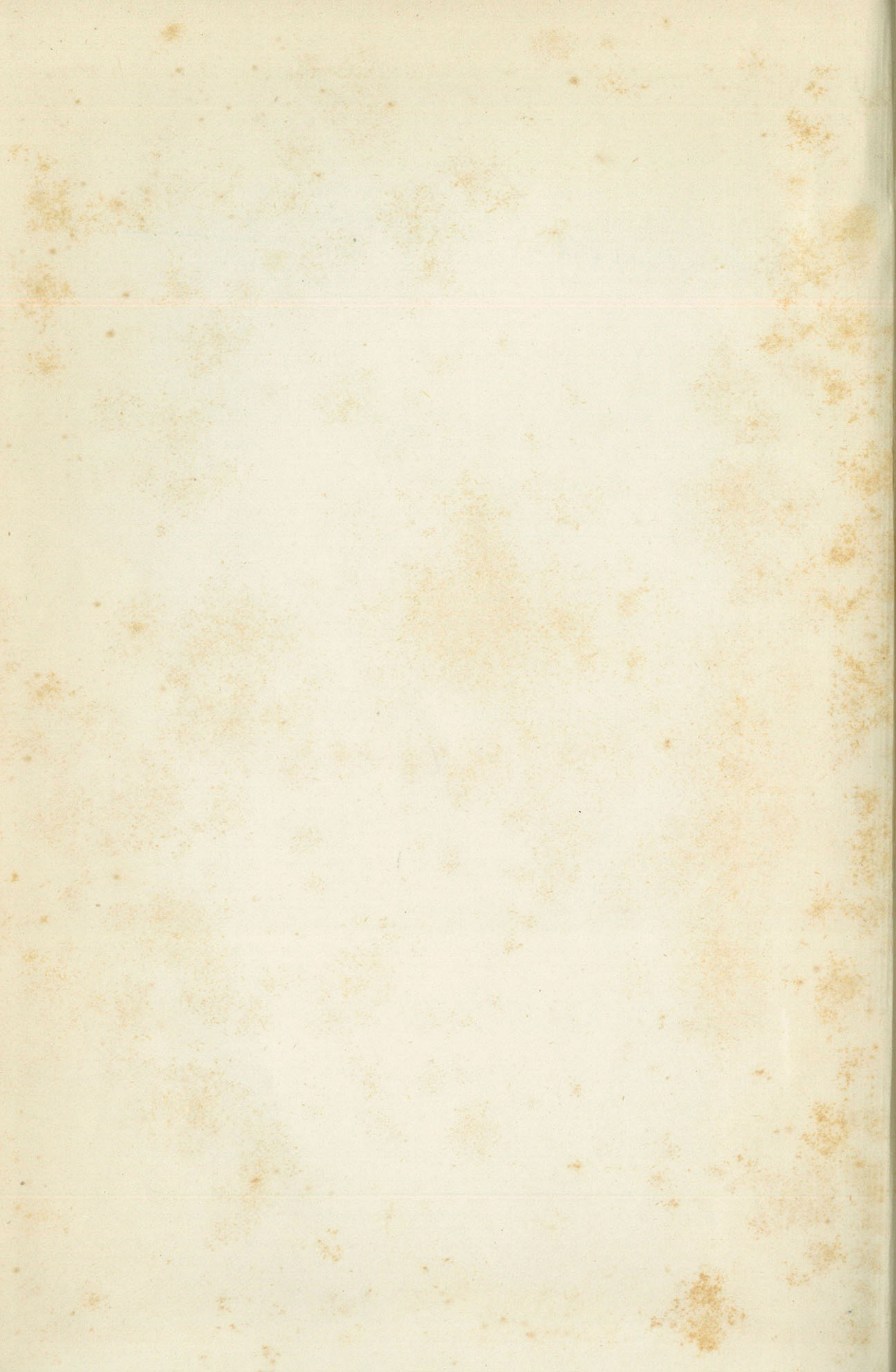
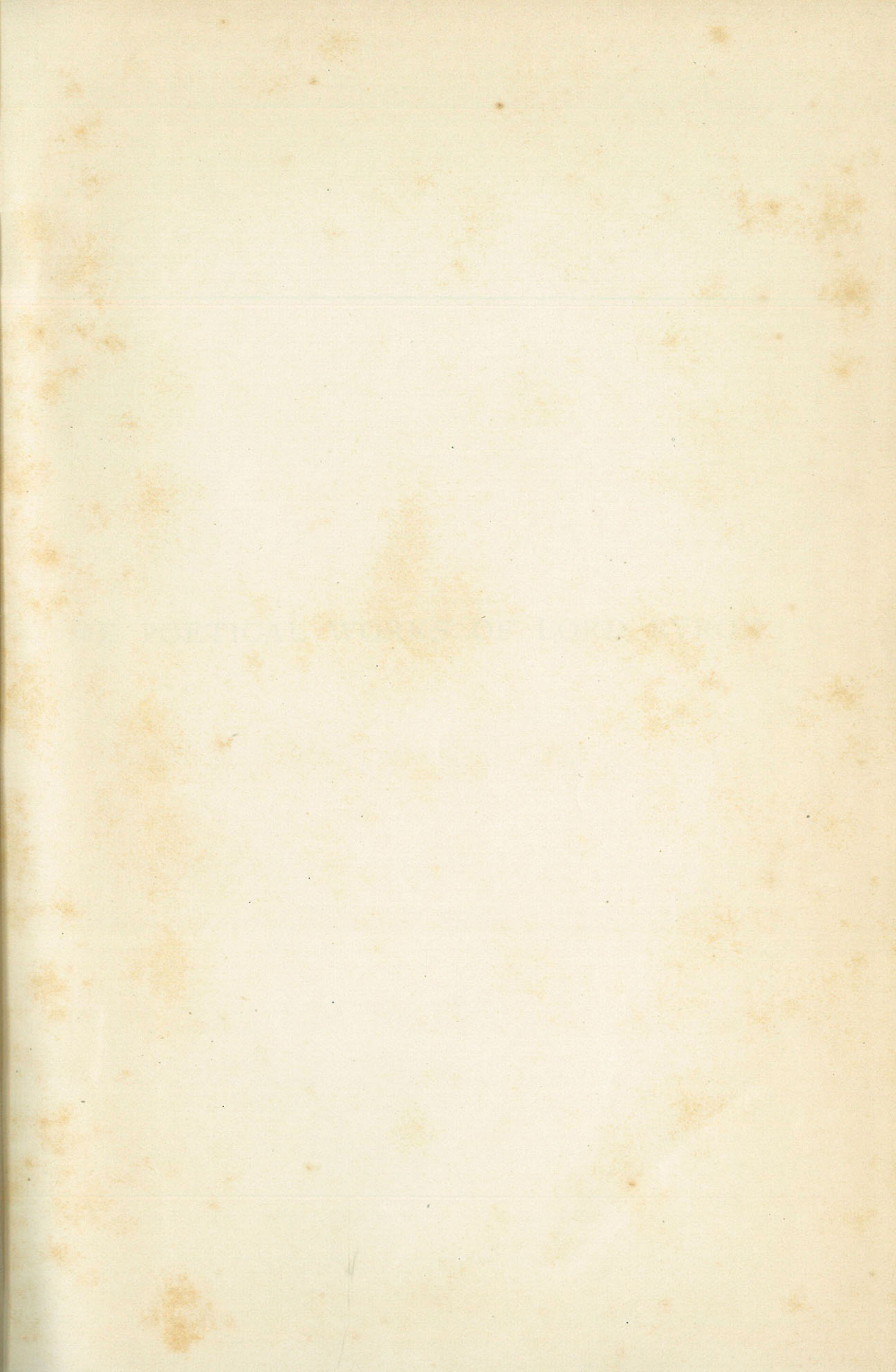


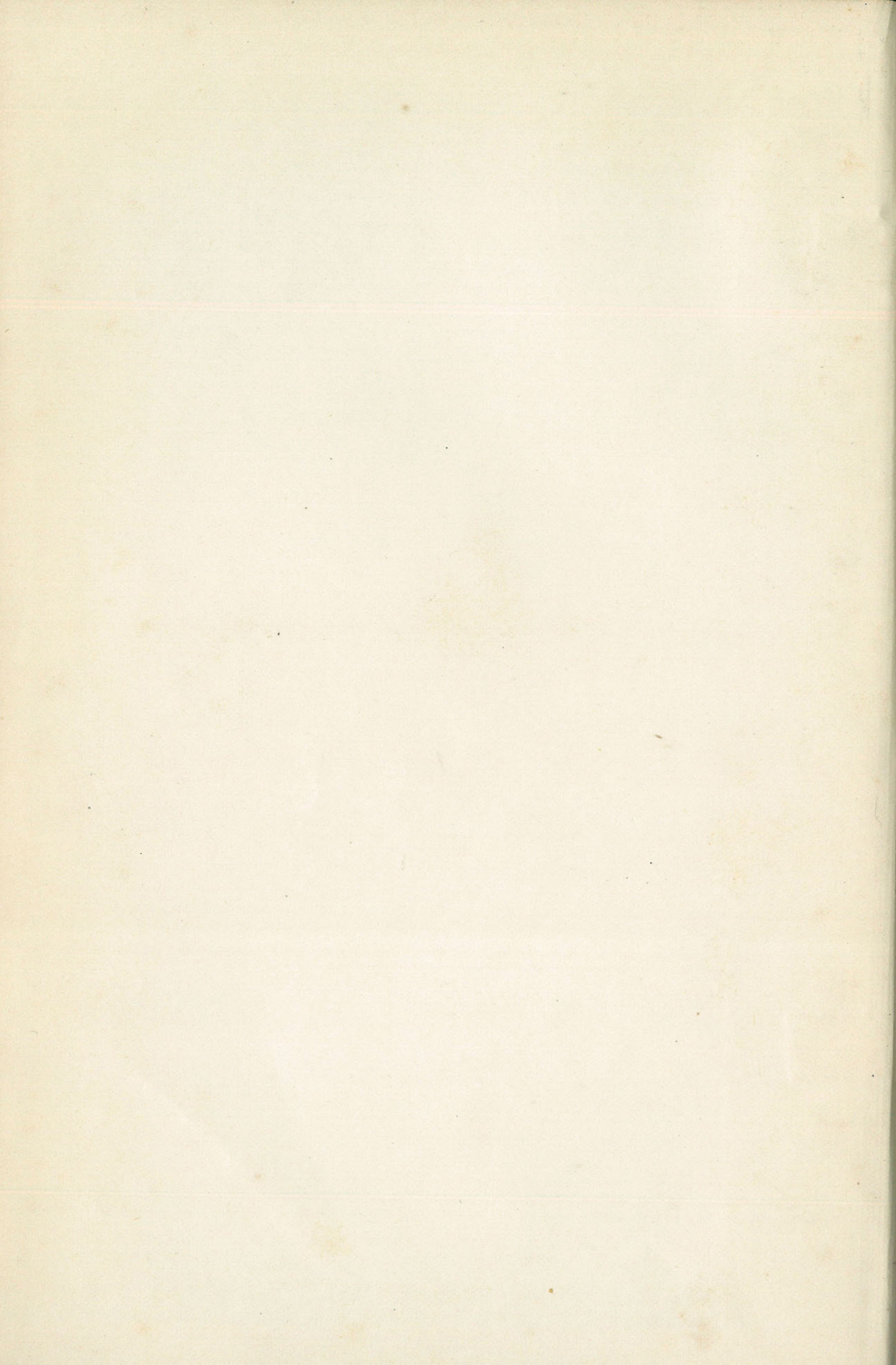




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THE POETICAL WORKS OF LORD BYRON

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Lord Byron
from an engraving after a drawing by G. H. Harlow.

Walker & Cockerell, ph.sc.

THE
POETICAL WORKS OF
LORD BYRON

THE ONLY COMPLETE AND COPYRIGHT
TEXT IN ONE VOLUME

EDITED, WITH A MEMOIR, BY
ERNEST HARTLEY COLERIDGE

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET

1905

THE

POETICAL WORKS OF

LORD BYRON

IN THREE VOLUMES

THE SECOND VOLUME

BY JOHN GALT

LONDON

PRINTED BY RICHARD CLAY AND COMPANY

1850

DEDICATED
BY GRACIOUS PERMISSION
TO
HIS MAJESTY
THE KING OF THE HELLENES

1905

THE KING OF THE HELLERS
HIS MAJESTY
BY GEORGE PERKINS
DUBLIN

P R E F A C E.

THE text of this edition of Lord Byron's Poetical Works is based on that of the edition in seven volumes, issued by Mr. Murray during the years 1898-1904. It has been subjected to a fresh and, it is hoped, exhaustive revision in respect of punctuation and orthography.

The first draft of *Werner*; the fragment of the third part of the *Deformed Transformed*; the fourteen stanzas of the Seventeenth Canto of *Don Juan*; the additional stanzas to *The Devil's Drive*; and more than twenty other occasional poems which first appeared in the larger editions of 1898-1904 are included in the present issue.

Byron's notes have been retained, with a few exceptions, *e.g.*, the additional notes to the Second Canto of *Childe Harold* (headed "Papers referred to by Note 33," etc.); a note at the end of *The Corsair*, and the appendices to *Marino Faliero*, and the *Two Foscari*.

The Notes to the Fourth Canto of *Childe Harold*, which were the work of J. C. Hobhouse (Lord Broughton de Gyfford) are omitted.

The Editorial Notes are enclosed in square brackets. They are intended to give, in the fewest possible words, information with regard to the dates of the poems, and to explain a few of the obscurer allusions and more difficult passages.

From consideration of space all variants have been omitted.

The facts contained in the Introductory Memoir are, with the rarest exceptions, derived from Moore's *Life, Letters, and Journals of Lord Byron*, (1 vol., 1892); Dr Karl Elze's *Lord Byron: A Biography*, 1872; Mr. R. E. Prothero's Notes to *The Works of Lord Byron, Letters and Journals*, vols. i.-vi., 1898-1901; and, here and there, from the Introduction and Notes to *The Works*, etc., *The Poetical Works*, vols. i.-vii., 1898-1904.

I desire to express my acknowledgments to Mr. Murray, and to Mr. R. E. Prothero for valuable assistance in reading and revising the manu-

script, and to Mr. W. P. Courtney for kindly undertaking to read the proofs of the Introductory Memoir.

The whole of the text of this edition has been collated with the original MSS. wherever they are available. It therefore constitutes a new and copyright text of Byron's Works. Moreover, it contains several poems, or portions of poems, which were published for the first time in the new thirteen volume edition of Byron's Works, and are therefore copyright.

ERNEST HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

October 1905.

INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR.

GEORGE GORDON BYRON, sixth Baron Byron of Rochdale, was born in London at No. 16 Holles Street, Cavendish Square, January 22, 1788. He was descended from Sir John Byron, Knight Bachelor, nicknamed "Little Sir John with the great beard," the first lay possessor of the Priory and lands of Newstead, in the county of Nottingham. Sir John's great grandson, a second Sir John Byron, K.B., was raised to the peerage by Charles I. in 1643. The first Lord Byron died childless, and was succeeded by his next brother, Richard, the great grandfather of William the fifth (nicknamed "the wicked") lord, and of Admiral, the Honble. John Byron, who was the poet's grandfather. The poet's father, Captain John Byron, the eldest son of the Admiral, was twice married. By his first wife, the Lady Amelia D'Arcy (Baroness Conyers, in her own right), the divorced wife of Francis, Marquis of Carmarthen, he had one daughter, Augusta, who married her first cousin, Colonel George Leigh; and by his second marriage (May 13, 1785) with Catherine Gordon, of Gight, a Scottish lady of long descent, and an heiress, one son. Captain Byron was an engaging spendthrift known as "Mad Jack Byron." His madness consisted in squandering the property of both his wives, and in bringing himself to irretrievable ruin. His son describes him as "amiable and joyous, though careless and dissipated," and denies the charge of cruelty to Lady Conyers or to his mother. It is certain that he could not, or would not, live with his second wife after he had spent her money. He died at Valenciennes, in France, in the summer of 1791.

