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PERSONAL RELATION BETWEEN BYRON AND SHELLEY

By

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PREFACE

Any facts or details that might be given concerning the personal relation between two poets whose lives ran closely side by side, whose environment was practically the same, although they reacted to that environment entirely differently, and from whose works we have derived pleasure or profit, can not but be interesting. This conviction induces me to present a consecutive account of the development of the relation between Byron and Shelley, and to correlate the several interests that occupied their thoughts. I have endeavoured to portray them, not just as two poets, but as citizens of the actual world.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to Dr. John S. Harrison for the assistance given me in the choice of a subject, and also for the encouragement which he so graciously gave; to my sister for giving so willingly of her time for the typing of this thesis.

Indianapolis, 1939.  
M. H. F.
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PERSONAL RELATION BETWEEN BYRON AND SHELLEY

CHAPTER 1

FIRST MEETING OF BYRON AND SHELLEY IN SWITZERLAND

At Lake Geneva Byron and Shelley met for the first time, and here began the most interesting literary relationship of their lives. On May 25, 1816, Byron and his traveling companion and physician Polidori arrived at Secheron, a suburb of Geneva, Switzerland, from London. They registered at the DeJean's Hotel d'Anglterre, where they found Shelley and his wife to-be, Mary Godwin, with Claire Clairmont, a relative of the latter, installed ten days before. It was not Byron's first meeting with Claire Clairmont, for she was already the expectant mother of his child.

Shelley for a long time had desired to meet Byron since his writings were well known to him. A few years before, when Shelley was quite a youth - being the younger of the two by four years - he had sent to Byron one of the privately printed copies of his "Queen Mab", together with a letter setting forth in detail the accusations brought against himself, and adding that, if Byron discredited these accusations, it would make him happy to be honored with his lordship's acquaintance. The letter, it seems miscarried and Byron received only the poem. The opening lines of the poem were much admired by Byron. In his notes to "The Two Foscari" Byron referring to "Queen Mab" says:

"I shewed it to Mr. Sotheby as a poem of greater power and imagination. No one knows any better than its real author that his opinions and mine differ radically upon the metaphysical portion of that work; though, in common with all who are not blinded by baseness and bigotry, I highly admire the poetry of that and his other productions."

Therefore on their present meeting at Geneva, they seemed equally pleased with each other, and an intimacy almost immediately sprang up between them which with some interruptions, extended over the six remaining years of their joint lives. Their friendship was to become one of the most interesting facts of English literary history. They entered deeply into poetical discussions as nothing could be more opposite than their natures, and their poetic tendencies. Two persons more formed to whet each other's faculties by discussion would be difficult to find. Shelley, purely spiritual, was all imagination while Byron had much of the world in him, and a strong tendency to truth and reality. Shelley entertained the highest possible opinion of Byron's genius and his fruit in poetry. He could not help comparing his own achievement and his fame with Byron's and the result that in the presence of one whom he believed to be the greater poet, he became inactive. On the contrary Byron found himself refined and inspired by his spiritually-minded companion.

From the first Shelley perceived Byron's great faults of character but at the same time he recognized the fact that Byron made himself out much worse than he really was.

Shelley wrote to Peacock, a poet and novelist who was a close friend of his:

1. Byron, The Two Foscari
"Lord Byron is an exceedingly interesting person; and as such is it not to be regretted that he is a slave to the vilest and most vulgar prejudices, and as mad as the winds?"

Among the simpler tastes common to both which perhaps helped to unite them was fondness for boating. They purchased a boat together, and every evening, during their residence at the same hotel at Secheron, they went boating accompanied by the ladies and Polidori. These excursions, which often lasted into the "hours of moonlight" were the inspiration of some of the most admirable of the third canto of "Childe Harold" which was written at Geneva.

"There breathes a living fragrance from the shore,
Of flowers yet fresh with childhood; on the ear
Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night carol more;

He is an evening reveller, who makes
His life an infancy, and sings, his fill;
... There seems a floating whisper on the hill,
But there is fancy, for the starlight dews
All silently their tears of love, instil,
Weeping themselves away...."