The first years of the poet's boyhood were passed in lodgings at Aberdeen. It was, probably, narrow quarters at home which forced Mrs. Byron to send her son to a day-school before he was quite five years old. He is the historian of his own infancy, and tells us how he passed from the dual classes of "Bodsy" Bowers, who taught him next to nothing, to the care of "a clever little clergyman, named Ross," who inspired him with a love for history; and, afterwards, to that of a "very serious, saturnine, but kind young man, named Paterson," who grounded him in the rudiments of Latin grammar. When he was just turned six (April 1794) he entered the Grammar School, where he remained till the summer of 1798, "threading all the classes," till he reached the fifth place in the fourth.

He was a noticeable child, and, after his death, incidents of these early days

were remembered and recorded. "The old porter of the College," says Moore, "'minds weel' the little boy with the red jacket and nankeen trousers whom he so often turned out of the college courtyard."

He appears to better advantage in this word-picture than he does in Kay's sketch of a ringleted lad *en grande tenue* as an archer. He was lame from his birth, not as has been supposed from a club-foot, but as the result of "infantile paralysis which affected the inner muscles of his right leg and foot." It was the right foot, not the left, which was malformed. His mother's testimony (in a letter dated May 31, 1791) is conclusive: "George's foot turns inward, and it is the right foot."¹ With the vain hope of strengthening his muscles after an attack of scarlet fever his mother sent him in the summer holidays of 1796, and, possibly, again in 1797, to drink "goat's fey," at a farm-house at Ballaterich on Deeside. His lameness did not prevent him, though with pain and difficulty, from wandering by rugged ways, and then it was that he acquired, or discovered his passion for mountain scenery which haunted him to his life's end. The "child is father of the man," and though he had a sweetheart at home, his cousin, Mary Duff of the Plain-Stanes, it was "while he rov'd a young Highlander" that the soft blue eyes and golden ringlets of Mary Robertson, the "Highland Mary" of tradition, touched his fancy and visited his dreams.

In the early summer of 1798 (May 19) the fifth Lord Byron died. He had outlived both son and grandson, and was succeeded in the title and estates by his great-nephew, George Gordon Byron, the grandson of his brother the Admiral. There is a tale that when the boy first heard his name read out in class as "Dominus" Byron, he stood silent amid the general stare of his schoolfellows, and at last burst into tears.

At the end of the summer, September or October, Mrs. Byron, with her one servant, May Gray, and her ten-year-old son, left Aberdeen for ever, and made her way to Newstead Abbey. Of this journey Byron remembered, or, at least, recorded, nothing but the sight of Loch Leven "in my way to England," and the passage at Queensferry. "It was a change," said the reviewer of Moore's "Byron," "from a shabby Scotch 'flat' to a palace,"—a half-ruined palace, indeed, but spacious, magnificent, inspiring, and the impression for good and for evil was indelible. Henceforth there was always the possibility of the improbable. The odds were in favour of trumps. But whatever triumph the "little Lord Byron" may have felt in his soul, his outward circumstances remained much the same. The shrunken leg did not improve, and, acting under bad advice, Mrs. Byron consulted an ignorant surgeon named Lavender, trussmaker to the general hospital at Nottingham, and for seven or eight months, either in lodgings with May Gray, or in charge of his aunt, Mrs.

¹ It is possible that in after life both legs were more or less atrophied, and that this accounts for the conflict of opinion as to right or left leg. For instance, Trelawny says that the right leg was affected, Dr. Julius Millingen that the left foot and leg were malformed. Both were eye-witnesses, as they saw the poet's body after death, and took particular note of the feet and legs. See *Letters*, 1898, i. 11, 12; note 1.

Parkyns, he underwent a mischievous and ineffectual "cure." At his own request he read Virgil and Cicero with a tutor named Dummer Rogers, a pensioned American royalist. Lavender, who "screwed up his leg in a wooden machine," he hated and despised, but Rogers met with his august approval. They have their posthumous reward.

As Nottingham had proved a failure, his mother made up her mind to send him to London. Her lawyer, John Hanson, received him in his house at Earl's Court, placed him under the care of the eminent physician, Dr Matthew Baillie, and at the end of the summer holidays (August, 1799) sent him, as a boarder, to a preparatory school at Dulwich. A kind and disinterested friend, he had persuaded Lord Carlisle, who was connected with the Byrons, to be his nominal guardian, reserving all the duties and responsibilities for himself.

For five years (1799-1804) Byron spent the greater part of his holidays under Hanson's roof, sharing the family life, and getting such advice and control as he was willing to accept or could not altogether avoid. At Dulwich he did well. His schoolmaster, Dr Glennie, an intelligent and liberal-minded man, gave him the free run of his library. A set of "British Poets" (was it Anderson's or Bell's?) was more than once "perused from beginning to end," and what he read then was remembered and turned to account. This would not make him a poet, but it was after this fashion, that "unknowing what he did" he learned to write poetry.

Eighteen months went by, and, in April 1801, Mrs. Byron, who had interrupted and interfered with the boy's studies at Dulwich, professed to be dissatisfied with his progress, and either coaxed or argued Lord Carlisle into sending him to Harrow. Unreasonable and vexatious as her general behaviour may have been, in this instance she had right on her side. He had completed his thirteenth year; he was a peer, the heir to a great though encumbered estate, and his natural destination was a public school. Byron carved the letters of his name on the walls of one of the Harrow class-rooms, and wrote his name in larger letters on the memories and traditions of the school itself. At first he hated the place, kicked at the discipline, and chafed at his inability to keep pace with the studies of boys of his own age. But, as he rose in the school, and outgrew the unpopularity which a moody temper and a sense of his own importance had brought upon himself, he caught the spirit of his surroundings, and for the first, perhaps for the last, time in his life, knew what it was to be happy. A poetic child, a dreamer of dreams, a devourer of books in secret and at odd times, he was not only a champion of school rights, a ringleader in mischief, but he shared the ambitions and, with a difference, led the life of an ordinary schoolboy. He was a "record" swimmer, a frequenter of "Duck-pool" (the "Ducker" *de nos jours*), and, in spite of his game leg, cricketer enough to play for his school Eleven at Lords. And yet, when the mood was on him, he would "recline" on his favourite tomb in the churchyard, dreaming and trying to dream, consciously and unconsciously the hero of a legend in the making. And there his schoolfellows "let him *lay!*" There were no

“Byron-Hunts” at Harrow, as a year or two later there were “Shelley-Hunts” at Eton. For one thing, he was “ever a fighter,” and fisted his way in many a “memorable combat” to independence and mastery.

His attitude to the school authorities was eminently characteristic. The headmaster, Dr. Joseph Drury, was, so he considered, what a headmaster should be. He disobeyed him, sometimes played tricks at his expense, but he respected and liked him, and, on the whole, submitted to the discipline of the “silken string.” With the doctor’s son, Henry Drury, afterwards his friend, there was war to the knife, and under the sway of Dr. Butler, who succeeded Drury (in January 1805), he was outrageously insubordinate. In “Childish Recollections,” which were first published in *Poems on Various Occasions* (1807), he celebrates Drury as *Probus*, contrasting him with Butler, who appears as *Pomposus*. But, *de te fabula*, as they, and he, might have said. There was never a headmaster, not even a new one, who so richly deserved the latter title as the youthful satirist.

“*My School Friendships*,” he wrote in 1821, “were with me passions . . . but I do not know that there is one which has endured . . . till now.” Three of his closest friends, John Cecil Tattersall, Edward Noel Long, and the Duke of Dorset died young. With Lord Delawarr he quarrelled. From Lord Clare, the sound of whose name moved him, “like a love-thought,” to the very last, he was parted rather than divided by chance and circumstances. Other names should be mentioned. There was Sir George Sinclair, “the prodigy of our school-days,” whose exercises he copied, whose battles he fought; there was Tom Wildman, the purchaser and restorer of Newstead Abbey; there was little William Harness, whom he protected at school, and to whom he once thought of dedicating *Childe Harold*; and, last but not least, there was Sir Robert Peel, his “school and form fellow,” to whom John Murray dedicated the one volume edition of “*The Poetical Works of Lord Byron*,” which was first issued in 1837. But none of these, with the possible exception of Harness, were the friends of his manhood, or helped to shape his career.

It has been maintained that Byron wasted his time at Harrow, learning but “little Latin and less Greek.” Moore, who looked through his books, was struck with the “narrow extent of his classical attainments.” At least they were wide enough to enable him to turn a chorus of the *Prometheus* of Æschylus into English verse, whilst he was at Harrow, and soon afterwards to translate Odes of Catullus, Odes of Anacreon, many hundred lines of Virgil, and a chorus from the *Medea* of Euripides. The delicate scholarship of Shelley was then and always out of his reach or his ambition, but even as a schoolboy, “sickened with the daily drug of Homer and Ovid,” he must have made an extraordinary use of his time and opportunities. Apart from the classics, he read more and probably knew more history than boys and masters put together. He was a born orator, and even Dr. Drury, who depreciated his verses, could not refrain from loudly and openly applauding his recitation of Zanga’s speech over the body of Alonzo in Young’s tragedy

of *The Revenge*.¹ Byron's love of Harrow outlived his school friendships. When his natural daughter, Allegra, died in Italy (April 1822) he sent her body to England, to be buried in Harrow Church. "There is a spot," he adds, "in the churchyard near the footpath, on the brow of the hill, looking towards Windsor, and a tomb under a large tree, where I used to sit for hours and hours when I was a boy."

During the summer holidays of 1803 he fell in love, once for all, with his distant relative and near neighbour, Mary Anne Chaworth, "a minor heiress of Annesley Lordship," Park and Hall, which lies some three miles to the south-east of Newstead. They were fourth cousins, both being fifth in descent from George, Viscount Chaworth, whose daughter Elizabeth married the third Lord Byron. He was fifteen, she was seventeen, and already engaged to her future husband, John Musters of Wiverton Hall. If Medwin may be trusted, they used to meet secretly by a gate leading from one estate to the other; but they met openly too, for he came often enough to Annesley Hall, as the marks of his pistol shots in the garden door below the terrace remain to testify. If, as the story goes, she laughed behind his back at "the lame boy" she must have dropped, somewhere and sometimes, crumbs of encouragement, for, despite his mother's outcries and Dr. Drury's "enquiries," he played truant right through the autumn term, and did not go back to Harrow till January 1804. In August 1805, in the interval between Harrow and Cambridge, Miss Chaworth married, and he realised "the hopelessness of his attachment." "This," he says, "threw me out again alone, on a wide, wide sea." His early poems are full of allusions to his lost love. The pathetic lines "Hills of Annesley," perhaps his first *original poem*, and the stanza "Remembrance," were written shortly after the marriage in 1805. One poem in her honour "Oh, had thy fate been joined to mine," was included in *Hours of Idleness* (1807). Three of the poems contributed to Hobhouse's *Miscellany* (1809) are *plaintes de l'amour*. Other allusions and reminiscences are contained in *Childe Harold*, Canto I., stanza v. (1809), in the *Dream* (July 1816) and in the *Dual* (first published 1901), which was written at Venice in December 1818. All through his life there was the wistful sense of the "might have been," the rueful conviction of the lovers in Browning's "Youth and Art,"—"This could but have happened once, And we missed it, lost it for ever!" But whether he would have "spoiled her goodly lands," and sacrificed her life and happiness to his, as he admitted in his youth, or whether as he came to think (*Detached Thoughts*, 1821), "Our Union would have joined feuds . . . would have joined rich and broad lands, would have joined at least *one* heart," it is undoubtedly true that with his whole heart he "loved but one," and that one was Mary Chaworth.

1 "Is this Alonzo? Where's the haughty mien?
Is that the hand which smote me? Heavens, how pale!
And art thou dead? So is my enmity,
I was not worth the dart."

Act V., Sc. III., s.f.

And, surely, there is one other reference to her—in *The Giaour* (ll. 1127-1130):—

“She was a form of Life and Light,
That, seen, became a part of sight;
And rose, where'er I turned mine eye,
The Morning-star of Memory!”

Byron remained at Harrow till the end of July, 1805, went into residence at Trinity College, Cambridge, on the 20th of the following October, and graduated A.M. by special privilege as a peer, in the spring of 1808. But he was absent, with or without leave, during the whole of 1807, dividing his time between Burgage Manor, his mother's home at Southwell, and furnished apartments in Piccadilly.

Cambridge did him more harm than good. “I am allowed £500 a year, a horse, and a servant,” he tells his sister (November 6); and, a fortnight later (November 23), in reply to a letter of advice from John Hanson he “sits down to write, with a head confused with dissipation, which though I hate I cannot avoid.” “The place,” he remarks, “is the Devil, or, at any rate, his principal residence.” An allowance of £500 a year, for a school boy not yet eighteen, and the Devil stood in the relation of cause and effect. Hanson was alarmed, and stung him into an angry protest. “Neither here nor at Harrow,” he writes, “have I disgraced myself. The ‘Metropolis’ and the ‘Cloisters,’ are alike unconscious of my debauchery.” But he was only in his first term, and his later letters are full of boasts or confessions of “*une jeunesse orageuse*” unjoyous and unedifying.

It is idle to suppose that he makes himself out to be worse than he was. He is interested in facts about himself, not fables, and he did not much care whether his friends were shocked or amused. His sole excuse was that the pedantic inmates of “old Granta's Halls,” did not and could not command his respect or appeal to his more generous sentiments. And he was out of his element. Like Wordsworth he was not for the time or place; though, unlike him, he did not confine his excesses to the solitary indulgence of toasting the memory of Milton once too often.

But he made friends who did honour to his choice and whose names belong to the briefest record of his life. Among them were William John Bankes, “his collegiate pastor and master,” who made his name as traveller and Member of Parliament; Scrope Berdmore Davies, wit, scholar, and dandy; Charles Skinner Matthews, whose early death he never ceased to deplore—“an extraordinary man, who would have been a great one”; and Francis Hodgson, poet and divine, who died Provost of Eton. Last, but first and last, there was John Cam Hobhouse (afterwards Lord Broughton de Gyfford), his fellow pilgrim in Greece, his friend and champion and supporter to the end.

In one of his *Diaries* (January 12, 1821) he draws a pleasant picture of one side of his Cambridge life. “The reading of the song of Milton ‘Sabrina fair,’

has brought back upon me the happiest, perhaps, days of my life when living at Cambridge with Edward Noel Long. . . Sabrina's seat reminds me of our rival feats in *diving*. Though Cam's is not a very translucent wave we used to dive for and pick up, plates, eggs, and even shillings. I remember in particular there was the stump of a tree (at least ten or twelve feet deep) in the bed of the river in a spot—[a bend of the Cam still named "Byron's Pool,"] round which I used to cling and 'wonder how the devil I came there!' . . . In the day we rode, bathed, and lounged, reading occasionally. I remember our buying Moore's new quarto (in 1806) and reading it together in the evenings." There must have been lucid intervals in the "routine of dissipation."

Another episode to which he afterwards looked back with fond regret, was his romantic attachment for a Cambridge chorister named Edleston, whom he had rescued from drowning. It has been thought, but definite proof is wanting, that it was sorrow for the death of this "humble youth," an innocent and gentle spirit, who responded to his patronage with gratitude and devotion, which found its vent in the mysterious *Thyrza Poems*. But poetry is, itself, "a voice, a mystery." We hear the sound thereof, but whence it cometh or whether it goeth, even the poet himself cannot define or declare.

But if University life failed to make its mark, the Cambridge period was fruitful in results. He began to make friends outside his school and college, and, in contemporary phrase, he commenced author. Newstead Abbey was let to Lord Grey de Ruthyn, and, for months together when he was not in residence at Trinity, or in bachelor lodgings in London he shared his mother's home at Southwell. A Cambridge undergraduate, a local magnate *in posse*, he was naturally sought after and made much of by his mother's friends and neighbours, parsons, doctors, officers, provincial gentlefolk of the type familiar to Miss Austen's readers. There was a Mrs. Pigot and her daughter Elizabeth, a young lady of a certain age, who corresponded with him, and her sons John and Henry. There was a young clergyman, the Reverend J. T. Becher, an easy-going mentor, who checked his extravagance, and was, on the whole, an influence for good. But it was not an exhilarating atmosphere. Flattered, noticed, discussed and censured by a narrow circle of acquaintances, socially his inferiors, he neither found his own level, nor learned to take his place among his equals in birth and position. His relations ignored him, and there is no record of his visiting the houses of his Harrow and Cambridge friends. Self-conscious by temperament he never forgot that he was Lord Byron, but looked upon himself and others of the same or higher rank, as a curious and interested spectator. He drew a sharp distinction between authors of the better sort whose gentility preceded their authorship, and the children of the "Mighty Mother's, The would-be wits, and can't-be gentlemen," but if he had grown up in the security of gentlehood he might have perceived, but he would have shrunk from drawing the comparison. Satire is not made of rose-water, but the satirist should be careful how he handles his verdigris. But under whatever advantages or disadvantages of birth or parentage, or early surroundings, he began to write

poetry, it is wholly to his honour that he thought it worth while to write poetry at all. His boyish verses, trivial and egotistic as most of them are, were the natural outpourings of a simple-minded youth to whom "the numbers came." They are not precocious. They are not ambitious. They are perfectly sincere. He attempts but little, but he accomplishes what he attempts. And they are *poems*, not sketches or fragments or adumbrations of poems. They are rudimentary organisms, but they are self-contained and they are alive. Three, at least, of the hundred and three poems which stand at the beginning of this volume, have been and always will be read for their intrinsic worth, viz.: the lines entitled "When I rov'd a young Highlander"; "Lachin Y Gair"; and Boatswain's Epitaph, the "Inscription for the Monument of a Newfoundland Dog."

The first hint of authorship is contained in a letter to Miss Pigot, dated August 10, 1806. There was a misprint in the proof of some lines—"On leaving Newstead Abbey," and Byron not yet "soothed and tamed" by experience was highly indignant. The printers, S. & J. Ridge, of Newark, must have been already at work on the collection of *Fugitive Pieces*, known as the quarto which is dated, and was, presumably, to have been issued December 23, 1806. But long before that date a second issue had superseded the first. One poem, "To Mary," contained at least one stanza which was indecent as well as immoral, and, at Becher's suggestion, the "quarto," two or three copies being kept back, was thrown into the fire. Early in January 1807 a second collection, entitled *Poems on Various Occasions*, was ready for private distribution. Twelve additional pieces were included in this issue, of which a hundred copies were printed. The encouragement which Byron received from two or three noted critics induced him to re-cast the volume and publish it with additions and omissions. This was the name-giving *Hours of Idleness*, which appeared in June or July 1807. At first the book did fairly well. He tells Miss Pigot, of course in jest, that his works "are praised by reviewers, admired by duchesses, and sold by every bookseller in the Metropolis." But Nemesis only waited. In the January number of the *Edinburgh Review* of 1808 there was an article, not as Byron believed by Jeffrey, but by Brougham, which turned the book and its author into ridicule. It is a poor performance, neither just nor witty, and its sole title to fame is that it suggested the title, and, in part, the subject of his first original work—*English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers*, which appeared in March 1809 and may be said to have heralded his subsequent fame. In spite of the review Byron determined to publish a re-cast or second edition of *Hours of Idleness*, with a new title—*Poems Original and Translated* (March 1808). It was dedicated to his cousin and guardian, Lord Carlisle.

In April 1808 Lord Grey de Ruthyn's tenancy of Newstead Abbey determined, and early in September Byron took up his quarters in the least ruined portion of the "hall of his fathers."

It is a strange place, unlike other great homes, an ideal home for a master

who was unlike other men. Roughly speaking it is a square block of buildings, flanking a grassy quadrangle. Enclosing the quadrangle are two-storied cloisters, and in the centre there now stands a Gothic fountain, edged and ornamented with a double row of gargoyles. But the characteristic feature of Newstead is the west front of the Priory Church, which is in line with the west front of the mansion. "Half apart" the southern end of this front abuts on the windows of the Prior's parlour, and the upper room where Byron slept, facing and concealing the west end of the north cloister and library: but, with this exception, it is a stone screen—this and nothing more. Nave, aisles, and chancel are gone, and behind the screen there is nothing but a smooth sward of green turf. Only on the site of the high altar an urn-crowned block of masonry marks the site of "Boatswain's" tomb.

The rest of the monastery remains unchanged, used as, but hardly converted into, a "baronial mansion." In 1808 something was done to make good the ravages of time, and the ruin caused or suffered by his great uncle. A set of rooms (including a small library on the ground floor) in the south-eastern wing or annexe, which dates from the middle of the sixteenth century, and a bedroom and dressing-room above the Prior's parlour were furnished with a show of comfort and even luxury. Amongst the wreck or salvage of the "Wicked Lord's" belongings was a huge state bed, surmounted with a coronet, and to match or rival this, Byron ordered for his own use a smaller four-poster, upholstered in a Chinese-pattern chintz, and decorated with coronets at the four corners.

It was to this "monastic dome," this scene of desolate grandeur that in the late spring of 1809, not long after the anonymous publication of the first edition of *English Bards*, Byron invited a few choice spirits—Hobhouse, C. S. Matthews, and others of the same kidney. It was a "house-warming" with a vengeance. "Our party," writes Matthews, May 22, 1809, "consisted of Lord Byron and four others, and was, now and then, increased by the presence of a neighbouring parson . . . our average hour of rising was one. It was frequently past two before the breakfast party broke up. Then for the amusements of the morning there was reading, fencing, single stick, or shuttlecock in the great rooms; practising with pistols in the hall; walking, riding, cricket, sailing on the lake, playing with the bear, or teasing the wolf. Between seven and eight we dined; and our evening lasted from that time till one, two, or three in the morning. . . . I must not omit the custom of handing round, after dinner, on the removal of the cloth, a human skull filled with Burgundy. . . . A set of monkish dresses, with all the proper apparatus of crosses, beads, tonsures, etc., often gave variety to our appearance, and our pursuits." The picture, as Moore says, is "pregnant in character," and pleasant to recall, but the poetical version of the story, in the opening stanzas of *Childe Harold*, is ungenerous and unpleasing. If "Paphian girls" did sing and smile, there is nothing to show that the revellers and "wassailers" were "heartless parasites of festal cheer." But perhaps, as Hodgson wrote *à propos* of some other "wild

and whirling words" of self-accusation—"The poor dear soul meant nothing of all this."

On March 13, after some delay connected with proving the marriage of his grandfather, which had been celebrated in a private chapel, he took his seat in the House of Lords.

The early summer was devoted to the preparation of a new and enlarged edition of *English Bards*, now published under his own name, and when this was accomplished he felt himself free to complete his education by a "grand tour" of his own devising. He was, so he imagined, "sated" with the conventional or, indeed, the unconventional pleasures, which borrowed money could procure. Here, at home, was vanity of vanities; *there* in the East, in Persia, or India, or "across the central line" was the possibility of escaping from himself, and of learning a thing or two which would make a "full man" of him. Perhaps, too, he set out with the predestinating hope that a further inspiration was at hand, and that he would come home bringing his sheaves with him.

He sailed from Falmouth, July 2, 1809, and, if his song of the ship, "Huzza! Hodgson, we are going," rings true, with a mind made up to enjoy himself to the full. He started with a small retinue—Joe Murray, an old family retainer, Robert Rushton, the son of one of the Newstead tenants, his valet William Fletcher, and a German servant. Murray and Rushton, the stout yeoman and "trusty page" of *Childe Harold*, were sent back from Gibraltar. Fletcher stayed with him till November 1810, but when or where he shed the German is uncertain.

Hobhouse, who meditated a "Book of Travels," was his sole companion. Byron's first sojourn in foreign parts lasted exactly two years, and falls into two divisions of almost equal length. The first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, which may be described as a "song of travel, a rhythmical diorama," record directly or incidentally the principal events of his first year of absence. The first canto deals with the arrival at Lisbon, the visit to Cintra, the ride through Portugal and Spain to Seville, and, again, across the Sierra Morena, to Cadiz (July 6-July 25). There was not time for many adventures. At Seville he was shown the famous, if somewhat legendary, Maid of Saragossa, and at Cadiz he was present at a bull-fight, a scene which his genius seized and fixed, making it "for ever warm," a spectacle for all time. On the 15th of August he sailed for Gibraltar, where the novelist Galt, who afterwards wrote his life, met and took note of him—"His physiognomy was prepossessing and intelligent, but ever and anon his brows lowered and gathered"—not, as Galt thought, because some disagreeable reminiscences crossed his mind, but because he could not or would not control the displeasure of the moment. Galt sailed with him from Gibraltar to Malta, but could neither coax nor drag him into intimacy. "Sitting amid the shrouds and rattlings, in the tranquillity of the moonlight, churning an inarticulate melody he seemed almost apparitional, suggesting dim reminiscences of him who shot

the Albatross." Most probably Galt bored him, and "the steepy shore" with Europe and Africa on either hand, moved him to unutterable thought.

Malta, and a "new Calypso" Mrs. Spencer Smith, the wife of John Spencer Smith, some time Minister Plenipotentiary at the Porte, held him captive for a month. The "Sweet Florence" of "Lines composed during a thunderstorm," the "Fair Florence" of the second canto of *Childe Harold*, was a fair-haired, fair-skinned enchantress, with a romantic history, who caught his fancy and let it go. At most she served to remind him that he had not forgotten Mary Chaworth. At length, September 19 (he says the 21st), he sailed for Greece, and as the vessel threaded the channel between Ithaca and Cephalonia, he passed the Hill of Ætos, where Penelope watched for Ulysses, and Leucadia's Cape, the scene of Sappho's leap. He arrived at Prevesa, September 28. Then followed the tour in Albania, at that time and to the present day almost a *terra incognita*. The travellers left Prevesa on October 1, and arrived at Janina, October 5. They left Janina October 11, and reached Zitza at nightfall. Byron, who had been caught in a thunderstorm, did not reach the monastery where he was to sleep till three in the morning. They left Zitza October 13, and arrived at Tepeleni October 19. Janina, or as Byron spelled it Yanina, was the capital, but as Ali Pasha, nominally a vassal of the Sultan's, but, in fact, the absolute governor of the west of Greece, was in residence at Tepeleni, "seventy-five miles to the north," it behoved an Englishman of rank to visit His Highness in his country palace.

He describes, in prose and verse, his entry into the town, and his first impressions of a Turkish palace. "I shall never forget," he writes, "the singular scene on entering Tepeleni at five in the afternoon, as the sun was going down." In 1809 the Ramazan, the Turkish Lent, fell in the month of October, and the minarets were decorated with their circle of lamps—each minaret presenting a point of light—"like meteors in the sky." The huge gallery in front of the palace resounded with the busy hum of warrior-men—of Albanians in their white kilts and gold-laced jackets, "Tartars with their high caps," and Turks in their vast pelisses and turbans. The sound of the kettle-drums mingled with the cries of the boys calling the hour from the Mosques. It brought to his mind Scott's description of Branksome Castle in his "Lay." Byron, like Scott, could make things which were once seen eternal. Ali was pleased with his guest, and paid him what Byron felt to be a very proper respect. He stood up to greet him, placed him at his right hand, admired and praised his "small ears, curling hair, and little white hands," and was impressed by his pedigree. Byron repaid these compliments by giving the Mahometan Buonaparte a niche in his own Temple of Fame.

On the return journey he revisited Janina, October 26, and five days later began to write the First Canto of *Childe Harold*. Early in November the travellers had regained Prevesa.

The months which followed were full of adventure. A first attempt to cross the Gulf to Patras was frustrated by adverse winds, and the vessel, a galliot of

Ali's was driven to Port Phanari. To the amazement of the crew, the Suliotes brought them ashore, and gave them a "Highland welcome." A few days later, when they were coasting the Gulf of Arta, the travellers with their Albanian bodyguard bivouacked on the shore, "in lone Utraiké's circling cove." Fires were lit, and the Albanians danced and sang and shouted to the tune of "Robbers all at Parga." Long afterwards on the Lake of Geneva, Byron entertained Shelley and Shelley's Mary, and Claire, with an Albanian war-song, but they did not hear him gladly.

All but a fortnight was spent at Patras, a week at Vostitsa, on the Gulf of Lepanto, where he shot a bright-eyed eaglet and sorrowed for the deed. At last (December 18), it was time to strike inland and northwards for Athens. Delphi was taken by the way, and Parnassus looked on with the bodily eye. "Happier in this than mightier bards have been," he was, even then, a poet, and sang nobly enough of what he saw. No wonder Apollo accepted his homage, and greeted him with a flight of twelve eagles, which Hobhouse declared (but, of course, it was Byron's joke at his own expense) were vultures. Athens was reached on Christmas Day, and on the 30th of December, 1809, Byron finished the First Canto of *Childe Harold*.

Byron and Hobhouse "resided for ten weeks in Athens, making short excursions to Cape Colonna and the plains of Marathon; but, save in a few brief stanzas "he would not describe," thinking that it was not worth while to repeat a twice-told tale. But a thousand forerunners in search of the picturesque would not make it not worth while to say or sing "The Mountains look on Marathon, And Marathon looks on the sea." For what all men have *seen* only one found it in his heart to tell.

It was during this ten weeks' residence, when he lodged next door to a Greek lady named Theodora Macri, that he paid court to her daughter Theresa (or Thyrsa), the oft sung "Maid of Athens." There were indeed three "Maids of Athens," Theresa and Mariana, who were dark, and Katinka who was fair. Byron, who was all things to all women, in order to make love *in Greek*, gave himself a wound across his breast with a dagger. But Theresa, or whichever "Maid" it was, received the attention as her due, and failed to be impressed.

On March 5, 1810 the travellers left Athens for Smyrna. There they made a three days' (March 13-16) excursion to explore the ruins of the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus. These being still undiscovered, they did not see. The columns "which strewed the wilderness" were those of the great gymnasium near the gate of the city; but no doubt, they heard the "jackals howl." Twelve days later (March 28) before he quitted Smyrna he finished the first draft of the Second Canto of *Childe Harold*. On April 11 they sailed in the *Salsette* frigate for Constantinople, but owing to the non-arrival of the firman, permitting the vessel to enter the Dardanelles, they anchored off Cape Janissary, and spent a fortnight in exploring the Troad. The barrows supposed to contain the carcasses of Achilles, Antilochus, Ajax, etc., excited his interest, and though he says nothing about them in *Childe Harold*, after-

wards in *The Bride of Abydos* (Canto II., stanza iii.), and in *Don Juan* (Canto IV., stanzas lxxv., lxxviii.) he recalls the scene.

They left Cape Janissary behind, and anchored off Chanak Kalesi, where Byron and Lieutenant Ekenhead made a second and successful attempt to swim across the Hellespont from Sestos to Abydos. He thought a great deal of the feat, partly because it was a feat, but also for the association. It was a classical allusion, not in word but in deed. He "trumpets" his swim in letters to Henry Drury twice, to Hodgson once, and to his mother twice, in the lines written after swimming from Sestos to Abydos (*vide post*, p. 245) and in the witty lines (*Don Juan*, Canto II., stanza cv.):

"He could, perhaps, have passed the Hellespont ;
As once (a feat on which ourselves we prided)
Leander, Mr Ekenhead, and I did."

There was compensation and there was triumph in the thought that the "lame boy" was a champion swimmer.

Constantinople was reached May 13, and there the friends stayed for two months. Of place or visit he says but little in his letters, but leaves a record in *Childe Harold* (Canto II., stanzas lxxvii., lxxxii., and again, in *Don Juan* (Canto V., stanza iii.). Hobhouse made good use of his time, noting the manners and customs of "Stamboul," the "City" *par excellence*, and Byron gazed with delight on the "ocean stream," and "Sophia's cupola with golden gleam," and flouted the time merrily in the Valley of Sweet Waters, or in lightsome tumult in the grove of Fanar Bagdcheh.