After spending a fortnight under the same roof with Byron at Secheron, Shelley with Mary and Claire, finding the expenses at the hotel too great, moved to a cottage at Mont Alegre, about two miles from the city. Byron followed them on June 19th, taking the Villa Diodati which was only a few minutes' walk from Shelley's cottage. During the time that Byron outstayed them at Secheron, he and Polidori every evening crossed the lake to visit them. As he returned over the darkened waters, says Mrs. Shelley:

July 17, 1816
"The wind from far across bore us his voice "singing a Tyrolean song of liberty by Moore. 1

After moving to Diodati Shelley was his constant companion upon the water, and every evening after dinner they went out on the lake; sometimes they landed, and Shelley with the two women would walk ahead, while Byron limped behind leaning on his cane and muttering a stanza to himself. One evening, while they were all out rowing Byron cried:

"I will sing you an Albanian song; now be sentimental and give me all your attention." 2

He gave out a strange wild howl which he declared was an exact imitation of the savage Albanian mode. The group had expected to hear wild Eastern melody and Byron was very much amused at their disappointment. Perhaps it was after this evening that Byron was called the "Albanese", or more often Albe.

When the weather was bad and they could not go out on the lake, Shelley and Mary would come up after dinner and spend the evening at Diodati, sometimes staying there all night.

"We often," says one who was not the least ornamental of the party, "sat up in conversation till the morning light. There was never any lack of subjects and grave or gay, we were always interested." 3

In the meantime Polidori had become jealous of the growing intimacy between Lord Byron and Shelley. On one occasion having been the loser in a sailing match with Shelley, he took it into

1. Dowden, Edward, The Life of Shelley, p. 310
his head that Shelley had treated him with contempt; and went so far as to send him a challenge, at which Shelley only laughed. Lord Byron, knowing Shelley's sentiments against duelling stopped further impertinences by remarking:

"Recollect, that though Shelley has some scruples about duelling, I have none; and shall be, at all times, ready to take his place."

During a week of rainy weather at this time, they amused themselves with reading German ghost stories. After midnight on June 18th, when the tales of spectres had been told, Byron repeated the lines in Coleridge's "Christabel" descriptive of the mysterious horror of the witch Geraldine's bosom. When silence ensued Shelley ran out of the room with a candle, shrieking and putting his hands to his head. The physician had to throw water on his face and give him ether in order to revive him. After this spasm passed and they were again calm, Byron said, "We will each write a ghost story." They all promised to try to write something weird or ghostly and separated for the night. Shelley and Claire began stories, but never did anything with them. Byron only wrote a fragmentary portion of a tale called "The Vampire", and Polidori using the same foundation wrote an absurd narrative. Mary Shelley disappointed the others by not writing any story; but, as it turned out, she was only waiting for an adequate motive. One evening she heard Byron and Shelley discussing the nature of the principle of life and the possibility of communicating the vital spark to inanimate matter. That night, as she lay sleepless,

1. Moore, Thomas, The Life And Letters Of Lord Byron, p.555
she had a waking vision of a student of mysteries creating a
human monster, and of his terrible emotions when his task re-
sulted in unexpected success. The result was the romance,
Frankenstein.

Toward the latter end of June Shelley and Byron decided
to make a tour around the lake. On the 23rd of June they
started out. Two days later a rudder of their boat was broken
making it hard to manage, for the waves fell in the boat. Byron
and Shelley took off their coats and expected every minute to be
swamped. They managed to arrive safely at a sheltered port. Shel-
ley writes to Peacock:

"I felt in this near prospect of death a mixture of sensa-
tions, among which terrors entered though but subordinately. My
feelings would have been less painful had I been alone; but I
knew that my companion would have attempted to save me, and I was
overcome with humiliation, when I thought that his life might have
been risked to preserve mine." 2

Moore tells us that Shelley seated himself on a locker and "grasp-
ing the rings at each end firmly in his hands, declared his deter-
mination to go down in that position without a struggle." 3 Byron
says:

"The boat was nearly wrecked near the very spot where St.
Freux and Julia were in danger of being drowned. It would have
been classical to have been lost there, but not agreeable. I
ran no risk, being so near the rocks and a good swimmer; but our
party were wet and incomforted." 4

Two such revolutionary or such brave poets were, in all probability,
ever before nor since in a storm in a boat together. The next morn-

1. Sharp, op. cit., p. 121.
2. Rhys, Ernest, Essays And Letters By Shelley, p. 190
ing they inspected the dungeons of Chillon, then went on to Clarens - a visit commemorated in stanzas of "Childe Harold".