There ended Childe Harold's pilgrimage. The poetical record of his second year in the East is to be sought elsewhere. On July 14 Byron and Hobhouse sailed from Constantinople in the *Salsette* frigate; Hobhouse to return to England, and Byron to be dropped at the Island of Zea on his way to Athens. He was no sooner alone, and he was glad to be alone, than he set out for a tour in the *Morea*. Of this solitary excursion we know nothing save that he reached Patras at the end of July, "with a tolerable suite, a Tartar, two Albanians, an interpreter, besides Fletcher," that he was back again at Patras, "sick of a fever" at the beginning of October, and that by November 14 he had taken up his quarters in the Franciscan Convent at Athens. He was still, or again, at Athens in March when he wrote the *Hints from Horace* and the *Curse of Minerva*, but there is no detailed record of his movements from his re-arrival at Athens in November 1810 till June 25, 1811, when he dates from the *Volage* frigate twenty-three days out from Malta, on the homeward voyage, and twice or thrice only does he revert to this period. There is a mysterious entry in the Journal for March 10, 1814:—"Hobhouse told me an odd report that I am the actual Conrad, the veritable Corsair, and that part of my travels was supposed to have passed in privacy (*sic* ? piracy) . . . H. don't know what I was about the year after he left the Levant; nor does any-

one—nor—nor—nor—however, it is a lie.” Again in a letter to Moore of date February 2, 1815, he recalls “the interesting white squalls and short seas of Archipelago memory”—possibly a reminiscence of the voyage on the *Salsette* in April 1810, but which seems to point to a more intimate acquaintance with the “Isles of Greece.”

Wherever he went or whatever he did two facts are incontestable, that whilst he was in Athens he was busily employed in learning Romaic (see the Appendix to *Childe Harold*, entitled “Remarks on the Romaic or Modern Greek,” *Poetical Works*, 1891, pp. 792-797), and that it was not during his first pilgrimage, or whilst he was stationed at Athens, that he acquired that personal and intimate knowledge of the East, which is writ large in his Turkish Tales. There is a “something,” as he might have said, in *The Giaour*, *The Bride*, and *The Corsair*, which was not derived from books, or noted by the tourist in search of the picturesque. He had plunged into deep waters and seen strange sights below the surface of the wave.

There is nothing to show when he left Athens, but lines entitled “Farewell to Malta,” which are dated May 26, 1811, imply that he had spent some weeks in the island, where he had again been laid up with a touch of fever. He left Malta early in June, but owing to a tedious passage he did not land in Portsmouth till the 19th or 20th of July. His first letter to his mother announcing his return is dated Reddish’s Hotel, St James’s Street, July 23, 1811. He had already informed his elderly *protégé*, R. C. Dallas, who had acted as commissary with regard to the successive editions of *English Bards*, that he had a poem by him, an imitation of “Horace’s Art of Poetry,” which was ready for Cawthorne. Dallas hastened to pay his respects, and on the 25th (not as he says, the 15th) of July received for his inspection and criticism a MS. of what was afterwards named *Hints from Horace*. He did not think much of it, and the next day at breakfast “ventured to express his surprise” that Byron had written nothing else. This led to the opening of a “small trunk” and the production of the MS. of *Childe Harold*. Dallas “was delighted” with the poem, with the office of intermediary between author and publisher, and last, but not least, with the gift of the copyright. But there was a difficulty. Cawthorne did not stand high enough in the trade; Longman, who had refused *English Bards*, was ruled out, and William Miller of Albemarle Street declined the work on the score of its scepticism and the attack on Lord Elgin for his spoliation and purchase of the “Elgin” marbles. Finally it was accepted by John Murray, of Fleet Street, who, thereby and thenceforward, became Byron’s publisher, his frequent correspondent, and his friend.

Another connection was made at the same time. Despite Byron’s stipulations, Murray showed the MS. to his literary adviser, William Gifford, who was editor of the *Quarterly Review* from its commencement in 1809 till his resignation in 1824. Gifford perceived that Byron was a poet, and though he did not always praise his poetry, did all he could to make and establish his

fame. He was a pioneer in the world of letters, and, so Byron thought, a great critic against whom there was no appeal. He called him "Magnus Apollo."

But before the fate of *Childe Harold* was decided Mrs. Byron died from a stroke of apoplexy. "I heard," he writes (August 2) "one day of her illness, the *next* of her death." It may be that he reproached himself for his somewhat reluctant return to Newstead and his mother, after a two years' absence. Certainly the last letter which he ever wrote to her is cold and unfilial. But as he journeyed homeward he felt that his loss was irreparable, that "High Heaven" gives but one mother, and on the night after his arrival he was discovered sitting in the dark beside her dead body. She was a woman of many sorrows, and she did not bear them well. Vain and passionate, proud of her birth, but without the reserve and self-control of women of her station, she mismanaged her son from his childhood, now spoiling him, now storming at him, and always jarring his sensibilities. But she was scrupulously honest, hating and fearing debt, and a true mother in her readiness to sacrifice her own pleasures and comforts for those of her son. As her letters show she was neither as foolish nor as ill-conducted as she has been described. The charge brought against her by Hewson Clark (the Sizar of Emmanuel College, see p. 110) that her days and nights were spent in a delirium of drunkenness was no doubt an atrocious calumny. And yet it is difficult to believe that her paroxysms of fury were not in part the effect of self-indulgence. But to a young man of Byron's temperament any mother is better than none, and he felt—and had reason to feel—her loss.

Whilst his mother lay dead in the house, Byron learned that his friend Matthews had been drowned in the Cam. Edleston and Wingfield had died in May, and now when he was mourning for his mother, the death of yet another friend which was grievous to himself, still more grievous to his friend Hobhouse,¹ left him almost alone in the world. He had come home "without a hope," but with a spirit yet unshaken, but now his cup was full, and he had another tale to tell. There are some lines in *Werner*, which were, perhaps, a reminiscence of this earlier desolation:—

" An hour ago methought
My state beyond despair; and now, 'tis such,
The past seems paradise."

At this time, and in this mood, he drew up the strange will, directing "the body of Lord B. to be buried in the vault of the garden of Newstead, without any ceremony or burial-service whatever. . . His dog not to be removed from the said vault." Two months later, when, as he writes, "he had been again shocked with a *death*, and had lost one very dear to me in happier times" (*i.e.*, Edleston, of whose death he had recently heard a more detailed account), he

¹ See Letters to Dallas, August 21, 1811, and to Hodgson, August 22, 1811. *Letters*, 1898, i. 337, 338.

wrote the first of the five poems to Thyrza, which were published in the first and second editions of *Childe Harold*. It was the "Thyrza Poems" (for the concluding stanzas of the Second Canto of *Childe Harold* were not published till 1814) which first excited a sentimental interest in Byron's personality, and made him a hero of romance. The effect, in the first instance, was to make melancholy poetry fashionable, and then, *autres temps autres mœurs*, to bring suspicion on the poet, and to make sentiment ridiculous.

Was Byron really miserable, or was it a pose? and did he bewail his fate, with his tongue in his cheek? There can be no doubt that, at this time, for some valid reason or reasons, he was profoundly and genuinely unhappy. The mood did not last for ever, though it lasted long for so young a man, but it recurred. He *was* melancholy, he *was* a misanthropist, and not without reason. At the same time he was fully aware that his self-revelations were interesting, that his mysterious lamentations would excite both curiosity and sympathy, and, being persuaded that "All the world's a stage," he was minded to tread the boards as the actor of a great part. He did not feign a passion, but he did not forget that he was an artist.

In the autumn of this year, while *Childe Harold* was in the Press he formed one of the few great friendships of his life, and in a curious manner.

In the first edition of *English Bards, etc.* (see ll. 466, 467 and *note*) Byron had attacked Moore, repeating an old joke at his expense that he and Jeffrey had fought a duel with *leadless* pistols. Moore sent Byron a challenge which Hodgson intercepted, and, when opportunity offered, renewed his remonstrance in a more reasonable spirit. Letters were exchanged, and after the requisite *pourparlers*, a treaty was struck. It was arranged that Byron should meet Moore, that the scene should be the dining-room of Rogers, and that there should be one more guest, Thomas Campbell—a *partie carrée* of a singular composition and completeness. The relations between Byron and Moore were to the credit of both. Moore was a loyal friend, through good report and through evil report. Byron turned his best side to Moore, regarding him as in some respects his superior, and keeping a watch over the suspicious and capricious temper which he exhibited to most of his intimates. He entrusted Moore with a Memoir of his Life, which at Byron's death passed into Murray's absolute possession, and, at Murray's instance, and by the desire of Byron's friends and family was burned in the drawing-room of Albemarle Street, May 17, 1824. Byron's confidence in Moore was justified. The *Life*, or to give the exact title, *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron, with Notices of his Life*, might have been written by a recording angel, who had the pen of a ready writer. There are the faults and the excuses, the vices and the balance of virtue. It is generous and it is just, and it remains the *Life* of Lord Byron.

Byron had taken up his quarters at No. 8 St James's Street, at the end of October 1811, and there he remained for nine or ten months till the autumn of the next year. On February 27, 1812 he delivered his maiden speech in the House of Lords on the second reading of the Frame-breakers' Bill. The

“frames” afforded new facilities in the manufacture of gaiters and stockings, and the “breakers” were opposed to these wider frames in the interests of the “hands” who would be thrown out of work. The Bill made frame-breaking a capital offence. Byron’s speech denouncing the Bill was highly commended. Sir F. Burdett said: “It is the best speech by a *lord* since the ‘Lord’ knows when:” “Lord H(olland) tells me I shall beat them all if I persevere;” but he did not persevere. His “parliamentary speeches” are but three in number. It was his country’s loss as well as his own, for though he was neither democrat nor radical, and sympathized but moderately with the oppressed, he had a righteous hatred of the oppressors. A great work lay before him, but after putting his hand to the plough he looked back.

Childe Harold (quarto) was published Tuesday, March 10, 1812, “The effect,” says Moore, “was . . . electric, his fame . . . seemed to spring, like the palace of a fairy king in a night.” As he said himself, “I awoke one morning and found myself famous.” In three days an edition of 500 copies was sold. A fifth edition was issued on December 5, 1812. His birth and rank, his connections, his reputation as a satirist might have opened many doors to him, but it was *Childe Harold* which laid Society at his feet. He was but twenty-four years of age. He was practically alone in the world, and, with none to give way to, or to give way for, he became a law to himself. Hitherto, though he had done as others did, he had kept scandal at bay, but now his indiscretions and intrigues became public property. His first affair of any moment was with Lady Caroline Lamb, a daughter of the third Earl of Bessborough, and the wife of William Lamb, afterwards Lord Melbourne. She was a delicate creature with “golden hair and large hazel eyes.” She had been nicknamed in her girlhood “Ariel,” “Squirrel,” “Sprite,” and so forth, and at twenty-seven had by no means touched earth, or emerged into the light of common day. She flung herself at Byron’s head, and he at first made love to her, then tired of her, and finally shook her off. Once she disguised herself as a page in order to force her way into his rooms in St James’s Street. At another time she pricked herself with a knife because he told her to waltz with any one she chose. She got him, if not a bad name, a dangerous reputation among the “best people” with whom he might have stood well. In 1816, after Byron had left England for ever, she put herself and him into a novel entitled *Glenarvon*. Its chief merit is that it induced Byron to say or sing:

“I read *Glenarvon*, too, by Caro Lamb;
God damn!”

But in 1812 from March to August she reigned supreme.

When the season was over Byron went to Cheltenham. His first holiday-task was to write, at Lord Holland’s request, *An Address to be spoken at the Re-opening of Drury Lane Theatre*. It was a long time in hand, and under-

went many revisions. His next was to sit down "by the waters of Cheltenham," and write *The Waltz*, which was published anonymously in the following spring. At the end of October he went to Eywood in Herefordshire as the guest of Lord Oxford, and there, or at Kinsham Court which Lord Oxford lent or let him, he remained till the spring of 1813. Lady Oxford who had been married some nineteen years, and was forty, had driven Lady Caroline Lamb off the field. She had married Lord Oxford in her youth, but she was neither happy with him nor faithful to him. "She resembled," so he told Lady Blessington, "a landscape of Claude Lorraine, with a setting sun," and for a while, "her autumnal charms" were an irresistible attraction. At one time he intended, or made as though he intended, to go abroad with her. The "Agnus" (*i.e.*, Lady Caroline) was furious with him and burnt him in effigy at Bocket Hall. His passion for Lady Oxford found no expression in verse unless the lines, "On being asked what was the Origin of Love" were addressed to her, but the stanzas "To Ianthe," which were prefixed to the seventh edition of *Childe Harold* (1814) were inspired by her thirteen-year-old daughter, Lady Charlotte Harley.

When Byron returned to London, at the end of February 1813, he took lodgings at No. 4 Bennet Street, St James's, which he retained till April 1814, when, on Lord Althorp's marriage, he succeeded to his apartments in the Albany.

Byron's sole publication in 1812 was *Childe Harold—unum sed leonem!* In 1813 he published *The Waltz*, wrote and published *The Giaour* and *The Bride of Abydos*, and wrote *The Corsair*. And yet, in very truth, he wrote for love and not for money. He was deeply in debt, hampered by the usurious interest which he was bent on paying for minority loans, and though he had offered Newstead Abbey for sale and had met with a purchaser, the transaction fell through, and it was long before a forfeit of £25,000 for non-completion of purchase was paid in full. Still he would accept nothing for the copyright of his poems, handing over the proceeds, which were considerable, to Dallas, who swallowed these substantial crumbs as they fell to his share. But, his embarrassments notwithstanding, it was a gay, and on the whole, a happy year for Byron. *The Giaour* was even more popular than *Childe Harold*. Edition trod on the heels of edition—and there were always "considerable," or at least, "some" additions. One of these additions consisted of those famous lines, "He who hath bent him o'er the dead." No wonder these "pamphlets" sold.

It was in great part owing to *The Giaour* that Byron began to be regarded as a "Man of Mystery." Some "gentlewoman" had circulated a story to the effect that the *Giaour* was Byron in disguise, and that *he* had been the guilty cause of "Leila slain!" He was sufficiently moved to write to his friend, Lord Sligo, whose yacht, a twelve-gun brig, had been anchored off Athens when the actual event, to which he refers in the *Advertisement* (see p. 262), took place, and requested him to put on paper "what he had heard at Athens about the affair

of the girl who was so near being put to an end while you were there." But as more than one entry in his diary and his letters show, he was unwilling to part with the mystery, "The circumstances which are the groundwork make it—heigh-ho!" Byron was not a hypocrite, but he was an actor, and like other actors he was ill at ease when he was off the stage.

And so, passing gay hours with Moore and Sheridan, sparring and dining with his "corporeal pastor and master," "Gentleman Jackson" of pugilistic renown—"laughing at all things, great and small things,"—at Rogers, at Lord Thurlow's poems, at Madame de Staël, the *Epicene*, he rode on the top of the wave. When he was not in London he was to be found at Aston Hall near Rotherham in Yorkshire, making love to Lady Frances Wedderburn Webster, who was now the favourite of the hour. The lines, "Remember him, when Passion's Power," and the sonnets, "To Geneva" were written under her spell. *The Bride of Abydos*, which was "thrown off" in four nights at the beginning of November, was written to divert his mind from his passion for this lady, and it was in her honour that Medora, the Corsair's bride, was first named "Francesca." *Le roi s'amuse*—and there's an end!

In the summer of 1813 a more potent influence came into his life. In March he had written to his half-sister Augusta, "You have perhaps heard that I have been fooling away my time with different 'regnantes'; but what better can be expected from me. I have but one *relative* and her I never see." In the following June Mrs. Leigh came up from Newmarket to London, and after an interval of many years the brother and sister met, and thenceforward there was, at least, one person (she was five years his senior) whom he grieved to grieve and to whom he was anxious to excuse himself. As he said three years later, "There's more in one soft word of thine, Than in the world's defied rebuke." Whatever is true or false concerning Lord Byron it is certain that he cared for his sister more entirely and unreservedly than for any other human being who belonged to him or crossed his path.¹

Newstead was still unsold, and in January 1814 Byron determined to look once more on his own, and asked his sister to accompany him on a short visit. He would do his best to make the house as comfortable as possible "for both our sakes." As it turned out he was "snow-bound and thaw-swamped in the valley of the shadow of Newstead Abbey" for nearly a month, and did not return to London till February 9. During his absence, on February 1, *The Corsair* was published. "Murray sold 10,000 copies on the day of publication—a thing quite unprecedented." A few days later a second edition was issued, and among the poems appended were the "Lines to a Lady weeping," which had been published anonymously in the *Morning Chronicle*, March 7, 1812. The papers were in an uproar, exultant or indignant at the exposure of Royalty. The Prince Regent chose to be affected more in sorrow than in anger. It

¹ For a full account of the Beecher Stowe controversy see *Lord Byron, etc.*, by Karl Elze, 1872, pp. 163-201.

was, indeed, a "ripping up of old sores" for which Byron himself, though he would not withdraw the lines, felt some little compunction.

In spite of his pledge (see *Dedication of The Corsair*, "To Thomas Moore Esq.") to stay his muse and keep silence for some years, the abdication of Napoleon in April 1814, extorted *An Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte*, which was published anonymously; and, again, in May, he produced *Lara: A Tale* which was published in August, together with *Jacqueline: A Tale*, by Samuel Rogers. *Lara* is perhaps the most "Byronic" of all the Tales, and the least successful as a work of art. Its chief interest to the modern reader is that it bears traces of his recent sojourn at "his solitary hall."

It was in this year that Byron met his fate, when he was at Newstead for almost his last visit. On or about September 16, 1814 an offer of marriage, which he had made by letter, was accepted. The lady of his choice, or of his determination, was a Miss Anna Isabella (Annabella for short) Milbanke (*b.* May 17, 1792; *d.* May 16, 1860), the only daughter of Sir Ralph Milbanke, Bart., and the Honourable Judith Noel, daughter of Lord Wentworth. She was an heiress, and in succession to the Barony of Wentworth. She was a pretty girl, "of a perfect figure," and "had the fairest skin imaginable." She was clever, had some knowledge of mathematics, and could express herself in smooth, if not original, verse. She was a very good young woman, anxious and determined to do her duty, but quite incapable of distrusting her own powers of judgment. She believed herself to be a woman of the world, armed at all points, and at liberty to condemn or condone, as reason and virtue might dictate. In reality she was both innocent and ignorant, a little vain, and not a little ambitious. She has been accused of coldness, of a prudish aversion from all display of pain or feeling, but her letters leave a different impression. She was evidently in love with Byron, and as full of her engagement as any "Maud or Marion" of them all. But there was one person whom she loved better still, and that was herself. If she had married a saint, he would have encountered *that* rival in her affections: as it was, to quote his own *Farewell*, "All words are idle." Byron's letters to Miss Milbanke are not very lover-like, but they are tender and considerate. He, too, was proud of his conquest. He had succeeded where others, himself included, had failed. In a letter to Moore he quotes Moore's song:—

" Here's to her who long
Had waked the poet's sigh!
The girl who gave to song,
What gold could never buy."

At that moment he must have told himself that he had drawn a prize.

In October he paid a visit to her father's villa on the Cliff at Seaham in Durham, and, on his return to London, applied to the Archbishop of Canterbury for a special licence. The marriage took place at Seaham on January 2,

1815. There is a passage in *The Dream* (July 1816) in which Byron describes his state of mind during the marriage ceremony:—

“Even at the altar
 a moment o'er his face,
 The tablet of unutterable thoughts
 Was traced,—and then it faded as it came,
 And he stood calm and quiet, and he spoke
 The fitting vows, but heard not his own words,
 And all things reeled around him.”

Moore gives the passage and quotes from memory a prose account of the wedding as recorded in the “Memoranda,” which “agrees closely” with the poetry. But it is the same story, and however true to fact was not reported or put into shape till after the presage had been fulfilled. The honeymoon was spent at Halnaby, near Richmond, in Yorkshire, and, in due season, the young people came back to Seaham, where they stayed for seven or eight weeks. To judge from his letters to Moore Byron was happy, and behaved with the utmost propriety. He made some additions to his *Hebrew Melodies*, which he had begun at Seaham in the preceding autumn, partly to please the composer, Isaac Nathan, who was to set them to music, and partly no doubt to gratify the tastes and sentiments of his bride. He felt the strain of Sir Ralph's political harangues, and of the mode of life—and once he relieved his feelings with a smothered sigh—“I must go to tea. Damn tea!”—but he managed to curb his impatience, and came off with flying colours. At the end of March, after a visit to Mrs. Leigh at Newmarket (March 10-28), he brought his wife to London, to No. 13 Piccadilly Terrace, a house which belonged to the Duchess of Devonshire, and which Hobhouse had taken for him at a rental of £700 a year. The death of Lady Byron's uncle, Lord Wentworth, and her condition, prevented them from going into Society together, and Byron was thrown on his own resources. Another tale, *The Siege of Corinth*, which had been begun in January was finished some time during the first half of the year, and yet another, *Parisina*, which had been begun before his marriage, was transcribed by Lady Byron. But his principal occupation and amusement was centred in Drury Lane Theatre. He was on the sub-committee of management, and took an active part in procuring plays, in deciding which play should be acted, in casting the parts, interviewing authors and authoresses. Whatever his hand found to do he did it with his might, and partly to banish care, but also because he liked and understood the business, he worked at and for the theatre, with the zeal and ability of a paid manager.

At the beginning of the London season Sir Walter Scott came up to town and (April 7) was introduced to Byron by John Murray. “We met,” writes Scott, “for an hour or two almost daily in Mr. Murray's drawing-room, and found a great deal to say to each other.” There were other meetings in

Society at Sir George Beaumont's and elsewhere, which led to a considerable intimacy, and to mutual admiration and regard. Scott's review of the Third Canto of *Childe Harold* (*Quarterly Review*, No. xxxi., October 1816) and of his poetry generally, was a tribute of noble praise from one who had the right to speak. And, as Byron felt when Murray told him who wrote it, it was "very kind." Byron's allusion to Scott as the "Ariosto of the North" (*Childe Harold*, Canto IV., stanza xl.) and his dedication of *Cain* were marks of respect and of gratitude. He had already, in one of his diaries, hailed him Monarch of Parnassus, and placed him on the apex of his triangular *Gradus ad Parnassum*.¹

It must have been at the end of May that at Murray's or at Byron's house in Piccadilly, Scott recited Coleridge's *Christabel*, which [Sir] John Stoddart had recited to him thirteen years before at Lasswade. Coleridge had already written to Byron in March 1815, asking him to make a bargain for him with a publisher for two volumes of poetry which he proposed to bring out; and it is possible that Byron discussed Coleridge's letter, and his place as a poet, with Scott. Other letters followed, one of which contained the MSS. of *Christabel* and of other poems. It was on the strength of Byron's recommendation that Murray published *Christabel* in May 1816, and undertook to publish *Zapolya*, which the committee of Drury Lane had rejected for representation on the stage. Nor did his goodwill and generosity to a man whose genius he admired and whose poverty he commiserated, end with words. He had proposed to bestow the price of the copyright of *The Siege of Corinth* on Godwin, and Coleridge, and others, and when this piece of quixotry had been over-ruled he advanced, or rather gave, Coleridge £100, when his own fortunes were at their lowest ebb. Afterwards, trusting to a report that his generosity had been abused, and that Coleridge had joined with Southey in spreading an outrageous scandal about his life in Switzerland, he turned against him and attacked him in *Don Juan*. Who carried the report, or what report there was to carry, are points of interest which have never been ascertained.

There was a proposal that Moore should visit the Byrons at Seaham in August, but, unless there is a gap in the correspondence, Lady Byron did not go North, or leave London during the autumn. On the 10th of December she gave birth to a daughter, christened Augusta Ada; and, on January 15, 1816 she left London for Kirkby Mallory in Leicestershire, a property which her mother had inherited from Lord Wentworth. On that day, and again on January 16, she wrote to her husband in an affectionate and even playful tone, but two days later she informed Mrs. Leigh that she had placed herself "for the present under her parent's protection," and on February 2, her father wrote to his son-in-law to propose "an amicable separation." According to Lady Byron (February 19, 1830) her husband at first refused, but when he was informed that unless he gave way, "recourse must be had to legal measures," agreed to sign a deed of separation. Byron (in a statement drawn up at Venice in 1817, but first published in *The Academy*, October 9, 1869) traversed

¹ See *Letters*, 1898, ii. 344.

this statement, and affirmed that Mr. Hobhouse proposed on his behalf that he should "go into court," and that the previous correspondence should be published, but that the "other party declined"—a disclaimer which Hobhouse more or less re-affirmed (see *Edinburgh Review*, April 1871). And here we come to the parting of the ways. One path leads to surmise, conjecture, and the hazarding of guesses; the other to a tangle of irreconcilable testimonies. It would, perhaps, be unprofitable to discuss the question at length in an exhaustive biography, and in a brief memoir it is certainly impossible. That there was a cause none can doubt—an unknown cause why Lady Byron demanded, and Byron acceded to, a separation; but, as it is unknown, who would not say with Sir Walter Scott—"Premat Nox alta"—or, in other words, "Let the dead bury their dead!"

To the failure of his marriage, and his bitter resentment at his wife's inexorable *fiat* of separation and exile, his poems bear abundant testimony. There are no sonnets, or stanzas, or lines to Miss Milbanke; no outpouring of love and affection to his wife in the early days of their marriage. His first note is "the wild word Farewell." The so-called Poems of the Separation—*Farewell* and *A Sketch* were written in March before he left England. The concluding stanzas of the Third Canto of *Childe Harold* (cxvi.-cxviii.) in which he apostrophizes his daughter, were written at the end of May; *The Dream*, with its allusion to his marriage, belongs to July, and the *Incantation* (afterwards included in *Manfred*), and "Lines on Hearing that Lady Byron was ill" to September 1816. The Fourth Canto of *Childe Harold*, which belongs to the summer and late autumn of 1817, begins and ends (stanzas xxi., xxii., and cxxxii.-cxxxvii.) with an outcry against unmerited suffering, and an appeal to Nemesis—"Thy curse shall be forgiveness." Again, in the First Canto of *Don Juan* (November 1818) Lady Byron, therein named Donna Inez ("but that picture is too like") is held up to contempt and reprobation as a *bas bleu*, a pharisee, and a hypocrite. Lastly, there are three epigrams—the "Endorsement to the Deed of Separation," etc., 1817; "On my Wedding Day" (January 2, 1820); "To Penelope" (November 5, 1820); and a fragment entitled "The Charity Ball" (December 10, 1820), which were written to unpack and relieve his own feelings, and, if they should meet her eye, to prick and sting his wife.

After many delays the Articles of Separation were signed on or about April 18, 1816, and on Sunday, April 25, Byron sailed from Dover for Ostend. He took with him as servants, Berger, a Swiss, his valet, Fletcher, and Robert Rushton, and, as travelling physician, John William Polidori, the son of a former secretary of the Italian poet, Alfieri. Whilst he was waiting for a favourable wind, he wrote some of the "Lines to Churchill's Grave," and a farewell letter to his sister Augusta, asking her to tell him "How my little *Da* is!"

The separation of Lord and Lady Byron must, in any case, have been more than a nine days' wonder, but the magnitude and duration of the scandal were the result of the possibly accidental publication of the two sets of verses, *Farewell* and *A Sketch*. The *Champion* was the first to publish both poems

on Sunday, April 14. The other London papers, protesting that they were actuated by the highest motives, one by one followed suit. The Tory papers were profoundly shocked, and hinted that there was more behind. The Liberal papers, the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Examiner*, and others apologised and extenuated, and prefaced the poems with some notes of general commendation of the writer. But Byron's own world, with one or two notable exceptions, was against him, and looked the other way, whilst the general public, "your British blackguard," as he once put it, was stirred to the depths with virtuous indignation. The "whining stanzas" of *Fare Thee Well* were a proof that he could not take his punishment like a man; the "low malignity" of *A Sketch*, which was designed to blacken the character of Mrs. Clermont, a dependent of the Milbanke family, "degraded literature, and abused the privileges of rank, by converting them into weapons of vengeance against an inferior and a female."

There is extant a coloured print of Byron at sea in a boat *en route* for the Continent. Lady Byron, a modern Ariadne, wrings her hands on the shore, while Theseus, surrounded by "Paphian girls," is filling the "goblet again." He went away in disgrace. And yet the work that he had accomplished, which had made him famous in England, was as nothing to the work which the future held in store, which was to make him a leader of European thought, a maker of European history, and, as France and Germany, and Italy and Russia would have it, the greatest English poet since Shakespeare. It may be that the shock and discomfiture of failure and disgrace braced his nerves, and roused him to fresh energies. It may be that in his heart he was glad to be free. It is certain that when he came to himself the evil spirit of hypochondria was gone out of him, and that henceforth no one would suspect, or have reason to suspect, his sanity. "A considerable change has taken place in his habits," writes Hobhouse to Mrs. Leigh (September 9, 1816), "no brandy, no very late hours—neither passion nor perverseness, even the screams have died away; he seems as happy as he ought to be." *Per fas aut nefas*, he had risen to higher things.

When the scene re-opens, Childe Harold has resumed his pilgrimage, and is drawing fresh inspiration from the excitement of travel and the discovery that "all was not lost." There is no detailed account of his journey through the Low Countries, and by the Rhine to Switzerland, but from brief allusions in his letters, and from the text of the Third Canto of *Childe Harold* and the notes, we know that he passed through Ghent, Antwerp, and Malines, on his way from Ostend to Brussels. At Brussels he was detained for a few days for some carriage repairs, and visited Waterloo, still in its nonage as a battlefield. At Brussels he was called upon by an old Aberdonian, Pryse Lockhart Gordon, who describes (*Personal Memoirs*, II., 328-330) Byron's Napoleonic travelling coach with its *lit de repos*, a library, and a plate chest, and notes that the two first stanzas of the verses on Waterloo, "Stop! for thy tread is on an Empire's dust" (*Childe Harold*, Canto III., stanza xvii., xviii.), were

written at Brussels for Mrs. Gordon's album. On May 11, he was within sight of the "castled crag of Drachenfels." Coblenz and "Ehrenbreitstein's shattered wall" were left behind, and so, by way of Basle and Berne, the Lake of Morat and Avenches, he made his way to Lausanne. On May 25, he arrived at Dejean's Hôtel d'Angleterre at Sécheron, a suburb of Geneva on the north side of the Lake. There he met, probably by arrangement, Shelley, Mary Godwin, and Clara (or Claire) Clairmont, who was the daughter of the second Mrs. Godwin by a former marriage. Claire and Mary had been housemates from infancy, but she was not, as Moore says, a female relative. She was, in Byron's phrase, "a foolish girl," who, in the preceding spring, not long after the separation, had made up her mind to become Byron's mistress. She was the mother of his natural daughter Allegra. A brilliant and passionate creature, she ended by making trouble for herself and for Byron by her natural importunity with regard to her child, and by vexatious interference provoked his aversion and hostility. But at Geneva Claire made herself useful by transcribing the Third Canto of *Childe Harold* and other poems, and it may be, ate her heart out in silence.

At the end of May, Shelley and his party moved to the Campagne Montalègre on the southern shore of the lake, and, on June 10, to escape "the British tourist and gossip-monger," Byron took up his quarters at a house close by the Villa Diodati, which overlooked the lake. On June 23 Byron and Shelley started on a yachting tour round the lake. On June 26 they visited Clarens and the Castle of Chillon, and reaching Ouchy on June 27 were detained for two days at the Hôtel de l'Ancre by the weather. Here Byron began *The Prisoner of Chillon*, which was finished July 10, and published December 5, 1816.

Byron was a greater poet after he knew Shelley than he was before. He was, for the first time in his life, brought into close relationship with another poet, nursed in a different school of poetry, whom he was willing to acknowledge as his equal, who could quicken his genius by the impact of his own genius, and communicate the inspiration which he had himself received.

Shelley believed in Wordsworth and forced Byron to listen to his message. All the Swiss poems, the Third Canto of *Childe Harold*, *The Prisoner of Chillon*, *The Dream*, the first two acts of *Manfred*, are suffused with the spirit of the Lake Poets. The influence passed, and the native quality of Byron's genius resumed its sway, but to the last it bore the marks of this intermediate visitation.