It seems that neither Shelley nor Byron had ever studied Rousseau's "Nouvelle Heloise", which had been written many years before either of them was born. They now read it for the first time, and found that in some parts it formed an excellent guide-book. They threw themselves with zeal into an attempt to identify the very places where its imaginary incidents might have occurred; and they were probably unaware at the time that its author had admitted the existence of topographical errors and transpositions of scenery, in some cases due to carelessness and in others to a desire to lead the reader astray. At Meilleire they tried to identify the exact places connected with the old romance. At the chateau at Clarens they roamed in the deserted garden and picked roses to send to some of their friends. From Clarens they went to Vevai and then to Ouchy, where they were detained two days in a small inn by the weather. It was then that Byron wrote his "Prisoner of Chillon". They visited Gibbon's house at Lausanne and Byron picked a sprig of acacia and sent it to Moore. After leaving Ouchy they had two days of pleasant sailing before arriving back at Monte Alegre and Diodati.

During the voyage which lasted eight days Shelley wrote no poetry, but his mind was open to every appeal of beauty. The "Hymn To Intellectual Beauty" was conceived at this time.

1. Elton, Charles l., *An Account Of Shelley's Visit To France, Switzerland And Savoy*, p. 61
After their return to their residences, they again resumed
their regular routine of life. To read, to write, to go abroad
in the boat together, or alone, to meet at Diodati in the even-
ning for talk prolonged far into the night — such was the constant-
ly repeated round. They would talk in the evenings until as
Polidori says, "the ladies' brains whizzed with giddiness". While
Shelley and Byron debated, Mary would look on and listen. After-
wards when Shelley's voice was forever silent, the voice of Byron
would fill her with melancholy by the demand which it seemed to
make for that other which her heart must listen for henceforth
in vain. She wrote in her Journal for October 18, 1822:

"I do not think that any person's voice has the same power
of awakening melancholy in me as Albe's. I have been accustomed,
when hearing it, to listen and speak little; another's voice,
not mine, ever replied — a voice, whose strings are broken. When
Albe ceases to speak, I expect to hear that other voice, and when
I hear another instead it jars strangely with every association.
... since my incapacity and timidity always prevented my mingling
in the nightly conversations of Diodati, they were, as it were,
entirely tete-a-tete between Shelley and Albe; and thus, as I
have said, when Albe speaks and Shelley does not answer, it is
as thunder without rain — the form of the sun without heat or light,
as any familiar object might be, shorn of its best attributes; and
I listen with an unspeakable melancholy that yet is not all pain." 3

"With another I might talk, and not for the moment think of
Shelley — at least not think of him with the same vivdness as if
I were alone; but, when in company with Albe, I can never cease
for a second to have Shelley in my heart and brain, with a clear-
ness that functions of life — until, if tears do not relieve me,
the hysterical feelings analogous to that which the murmur of the
sea gives to me, presses painfully upon me." 4

2. Ibid., p. 313.
3. Ibid., pp. 315f.
Shelley and Mary with Claire returned to England in September, 1816. By this time the anticipated birth of Byron's child could hardly have been unknown to Shelley and Mary. Neither Shelley nor Mary appeared indignant at Byron's act probably because of their own behavior, and because Byron had not yet shown any cruelty to Claire.

On Shelley's return to England he had a commission to perform for Byron in London. The MS. of the third canto of "Childe Harold", written by Byron in Switzerland, had been entrusted to Shelley to be taken to Byron's publisher, John Murray, and with this MS. he sent a letter saying:

"I know not well to whom to consign the correction of the proofs, nor indeed who would be good natured enough to overlook it in its progress, as I feel that it should be published with as few errata as possible. Perhaps my friend, Mr. Moore, (if in town) would do this. If not Mr. Shelley will take it on himself, and in any case, he is authorized to act for me in treating with you, etc., on this subject".

Murray had Gifford to oversee the proofs and published the canto without permitting Shelley to revise the proofs before publication.