Byron spent July and August and the first half of September at the Villa Diodati. *The Dream* and "Darkness" and the un-Wordsworthian *Monody on the Death of Sheridan*, and the "Stanzas to Augusta" were written in July, the "Epistle to Augusta" in September. He was the near neighbour of Madame de Staël and at her Château at Coppet, where he spent many hours in her company, he encountered Charles Victor de Bonstetten, companion and friend of the poet Gray, and August von Schlegel. On September 17, Byron with his friend Hobhouse, set out on a thirteen days' excursion in the mountains. He

kept a journal for the benefit of his sister Augusta, which has now been printed for the first time *in extenso* (*Letters*, 1899, iii., 349-365). The word-pictures of the Alpine pastures on the Col de Jaman, of the "boiling sea of clouds" on the Wengern Alp, of the torrent "curving over the rock like the tail of a white horse streaming in the wind," of the glacier, "like a frozen hurricane," of "whole woods of feathered pines, *all withered*," were reproduced in *Manfred*; but the journal itself, and as a whole, is a great prose-poem and might well find a place in Byron's Poetical Works. Of all his repeated appeals *ad misericordiam*, there is none more finely worded, or more convincing than his confession that he had cried in vain for the hills to cover him. "I am a lover of Nature, and an admirer of Beauty. . . . But in all this—the recollections of bitterness, and more especially of recent and more home desolation, which must accompany me through life, have preyed upon me here; and neither the music of the shepherd, the crashing of the Avalanche, nor the torrent, the mountain, the glacier, the forest, nor the cloud, have for one moment lightened the weight upon my heart, nor enabled me to lose my own wretched identity in the majesty and the power and the glory, around, above, and beneath me."

On the 5th of October, Byron and Hobhouse left the Villa Diodati, crossed the Simplon, and made their way together to Milan, where they met Stendhal (H. M. Beyle), and the poet, Vincenzo Monti. Thence they travelled *viâ* Verona to Venice, which they reached early in November, 1816. For the greater part of the next three years, Byron lived in Venice, or at a villa on the Brenta some seven miles inland. This was his longest halt between Aberdeen and Mesolonghi. His first residence was a set of apartments in the Frezzeria, in the house of a "Merchant of Venice," named Segati. It was probably the "large, black, oriental eyes" of his landlord's wife, Marianna, which drew him to that particular spot, and, afterwards, kept him there, longer than he would. His Venetian *Donna*, as he calls her, was a notorious intriguer, with a voluminous past history, but she had wit enough to outwit Byron, and make him believe that he was without "predecessor or participator." But, in spite of this lover-like delusion, his amours with Marianna, and her Venetian successors, of which he wrote, and Moore published, far too much, lacked the excuse of misplaced tenderness, or misguided romance. They were but a wallowing in the mire.

But if Venice witnessed the debasement of genius, there remained the saving impulses both of genius and of will. The Ocean-city fulfilled the dreams of his childhood. Sights and scenes with which Schiller and Otway, Mrs. Radcliffe and Madame de Staël, and, whether he would or no, Shakespeare had fed his imagination, were there before his eyes. Nor, as with most men, did profligacy make him idle. "His mind," he says, "wanted something craggy to break upon," and "by way of divertisement" he took daily lessons in the Armenian language at the Mekhitarist Convent on the Island of San Lazaro. He translated the Armenian version of St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians, and the (spurious) Epistle of the Corinthians to St. Paul. Moreover, before he had been a month in Venice he was fluent enough in Italian, even in its

“Venetian modification,” which he studied for amusement, and not in a monastery. He was a strenuous prodigal. Nor was he without his reward. The demon of remorse, which Nature had failed to exorcise, left him for a season. There is a note of triumph, of real and not forced enjoyment in his ballad of the Carnival :—“ So we’ll go no more a-roving so late into the night !” For a moment or two, whatever he gave in exchange, he did enter into a “terrestrial Paradise.”

In the middle of April 1817, after re-writing the third act of *Manfred*, Byron set out for Rome. He halted for a day at Ferrara to see “the cell where they caged Tasso” ; spent a day at Florence, sparing just time enough to gaze on the Venus in the Tribuna of the Uffizi Gallery, to visit the Churches of San Lorenzo and Santa Croce, and to post the MS. of the *Lament of Tasso* to Murray. Thence by Foligno, and (if we may trust *Childe Harold*) Thrasimene’s “sheet of silver,” Clitumnus’ “gentlest waters,” and Terni’s “matchless cataract” to “Rome the wonderful.” His stay at Rome, where he met Hobhouse, lasted exactly three weeks. He spent his time riding “about the city and in the city,” . . . seeing “what must be seen,” and “skirred the country round to Alba, Tivoli, Frascati, etc.” He dined with Lord Lansdowne, saw “the Pope alive, and a Cardinal dead,” saw “three robbers guillotined,” and sat for his bust to Thorwaldsen. He left Rome May 20, and by the 28th was once more at home at Venice. He admitted to Murray that Rome was finer than Greece, but he kept no journal, and, for “descriptions of the indescribable,” referred his other correspondents to the guide-book. But when his memory had selected his impressions and reduced them to order, he wrote the first draft of the Fourth Canto of *Childe Harold*, which was begun June 26 and finished July 20, 1817. The poem, as it now stands, which consists of this original draft and some sixty additional stanzas, suggested by and written up to Hobhouse’s notes and *Historical Illustrations*, was not finished till the spring of 1818.

Soon after he returned to Venice, Byron took a villa at Mira, on the Brenta, where he was visited by “Monk” (Matthew Gregory) Lewis, and by Hobhouse, who during his morning and evening rides pumped into him fresh “copy” for *Childe Harold*.

It was in the autumn of this year that Murray chanced to send Byron a copy of Hookham Frere’s *jeu d’esprit*, which passes by the name of *Whistlecraft*. The metre is the *ottava rima* of the Italians, and the trick of the verse, the so-called mock heroic, a swift transition from grave to gay, a humorous colloquialism is of Italian birth and origin. Byron thought that he would try his hand on this metre, and produced *Beppo: A Venetian Story*. The “sources” were a Venetian scandal “in high life,” of recent occurrence, and a comedy, any comedy, of Goldoni’s. As Byron admitted, *Beppo* was “in the excellent manner of Whistlecraft,” but its seed was in itself. Frere’s *jeu d’esprit* turned his attentions to Frere’s masters and models, Pulci and Berni, and they in turn yielding up their secret and method inspired *Don Juan* and *The Vision of Judgment*. *Beppo* was the *avant-coureur* of a triumphal progress.

Early in January 1818, Byron took the Mocenigo Palace¹ on the Canal Grande on a three years' lease. His *relazione*, as he calls it, with Marianna Segati was drawing to a close, and a new *Donna*, Margarita Cogni (her husband was a baker, and Byron called her the Fornarina) was in the ascendant. She was a Venetian of the lower class, and delighted Byron with her savagery and her wit. For a while she installed herself in the Mocenigo Palace, and acted as housekeeper or *donna di governo*. She was finally dethroned and ousted with difficulty, and not without scandal. It was largely owing to the memorial notices or appreciations of his Venetian mistresses, which Byron drew up for the benefit of his friends, that he won and earned the title of *fanfaron de ses vices*. But, be it remembered, he invariably selected the tune.

The spring of 1818 was given up to the completion of the Fourth Canto of *Childe Harold* and of *Beppo*, the summer to the composition of the *Ode to Venice* and the First Canto of *Don Juan*. A few months later he began *Mazeppa*, a tale of the Ukraine, the border country between Russia and Poland, and on December 2, he began to write the Second Canto of *Don Juan*. He had settled to his stride, and though the race is not always to the swift, it is sometimes.

In the spring of 1819 more by hap than by cunning, Byron turned over a new leaf. It was, by comparison, fairer and cleaner than some of the earlier pages. In April, at a party given by a literary great lady, the Countess Benzoni, he was presented to Teresa, third wife of a wealthy landowner the Cavaliere Guiccioli, and daughter of Count Ruggiero Gamba, of Ravenna. She was in her twentieth year, a delicate blonde, with rich golden hair, the bust and arms of a portrait by Titian or Giorgioni. She was a good linguist, spoke French and understood English, an ardent "Dantiste," well-educated and accomplished. Her husband, who had married her when she was sixteen, was in his sixtieth year. Byron was of metal more attractive. "His noble and exquisitely beautiful countenance, the tone of his voice, his manners, the thousand enchantments which surrounded him," caught her fancy and awoke her passion. Henceforward he visited her daily, and without more ado, at first secretly, and afterwards openly, she became and remained his mistress till he sailed for Cephalonia in the summer of 1823.

A delightful and sympathetic companion, a devoted wife in all but the name, she succeeded in winning Byron's prolonged constancy, and whatever measure of love was in his gift. As time went on he tired of her more or less, but for four years he accepted and honourably repaid her disinterested surrender of her fortunes and herself.

The Countess Guiccioli left Venice for Ravenna at the end of April, but within a month Byron was summoned to soothe and entertain the Countess, who was threatened with consumption. On the 10th of June, the Festival of

¹ Byron's quarters were in the central of the three Palazzi belonging to the Countess Mocenigo. He paid a rent of 200 louis d'or. See Karl Elze's *Lord Byron*, etc. (English Translation), 1872, p. 222.

Corpus Christi, he arrived at Ravenna, and took up his quarters in the Strada di Ponte Sisi, hard by the tomb of Dante. To gratify the lady or to while away the time, for horses and books had not yet arrived from Venice, he wrote *The Prophecy of Dante*. The dedication, a sonnet to the Countess, is dated June 21, 1819.

According to the Preface, *The Prophecy of Dante* was a metrical experiment, an attempt to reproduce the *terza rima* of Dante in English verse. But, as he told Medwin (*Conversations*, 1824, p. 242) he had another object in view. The poem was "intended for the Italians," intended to foreshadow, in a vision, "liberty and the resurrection of Italy." If his pro-Gallican verse, which had appeared in the *Examiner* and *Morning Chronicle*, had not reached the Continent there was enough and more than enough in the Fourth Canto of *Childe Harold*, which had recently been done into Italian, to speak comfortably to lovers of freedom. He had shown his sympathy with Venice, his contempt for Great Britain as a partaker in the crime of Austrian usurpation, and, making Filicaja's words his own, he had bewailed the captivity of Italy; and, now, in Dante's name, he counsels open resistance, and gives the watchword of deliverance and independence—"Unite."

It is said, by those who have the right to speak, that Byron's Continental fame was largely due to his words and deeds on behalf of political liberty, that he was listened to and extolled as the spokesman and champion of the revolt against the old order. He earned his fame. His political energies sprung from a *generous* instinct, a lofty contempt for littleness in high places, a proud determination to see fair play. But his reprobation of his own country, his unsaying of "The Moral Lesson," of "bloody and most bootless Waterloo," was weakened and rendered suspect by a Coriolanus-note of revenge, and his "revolt" was rather against persons than principles. He was on the side of the people against kings, but he cared no more for the people for their own sake than Wellington, or Metternich, or Castlereagh; infinitely less than the "renegades," Wordsworth and Southey. For better or worse he was neither democrat, nor radical, nor humanitarian; and like the Faliero of his play, he conspired with his heart in the wrong place. "*We! We!*" he felt if he did not say, "no matter, ye have earned the right to talk of *us*." It was all the more to his honour that he stood for freedom against oppression, and that in a day of trembling and of dismay he spoke loud enough to be heard.

His migration to Ravenna at the call of the Guiccioli brought him into contact with the revolutionary movement. Her family the Gambas, were members of the Carbonari, and other secret societies, and though, at first, he held aloof and had other plans in view, he was known by his friends, and was thenceforth "shadowed" and spied upon by the commissaries of the Austrian Legation at Rome. On the 10th of August, Byron left Ravenna for Bologna in the train of the Guicciolis, and after a five weeks' residence, at first in an hotel, and, afterwards at the Casa Guiccioli, he returned to his villa, La Mira, bringing the Countess with him. So far the Count had

proved a "very polite personage." "He had left," says Moore, "his young Countess and her lover to the enjoyment of their own society at Bologna," and he had assented to her domicilement at La Mira, but on Byron refusing to advance a loan of £1000 he insisted that his wife should return to Ravenna, and, as Byron counselled prudence, she went. Finally, in July 1820, after more than one condonation and retractation on the part of her husband, the Countess appealed to the Pope, and obtained a decree of separation. We are reminded of Charles Lamb's apology for the morals or no-morals of the Caroline drama:—"The characters have got out of Christendom, into the land of what shall I call it?—of cuckoldry—the Utopia of gallantry where pleasure is duty and the manners perfect freedom." But the characters in this drama belong to history, and there is no apology for their antic.

After he returned to La Mira, perhaps in September, he began and all but finished the Third Canto of *Don Juan*, and, at Venice in November, he wrote the Fourth Canto. On the 7th of October, Moore, who was on his way from Milan to Rome, called at La Mira, and was introduced to the Guiccioli. He stayed a few hours at the villa and took Byron with him in his carriage to Fusina. "As we proceeded," says Moore, "across the Lagoon in his gondola, the sun was just setting, and it was an evening such as Romance would have chosen for a first sight of Venice, rising with her tiara of bright towers above the waves, while to complete the solemn interest of the scene I beheld it in company with him who had lately given a new life to its glories." Byron installed him willy-nilly in his own rooms in the Palazzo Mocenigo, and returned late at night to La Mira. The next three evenings (October 8, 9, 10) were passed together. It was a last meeting, and Moore dwells long on every incident and detail of the visit. Once the Contessa gave her *innamorato* leave to make a night of it—"We betook ourselves," says Moore, "to a sort of *cabaret* in the place of St. Mark, and there, within a few yards of the palace of the Doges, sat drinking hot brandy-punch, and laughing over old times till the clock of St. Mark struck the second hour of the morning. Lord Byron then took me in his gondola, and the moon being in its fullest splendour. . . I had, for the first time, the Venice of my dreams before me. For one moment Byron suffered himself to be touched, but 'that way lay madness' and the next, he laughed the melting mood away." Before he started for Ravenna, Byron gave Moore the MS. of the first part of his "Memoranda"—his "Life and Adventures," but not, so he said, "Confessions," brought down to the end of the year 1816.

In the last week of 1819, Byron left Venice for good and all, and settled at Ravenna in a suite of apartments in the Palazzo Guiccioli which were let to him by the Count. His relations to the Countess were at this time formally recognised, and he was received in Ravennese society as her *cavalier servente*, or lover in attendance. Of his outer life we know but little, save that his daily ride was to and through the Pineta, "Ravenna's immemorial wood," and that the business of the coming revolution occupied some portion of

his leisure. His literary activity was greater than ever. January and February were devoted to the onerous task of making a servile translation of the First Canto of Pulci's *Morgante Maggiore*. It is a scholarly piece of work, one proof amongst many of Byron's love of learning for learning's sake. In March he translated the episode of Francesca of Rimini from the Fifth Canto of Dante's *Inferno*. The early summer, April to July, was given up to the composition of a tragedy, *Marino Faliero, or the Doge of Venice*. This, too, was a labour of love, the outcome of the diligent study of early Venetian chronicles. The comparison of these chronicles with still more ancient documents contemporary with the events recorded was, as yet, neither possible nor regarded as necessary, and if and where Byron is unhistorical, he errs in company with his "authorities." He says that there are "no politics" in his play. It is true that the legend of La Congiura, an "old man jealous, and conspiring against the state of which he is the chief," had appealed to his imagination when Venice was new to him in the winter of 1816-1817, but there can be little doubt that his own more recent experience and reflections as an aristocratic rebel inspired his conception of a sovereign intriguing against the Government. At any rate, conspiracy was in the air, and history might be employed to reflect and to interpret the passions and actions, if not the events, of the hour. With the exception of *Manfred* which is a dramatic poem, *Marino Faliero* was Byron's first essay as a dramatist. He had taken Alfieri as a model, and was minded, so he says in the Preface, to escape from the English theatrical compositions by preserving a nearer approach to unity. He would not compete with Shakespeare and Otway, but he would attain to classical excellence by a "severer approach to the rules." It was an elaborate protest against the spirit of the age, a solemn recantation of the romantic heresy which had spread from Germany to England, and had sapped the very foundations of poetical orthodoxy. Byron would teach his countrymen a thing or two, and, with the zeal of a convert, practised, as well as preached, reformation. It was a heroic experiment, but even Byron could not make bricks without straw. His Venetian dramas, *Marino Faliero* and *The Two Foscari*, are admirable, but they are not stimulating. Goethe, who had praised and translated parts of *Manfred*, thought that Byron failed to understand the purpose of the "three unities," and had unwisely hampered himself by a "blind obedience" to dramatic propriety.

At the close of the year (October 16-November 20) he wrote a Fifth Canto of *Don Juan*, which was issued in August 1821, together with Cantos III. and IV., without the name of either author or publisher. In the first week of January 1821 Byron made a third attempt to keep a journal. His first diary, which extends from November 14, 1813, to April 19, 1814, depicts the man of the world, the idol of society; the Swiss journal (September 18-29, 1816), "the poet in his lonely hour"; and the Ravennese journal (January 4-February 27, 1821), the man of letters and the philosopher. A change has "come over the spirit of his dream." He is an amused and tolerant spectator of men and things. He would give of his substance, he would even sacrifice his life for

Italian independence, but his chief reward for advancing money to the conspirators, and exposing himself to some personal risk, is that the spice of danger keeps him from yawning. He was elected a Capo of the Romagnuole Society of *Americani*, or American Hunters, "an under-branch of the Carbonari," and was invited to dine with them in the forest; but before this Arcadian Feast of Liberty had taken place, the Neapolitans shied, and disavowed all participation in the general movement. "The *plan* missed," and the dream of Italian independence melted into thin air.

To resume the record of his poetical works. On the 13th of January he sketched the outline of his second historical drama, *Sardanapalus*. The names and plot were taken from Diodorus Siculus, and, as in *Marino Faliero*, the "unities" were to be strictly regarded. But whilst the political storm was brewing, Byron could not stick to his task. The "poetry of history" was thrown aside for the "poetry of politics," and to divert his mind while "the kiln was in lowe" he turned critic, and plunged into the politics of poetry. A controversy had arisen between Campbell and Bowles with regard to Pope. Other writers, notably Isaac D'Israeli in the *Quarterly Review*, had joined the fray. Byron scented the battle from afar, and addressed a remonstrance and rejoinder to the Rev. W. L. Bowles, "Strictures on the Life and Writings of Pope," in the form of two letters to *i.e.* John Murray. The first letter, dated February 7, was published in 1821, but the second letter, dated March 25, did not see the light till 1835. The *motif* of these letters was the redemption of literature. He would repel the invasion of the barbarians, Lakists, or Cockneys, and re-establish the sovereignty of Pope and of "him who drew Achitophel."

Byron's prose¹ is sometimes exalted at the expense of his poetry. In these so-called "letters," as in his diaries and prefaces and "advertisements," the excellence of the manner is incontestable. Style is merged and lost in expression. The thought is close, and the language crisp and to the point. He who runs may read. It is a natural, not an artificial, eloquence, which finds and does not seek its appropriate form. On the other hand the contention, which he is at pains to labour, that the inspiration of nature speaks to us through Art and not immediately, falls before his own confession that he could not "lift up his eyes to the hills" without emotion, that "Lochnagar with

¹ As a letter-writer, Byron can only be compared with his equals, Cowper and Charles Lamb, and with a good second, his enemy, "Bob Southey." A writer in the *London Magazine*, for October 1824 (vol. x., p. 341) (who seems "to have had unusual opportunities of observing the habits, feelings, and opinions of the inspired and noble Poet," was, perhaps, the first to give him his due. "Lord Byron's letters," writes R. N., "are the models of a species of composition which should be written without an eye to any models. His fancy kindled on paper; he touches on subjects in a common, everyday way; the reader smiles all through, and loves the writer at the end; longs for his society, and admires his happy genius and his amiable conversation. Lord Byron's letters are what his conversation was—but better—he had more undisturbed leisure to let his fancies ripen, he could produce his wit with more security, and his irritable temper met with no opposition on paper."

Ida looked o'er Troy." His admiration of Pope was genuine, but his vehement and aggressive praise was but the symbol and vehicle of depreciation of his contemporaries. He protests too much.

Another prose work, "Detached Thoughts," or "My Dictionary," was composed at intervals between May and December 1821. It consists of a collection of autobiographical and other anecdotes, maxims, and "aids to reflection," and was evidently designed for the benefit of posterity. It is a kind of table-talk at first hand, a literary jest-book, a sheaf or bundle of "Confessions." It pleased his humour to depict himself as a philosopher, mild and reasonable, appreciative and tolerant of all things, even of the mysteries of faith. "Detached Thoughts" was a kind of spiritual styptic. The charm lay in the detachment—the temporary absorption of self in "something afar from the sphere of his sorrow."

But prose was only an interlude. His poetical works for 1821, which overflowed one substantial volume, consisted of, at least, four dramas, and three satires. *Sardanapalus*, by far the greatest and the most original of his "regular" plays, was finished by the 28th of May; *The Two Foscari* was begun on June 12, and finished July 9. This was followed by *Cain: a Mystery*, begun July 9, and finished September 9. *Cain* was a new departure, an attempt to dramatise the Old Testament and at the same time to re-state the metaphysical or theological problem of the origin of evil. The *Mystery* raised a storm of remonstrance. The "parsons preached at it from Kentish Town to Pisa."¹ "Even," says Byron, "the very highest authority in the land, King George IV., expressed his disapprobation of the blasphemy and licentiousness of Lord Byron's writings!" Better judges thought differently. Scott, to whom the *Mystery* was dedicated, said that the author "had matched Milton on his own ground." Shelley declared that "it was a revelation never before communicated to man." Censure and praise are alike out of date; but as a display of "poetic energy" and a revelation of the inner workings of the poetic consciousness, it possesses a surpassing interest.

Early in August, whilst *Cain* was still on the stocks, Byron dashed off a kind of satirical farce which he called *The Blues*. It is a skit upon the literary coteries and their patronesses, Lady Beaumont, Lydia White, and, possibly, Lady Byron. He had been away from England and London for more than five years, and his quips and allusions were somewhat belated. Sotheby, nicknamed Botherby, Wordsworth, Hazlitt, and, possibly, Coleridge are quizzed and belittled, but the satire is vague and pointless.

When *Cain* was finished he turned with renewed zest to the continuation and completion of a parody of Southey's *Vision of Judgment*, which he had designed and begun in the preceding May. *The Vision*, the apotheosis of George III., with a Tory Paradise, on the right, and a Radical Inferno on the left of the canvas, would, in any case, have come under Byron's lash, but, in the Preface, the Laureate thought fit to launch an anathema at "the Satanic

¹ To one of these, Dr Nott (see p. 1038), Byron made answer accordingly.

School." By "Satanic School" he meant the anonymous author of *Don Juan*, who had not only ridiculed him in the First Canto, but, as Southey well knew, had flayed him alive in an unpublished dedication. Southey was quite in earnest, and, perhaps, did well to be angry, but he had "put his hand on the cockatrice den." Byron's response to the challenge was a second *Vision*, in which the execrator of the "Satanic School" is dragged before the bar of Heaven, and laughed out of court by Lucifer and Michael, by "devils, saints, and angels" with one consent. The Byron and Southey quarrel is a long story, in which hard knocks were given on both sides, and some of the hardest by Southey; but when it came to a battle of the bays, Byron was left in possession of the field. The wit, the humour, and, indeed, the rhythmical splendour of his octaves are beyond all praise.

The Vision of Judgment was recommenced on September 11, and forwarded to Murray on October 4; but, by way of a parenthesis, another satire, the *Irish Avatar*, a mock at Ireland for her servile reception of George IV. (August 17-25, 1821), was dashed off and sent to Moore to be privately printed at Paris.

For the last three months Byron had been the sole occupant of the Palazzo Guiccioli. About the middle of July the Gambas, including the Countess Guiccioli, had been suddenly expelled from Ravenna, and, after some hesitation and delays, had taken for themselves and for Byron the Villa Lanfranchi at Pisa. But Byron was unwilling to leave a spot which he loved for its own sake, a resting-place where he had done good work, a city where he was known and honoured, and he lingered on from week to week till the Countess despaired of his making up his mind to leave Ravenna at all. In the very last month, between the 9th and the 23rd of October, when his furniture had been sent on, and he had hardly a bed or seat left, he was busy with his pen. *Heaven and Earth: a Mystery*, a lyrical drama, based on the legend of the "Watchers" or Fallen Angels of the Book of Enoch, is dated from Ravenna.

On the 28th of October, at three o'clock in the morning, he started for Bologna on his way to Pisa. Between Ravenna and Bologna he met his old Harrow friend, Lord Clare, whom he had not seen for seven or eight years. In an instant and for an instant the past came back to him. "We were but five minutes together," he writes ("Detached Thoughts," 113), "and in the public road; but I hardly recollect an hour of my existence which could be weighed against them." We are often reminded that genius is no excuse for irregularity of feeling or conduct, that the same measure should be meted out to extraordinary persons as to the ordinary and the commonplace. Yes, and the lame ought to walk, and the blind would do better if they could see. The plain truth is that men of genius are handicapped by their genius, and that, by others, though not by themselves, an allowance ought to be made. They should be beaten with few stripes.¹

¹ Lady Blessington, who had read Moore's wise and beautiful words on "men of the higher order of genius" (*Life and Letters*, Cap. xxiii.), makes Byron plead his own cause. "Who can

At Bologna he met Rogers, and the next day set out with him to cross the Apennines. There are two descriptions¹ of this encounter. "Our party," says Rogers, "consisted of a dog, a cat, a hawk, an old gondolier from Venice, and other sundries . . . he spent one day here [Florence]. I wish you had seen him set off, every window of the inn was open to see him."

"At Bologna," writes Byron, "I met Rogers—I took him to see our old friend, the sexton at the Certosa, who looked at him very hard and seemed well disposed to keep him there in his skull-room." In 1821 Rogers was well under sixty, but his corpse-like appearance had long been a pleasing, and had now become a perennial, jest.

Pisa witnessed a change in Byron's mode of life, and a new departure in the disposal and publication of his poems. At Ravenna he had led the life of a recluse, but at Pisa he was surrounded by a group of English residents, the friends and associates of the Shelleys, who had settled at Pisa, and were already intimate with the Countess and the Gambas. Foremost in the group was Edward John Trelawny, once a midshipman in the Royal Navy, and always a seaman. He was essentially a Bohemian—adventurous, boisterous, unconventional. His *Records of Shelley: Byron and the Author*, which appeared in 1858, is brilliant and interesting, but his critical remarks must be received with caution. After him, and of lesser worth, was Shelley's cousin, Thomas Medwin, who compiled the amusing but inaccurate *Conversations of Lord Byron*, published in 1824. It is possible that Byron, who knew that Medwin intended to Boswellise him, sometimes talked at random, and with intent to deceive; but the *Conversations* contain much which would otherwise have perished, and on the whole, though inaccurate, are too vivid and too original to have been manufactured or invented. To the same set belonged John Taaffe, author of a *Comment* on Dante, and Edward Elliker Williams, who had begun life in the Navy, but was now a captain in the Army, and his wife Jane, the heroine of Shelley's "Invitation," and other poems.

As soon as he was settled at Pisa Byron made preparations for a new work, the conversion of Miss Lee's *Kruitznor* or *The German's Tale* into a drama named *Werner*. So far back as 1815 he had written a first Act (*vide post*,

walk the earth with eyes fixed on the heavens without often stumbling over the hinderances that intercept the path? while those who are intent only on the beaten road escape. Such is the fate of men of genius," etc. (*Conversations*, etc., 1834, p. 128).

¹ There is, too, a third record, an after-thought, which Rogers introduces in his *Italy*—See *Poems* by Samuel Rogers, 1852, ii. 116-120:—

" Much had passed
Since last we parted; and those five short years—
Much had they told! His clustering locks were turned
Grey; nor did aught recall the Youth that swam
From Sestos to Abydos. Yet his voice
Still it was sweet; still from his eye the thought
Flashed lightning-like, nor lingered on the way,
Waiting for words," etc.

pp. 716-722), but as the MS. had been left behind in England and was not forthcoming, he determined to make a fresh adaptation of the original narrative. *Werner* is "Kruitzner" done into blank verse with certain notable additions and embellishments. *Werner* stands out from Byron's other plays, and has a singular history of its own. In the first place, it was the last new play or poem which Murray issued in Byron's lifetime. Secondly, it was the only one of Byron's plays which had any run, or took any hold of the stage. Thirdly, it has quite recently been the subject of a controversy as to its authenticity.

It has been alleged that save for a few additions and emendations, the play as a whole was not Byron's handiwork; that, to save time and get money he transcribed a MS. play of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, given or lent to him eight or nine years before by Lady Caroline Lamb, and palmed it off on Murray and the British Public as his own.

Now it is possible that the Duchess of Devonshire turned Miss Lee's story into a play, and called it "Werner,"¹ but there is nothing to show that Byron purloined her adaptation and concealed his theft. He says openly that his "Drama is taken entirely from *The German's Tale, Kruitzner*," and it would have been quite as easy to make the further admission that the Duchess had saved him the trouble of breaking up the prose narrative into loose and slovenly blank verse. It would have made a good story, and would have taken off the edge of the confession that *Werner* was an adaptation, and only in parts original. There is, in my judgment, no doubt whatever that Byron wrote the whole of *Werner*, in the sense and to the extent that an adapter can be described as a writer. That he was the creator of all that is striking and beautiful in the play may be proved by internal evidence, and by "undesigned coincidences," with other plays and poems. *Werner* was begun, at Pisa, December 18, 1821, and finished January 20, 1822. He entrusted the transcription of his play to Mrs. Shelley, who took eight days, January, to accomplish her task.

Three months later Byron was cut to the quick by a grievous and unexpected misfortune. His daughter, Allegra, died of a fever at the Convent of Bagna Cavallo, some fifteen miles west of Ravenna. He had hoped that Allegra would have softened and made up for his inevitable separation from Ada, and, now, "Death had done his work," and he was bereaved of both his children. The Countess Guiccioli describes his agony of grief when he received the news:—"A mortal paleness spread itself over his face, his strength failed him, and he sank into a seat. . . . He remained immovable in the same attitude for an hour, and no consolation which I endeavoured to afford him seemed to reach his ears, far less his heart." He sent the body to England to be buried

¹ See *Did Byron write Werner?* by the Honble. F. Leveson Gower, *Nineteenth Century*, August 1899. Vol. xlvi., pp. 243-250. See, too, *Bygone Years*, by the Honble. F. Leveson Gower, 1905 pp. 325, 326.

in the church at Harrow, with the request that the following inscription should be placed on the walls of the Church :—

In Memory of
ALLEGRA,
Daughter of G. G. LORD BYRON,
who died at Bagna Cavallo,
in Italy, April 20th, 1822.
Aged, five years and three months.

“I shall go to her, but she shall not return to me.” II. Samuel, xii. 23.

But the Vicar and Churchwardens decreed otherwise, and Allegra lies at the entrance to Harrow Church, in a nameless grave, “without a stone to mark the spot.” None the less her memory is enshrined in Shelley’s verse :—

“A lovelier toy sweet Nature never made,
A serious, subtle, wild, yet gentle being,
Graceful without design, and unforeseeing—
With eyes—Oh, speak not of her eyes!—which seem
Twin mirrors of Italian Heaven.”

There is no evidence as to the exact date, but it is probable that soon after Allegra’s death, he began to write “*The Deformed Transformed*,” a “Faustish” kind of drama, which combines an attempt to solve the metaphysical puzzle of the relation of personality to individuality, with a sketch of a “striking historical episode,” the Sack of Rome in 1527. It was written at Pisa in 1822, but it was not published till February 1824.

On the 1st of July Byron received as paid, and not paying, guests the poet and journalist James Henry Leigh Hunt, his wife and six children. He had furnished and set apart for them the ground floor of the Villa Lanfranchi, and he had sent them a large sum of money to enable them to leave England and to defray their travelling expenses to Italy. He had done this, partly to please and relieve Shelley, partly to show kindness to a man of letters who had suffered at the hands of the Tories, but principally because he was anxious to edit a newspaper or periodical, over which he would have entire control, and in which he could publish his own poems without let or remonstrance. But he needed a coadjutor, a journalist of experience who could undertake the practical part of his scheme, and as Leigh Hunt had been, and as he believed, still was, editor of the *Examiner*, he was not unwilling to take him into his pay.

The fact that Hobhouse and his other friends were against his setting up a journal of his own was an argument in its favour, and an incentive to proceed. Murray had jibbed at *Don Juan*, and though he had agreed to publish *Werner* had kept back the *Vision of Judgment, Heaven and Earth*, and the translation of *The Morgante Maggiore*, and the time had come when Byron could afford to be independent of Murray and snap his fingers at the “Zoili” of Albemarle Street.

It was, in great measure, literary ambition, and literary impatience which prompted Byron who, in matters of business was the embodiment of common-sense, to loosen his purse-strings and open his doors to so typical a "child of the Mighty Mother" as Leigh Hunt. Of course the experiment failed. Hunt was aggressively impecunious, and Byron was a generous but not a cheerful giver. The guest was bumptious and critical, the host was rude and unkind. When all was over Hunt told the story not wisely but too well in *Lord Byron and his Contemporaries*. The money which he had eagerly accepted, and the death of the donor should have sealed his lips, but he had suffered much and revenge was sweet and remunerative.

In spite, however, of personal annoyance and financial loss Byron did accomplish one of the objects which he had in view. A Quarterly Magazine, *The Liberal, Verse and Prose from the South*, was set on foot, and in one or other of the four numbers which were issued between October 1822 and July 1823, the poems which Murray had reckoned as too dull or too daring for publication, first saw the light. Moreover, for the remainder of his life he ceased to publish with Murray, and transferred the copyrights of his new poems to the publisher of *The Liberal*, John Hunt.

Save for the addition of a knot or suite of friends and courtiers the daily routine of Byron's life was much the same at Pisa as it had been at Ravenna. At two or three o'clock in the afternoon he took his first meal, and from four o'clock till just before sunset he rode into the country, at first in the direction of the Cascine and "the Pine Forest That skirts the ocean foam," and, at a later period, by a road leading from the Porta alla Spiaggia to a Podere or farm, where he could indulge his favourite amusement of pistol-shooting at a mark. "He was always," said Medwin, "in better spirits when he *culpèd* the targe, or hit a five franc piece, the counterpart of which was given to the farmer" for permitting his garden to be turned into a shooting gallery. But before long, at the beginning of the New Year, Byron and Shelley turned their thoughts to the sea. Two of the Pisa friends, Trelawny and Williams, were accomplished seamen, and, acting on their advice and recommendation, Byron commissioned a certain Captain Roberts, who was an authority on boat-building, to build an open boat for Shelley, and a large decked one for his own use. In due course a schooner, the *Bolivar*, was built for Byron, and Shelley was provided with a boat thirty feet long, which Trelawny christened *Don Juan*, but the owner insisted on re-naming the *Ariel*. To be within reach of his boat Shelley had taken a villa on the Gulf of Spezia, but hearing that Leigh Hunt had arrived he returned to Pisa, and spent the first week of July in helping to make him "tolerably comfortable" at the Villa Lanfranchi,¹ where his presence would tend to keep Byron in a good temper with his guests and guestlings.

On Sunday evening, July 7, Shelley left Pisa for Leghorn, and at mid-day, July 8, accompanied by Williams and a lad named Vivian he started for a sail in the Gulph of Spezia. Whether the boat was caught in a squall, or whether,

¹ See Mrs. Shelley's Letter to Mrs. Gisborne, August 15, 1822.

as some suppose, she was intentionally run down by a felucca, is uncertain, but the *Ariel* was wrecked, and Shelley, Williams, and the lad were drowned. Ten days later Shelley's body was washed ashore at a spot not far from Viareggio, and was buried in the sand. On the 16th of August after a prolonged search the body was rediscovered, and placed on a funeral pyre on the sea-shore. Trelawny and Leigh Hunt and Medwin describe the "burning of Shelley" graphically, and with some particularity, but the few words which Byron found it in his heart to write to Moore (August 27) suffice to tell the tale :

"We have been burning the bodies of Shelley and Williams [the day before, on the 15th] on the sea-shore, to render them fit for removal and regular interment. You can have no idea what an extraordinary effect such a funeral pile has on a desolate shore, with mountains in the background and the sea before, and the singular appearance the salt and frankincense gave to the flames. All of Shelley was consumed except his *heart* which would not take the flame, and is now preserved in spirits of wine."

While the body was being consumed, Byron swam out to the *Bolivar* and back to shore ; a violent measure which resulted in one of the many fevers which weakened his powers of resistance, and shortened his life. When all was over he drove back through the forest with Leigh Hunt, who did as he was bid, and "sang and laughed and shouted" in concert with his chief.

The soul of Shelley was as far as the east is from the west from the soul of Byron. There was a similarity in outward circumstances. They were in the same galley, and they remained comrades, but not friends. But Shelley, who knew where Byron failed, has testified, not out of mock humility nor unreasoning modesty, but with the insight of genius, to Byron's essential greatness. He recognised him as "a mighty spirit," . . . "whose fame Over his living head like Heaven was bent." Of what Byron thought of Shelley as a poet we know very little. He admired *Queen Mab*, the *Revolt of Islam*, and *Prometheus*, but was silent as to *The Adonais*, and sometimes depreciated *The Cenci*. But to the man he pays a lofty tribute in simple words :—"You were all brutally mistaken about Shelley, who was without exception the best and least selfish man I ever knew. I never knew one who was not a beast in comparison."

Towards the end of June 1822, Byron bethought him of continuing *Don Juan*. The Fifth Canto had been finished in November 1820, and since August 1821 the first five cantos had been before the world unacknowledged by author or publisher, but known, read, and denounced as Byron's. He tells Murray (July 8, the very day on which Shelley was drowned), "it is not impossible that I may have three or four cantos of *Don Juan* ready by the autumn, as I obtained a permission from my dictatress to continue it." Cantos VI., VII., VIII., together with what Coleridge used to call "an apologetic preface," and Canto IX. were written at Pisa between the end of June and the end of August. The materials of these cantos were derived from a close and accurate study of books. The description of the Seraglio at Constantinople in

Canto VI. was taken from the *Voyages* of Aubry de la Mottraye, and from Kleeman's *Voyage de Vienne*. "The details of the siege of Ismail in Cantos VII., VIII.," are little more than a laborious rendering into unlaboured verse of page after page of the Marquis de Castelnau's *Essai sur l'Histoire . . . de la Nouvelle Russie*; and the description of Catherine II., of Russia, and her unspeakable environment is based on passages in Tooke's translation of J. H. Castéra's *Vie de Catherine II.*, and C. F. P. Masson's *Mémoires Secrets sur la Russie*. If, as Leigh Hunt writes, "Lord Byron sat up late at night writing *Don Juan* . . . under the influence of gin and water," the effect was to steady as well as excite his brain. He does, indeed, make answer to his accusers by a louder and angrier challenge to British cant and British pride—sometimes, as in the preface with its scarcely-veiled allusion to the Duke of Wellington as "an over-pensioned homicide," a little too loudly for good taste or good sense; and he, by no means, kept his promise to his dictatress, "to be more guarded and decorous in the continuation than in the commencement." Moreover, there is a deepening of intention, if not a heightening of the moral. *Don Juan* has ceased to be a playful satire with as little poetry as could be helped; it is "a satire on the abuses of the present state of society—not an eulogy of vice." He pretends to write with cynical indifference, but in reality he is in deadly earnest. And whether he knew it or not his time was short, and he was in haste to deliver his message.

Byron was not only an exile, but he had thrown in his lot with the exiled and the proscribed. The Gambas, father and son, with the Countess Guiccioli, who had been driven out of Ravenna, were not allowed to settle permanently at Pisa. Byron's first step was to take a villa at Montenero near Leghorn for the Gambas, where he could pass part of his time without giving up the Villa Lanfranchi at Pisa. But the authorities were still dissatisfied, and taking advantage of a quarrel between the Gambas' servants and Byron's, they threatened a formal sentence of banishment. In the end the Gambas removed to Genoa, and later in the autumn Mrs. Shelley secured for them and for Byron the Casa Saluzzo at Albaro, a suburb of Genoa, and a neighbouring villa, the Casa Negroto, for herself and the Hunts.

Byron and Leigh Hunt followed the Gambas at the end of September, but was taken ill "with violent rheumatic and bilious attacks and the Devil knows what," on the way, and detained four days at Lerici, in the "worst inn's worst room." As soon as he could travel he took boat across or rather along the bay to Sestri; and on board ship "the sea revived him instantly." He "ate the sailors' fish, and drank a gallon of country wine." He landed at Genoa early in October, and, before many days, continued or completed a Tenth Canto of *Don Juan*. The Eleventh Canto was finished by October 17, and the Twelfth some time before the end of November. The seven new Cantos VI.-XII. were sent to his friend and banker, Douglas Kinnaird, who was to get them published by John Hunt, or by whom, and as he best could. On the 15th of October the first number of *The Liberal*, which opened

with *The Vision of Judgment*, was published in London, and fiercely attacked in the *Literary Gazette* and the daily Press. These were dark days for Byron's fame in England. Nothing had appeared from Byron's pen since the publication of the volume containing *Cain*. The silence was broken by *The Vision of Judgment* in *The Liberal*, and that was followed, in December, by *Werner*, which did little to awaken any fresh enthusiasm. For the moment the hostility and the severity of the *Quarterly* and other Reviews shook his confidence in himself, and he began to think that the sceptre had departed from him. A letter which he wrote to Murray on Christmas Day, 1822, betokens a chastened spirit with regard to *Don Juan*, and his prospects of success with another publisher. He drops a hint that he "may take a run down to Naples . . . this spring," and when he has studied the country, write a Fifth and Sixth Canto of *Childe Harold*. If the door were left open the wandering sheep might slip back into the fold.

To judge from his correspondence, life at Genoa was eventless. He refused to take any pleasure in Leigh Hunt's society, and it is plain that there was no love lost between him and Mrs. Shelley. His unpublished works were at the service of *The Liberal*, but he does not seem to have entered with any zest into the work of compiling or editing the successive numbers.

Having finished what he calls the "Twelfth Canto of our Introduction," which leaves *Don Juan* in the full swing of London society, Byron laid his epic aside, and returned to his old loves, satire and romance. In the first week of 1823 he was at work upon and (January 10) finished a poem in heroic couplets, entitled *The Age of Bronze*. The theme or themes are the Congress of Verona, which met in November 1822 to discuss the attitude of the Powers to the revolution in Spain, the fall of Napoleon, and the cynical selfishness of the Tory party in England, the "landed interest" which had roared and voted for war, and now grumbled at having to foot the bill in the shape of reduced rents and increased taxes. He admits that it is somewhat "stilted," and "too full of 'epithets of war' and classical allusions." It cried out for notes when it was first published, and now, after the lapse of eighty years, the commentary threatens to overwhelm the text; but, where it tells its own story, *The Age of Bronze* exults in its strength. No one could raise a truism into a truth more effectively than Byron. Take, for instance, this after-thought on Napoleon:—

"He teaches them the lesson taught so long,
So oft, so vainly—learn to do no wrong!
A single step into the right had made
This man—the Washington of worlds betrayed;
A single step into the wrong has given
His name a doubt to all the winds of heaven."

Another reversion to his earlier muse was *The Island*, or *Christian and his Comrades*, a tale in four cantos, based on Bligh's *Narrative of the Mutiny of the Bounty*, and Dr. John Martin's redaction of Mariner's *Account of the Tonga*

Islands. Taken as a whole *The Island* betrays an exhaustion of the poetic faculty, a slackening of poetic energy. The lighter or facetious episodes are trivial and vulgar, and seem to have been introduced to avoid monotony, and catch the magazine public. But there is a deeper and a tenderer note in the recital of the feasts, and loves, and wars, of the dwellers by the coral seas, than his "Corsair style" in earlier and happier days had ever reached. The "Songs of Toobonai" are plaintive with the memories of lost loves and vanished youth, of sights and scenes, "beloved before." The poetic vision has been purged by suffering and by experience.

About the middle of February *The Island* was finished. The Thirteenth and Fourteenth Cantos of *Don Juan* were written between the 12th of February and the 4th of March: the Fifteenth Canto was finished by Lady-day, and the Sixteenth, which was begun at the end of March, was finished on the 6th of May.

These last four cantos of *Don Juan* which belong to the spring of 1823 were inspired by memories of Newstead Abbey. He ends as he began with celebrating the "hall of my fathers." It was, no doubt, the inspection of Colonel Wildman's plans for the restoration of the Abbey which revived and supplemented his love of a place which he had not seen for more than eight years. He had been consulted on the question of "improvements" when the property changed hands in 1818, and he had replied by leaving everything to his successor's "feelings, present and future"; but when the changes which involved the re-building of the quaint old kitchen and other domestic offices, the re-building and re-decoration of the south front, and the removal of the fountain from the courtyard, to its original site within the quadrangle, were brought home to him he could not refrain from a passing jibe at "new buildings of correctest conformation." Meanwhile he would build "a dome of air," an imperishable Newstead which would be his and the world's for ever. So far from his right hand having then lost its cunning, the end of *Don Juan* has all the power and more than all the beauty of the beginning.

Don Juan was Byron's greatest achievement, and his last. A great living poet has compared the life and movement of the stanzas to the life and movement of the sea. Whatever may be urged justly or unjustly, foolishly or wisely against the poem it has the "gift of life and variety."¹ But it must be read as a whole, not in selected passages, selected because they are harmful or harmless. It will repay the closest study, and those spots and blemishes which, at first, compel the willing or unwilling attention of the reader, will in due course sink into a natural and, therefore, comparative insignificance. It is a book which neither could or would have been written by a man of virtuous life, but at its worst, it is neither morbid nor unwholesome. It has got a bad name, which, perhaps, it will never lose, but so long as men go down into the sea in ships, so long as they love fighting, and are not averse from love-making, and so long as they can see and laugh at a joke,

¹ *A Selection*, etc., by A. C. Swinburne, 1885, p. x.

they will read *Don Juan* under protest, no doubt, but as a pleasure rather than a duty.

On May 8, Byron began a Seventeenth Canto and wrote those fourteen stanzas which Trelawny found in his room at Mesolonghi, and which were published for the first time in 1904. Whether he had not felt his way to a successful conclusion, or whether a call to arms sounded too loudly in his ears he wrote no more, and, thenceforth, save for a few occasional stanzas and his famous epilogue or epithet, "This day I complete my Thirty-sixth Year," his muse was silent.¹

Whilst Byron was still at work on *Don Juan* he received a communication which turned the current of his thoughts and feelings into a new channel. At home in England a knot of distinguished Whigs and Liberals, such as Lord Erskine, Sir James Mackintosh, Jeremy Bentham and Hobhouse had formed themselves into a "Greek Committee," to promote the liberation of Greece. On March 14 Byron was unanimously elected a member of the Committee—an honour which, it seems, was announced to him prematurely by Lieutenant Blaquiere, the historian of the Spanish Revolution, who had started for Greece March 4, and taking Genoa on his way, had sought him out, and secured his services on his own responsibility.² Byron at once offered money and counsel, but seems at first to have doubted whether his health or the Countess Guiccioli would permit him to go to Greece, and take an active part in the Revolution. He has been accused of an unworthy craving for self-advertisement, of seizing an unlooked-for chance of reviving his withered laurels, of nursing a secret ambition that he might end his days as King of Greece. A simpler explanation is that he was gratified by the compliment paid him by the Greek Committee, that he had the cause of Greek Independence at heart, and that he was ambitious to leave a mark on history as well as on literature. His hesitation, which was altogether to his credit, did not last long, and on June 15, so he told Trelawny, "he was at last determined to go to Greece."

Of how Byron looked, of what he talked, and how he comported himself at this period we have a vivid and, probably, a life-like picture in Lady Blessington's *Conversations of Lord Byron*. She came to Genoa with her husband, whom Byron had known in former days as Lord Mountjoy, and their "handsome companion," Count Alfred D'Orsay, at the end of March, and on the 1st of April saw Byron, for the first time, at the Casa Saluzzo, "a fine old Palazzo with an extensive view" over the Bay. Byron took to all three, the brilliant young wife, the good-natured "*épouse*" and the gay young Count, the "*Cupidon déchaîné*," whom he blended with himself in his final presentation of *Don Juan*. There is no keener or more persuasive delineation

¹ The lines [Love and Death, p. 1040], which allude to the earthquake and to his seizure, must have been, as Hobhouse says, "the last he ever wrote."

² See Letters to Edward Blaquiere, April 5 (and *Note*), and to John Bowring. *Letters* vi. 1901, 185, 214.