On September 24, 1816, Shelley made his will designating Byron and Peacock as trustees. On the 28th Shelley wrote to Byron on a subject of special interest. Rumors had been going around in London respecting Byron's relations with his half-sister, Augusta Leigh, daughter of his father by a previous marriage. During the time that Lady Byron lived with Byron there had been incidents and suggestions which caused her to suspect that a criminal relation had once existed, and might still exist, between Lord Byron

1. Peck, Walter, Shelley, V. 1, 496.
and Mrs. Leigh. After her separation from Byron it seems that Mrs. Byron determined to believe in Augusta and to crush the ever reviving suspicions. Shelley wrote the following to Byron:

"I saw Kinnard and had a long talk with him. He informed me that Lady Byron was now in perfect health, that she was living with your sister. I felt much pleasure from this intelligence. I consider the latter part of it as affording a calumny that ever was advanced against you. On this ground, at least, it will become the world hereafter to be silent."

In the same letter he minimizes the effect which scandal can have upon the estate of the true man of genius, and in a stirring appeal to Byron's best and highest self indicated the path which he believed that this D'Artagnan of English letters should hue for himself. Says Shelley:

"You have already given evidence of very uncommon powers, ... I do not know how great an intellectual compass you are destined to fill. I only know that your powers are astonishingly great, and that they ought to be exerted to their full extent. ... I delight in much of what you have already done. I hope for much more in the same careless spirit of ardent sentiment. I hope for no more than that you should, from some moment when the clearness of your own mind makes evident to you the "truth of things", feel that you are chosen out from all other men to some great enterprise of thought; and that all your studies should from that moment tend toward that enterprise alone; that your affections, that all worldly hopes this world may have left to you should link themselves to this design. 3

He does not advise Byron to write an epic poem, unless he is fully prepared to apply himself to that task.

"What it should be, I am not qualified to say. In a more presumptuous mood, I recommend the Revolution of France as a theme involving pictures of all that is best qualified to interest and to instruct mankind. But it is inconsistent with the spirit in which you ought to devote yourself to so great a destiny,

1. Peck, op. cit., V. 1, 487. (Footnote) Fragment of a letter from Bath, September 29, 1816.
2. Ibid., p. 488.
3. Ibid., pp. 488f.
that you should make use of any understanding but your own - much less mine." 1

It is particularly significant that this subject he suggested to Byron for his great poem became the foundation of his own "Leon and Cythna" which was later republished under the title of "The Revolt Of Islam".

1. Stovall, Floyd, *Desire And Restraint In Shelley*, p. 157
CHAPTER 11

THE MEETING OF BYRON AND SHELLEY IN VENICE

The child Claire had been expecting when she left Byron at Diodati was born at Bath, on January 12, 1817. Claire's mother and Godwin knew nothing of the affair, and as far as possible it was kept secret. Shelley and Mary addressed their letters to her at Bath as Mrs. Clairmont, but when they moved to Marlow, she resumed her maiden name. On the 17th Shelley wrote to Byron describing the child and told him that she passed in England for the child of a friend in London, sent into the country for her health. They called her by a name resembling Albe's - Alba until someone with a better right should rename the baby. Byron refused to correspond with Claire, and Shelley had to write to him concerning the child. On April 25th, following, Shelley requested Byron to make some provision for her, and relieve him and Mary of the embarrassment caused by the child's presence with Claire in their home. 1 Shelley writes:

"But we find it indispensable that Claire should reside with us; and a perpetual danger of discovery that it is hers impends. Nothing would be easier than to own that it was hers, and that it is the offspring of a private marriage in France. But the wise heads suppose that such a tale would make people consider it as mine, and that the inhabitants of this most Christian country would not suffer me to dwell among them under such an imputation." 2

2. Ibid., pp. 180f.
On July 9th, he wrote to Byron concerning Alba:

"We are exposed to what remarks her existence is calculated to excite. At least a period approaches when it will be impossible to temporize with our servants or our visitors."

He suggested delivering the child into the guardianship of two respectable ladies in Marlow, until the time came she could be taken to her father, but that plan was dropped.

By the autumn of 1817, it was necessary for Shelley to take a rest and change of climate to restore his health. Shelley thought the warm climate of Pisa would be beneficial to him, and he was also anxious to place Alba under her father's care. They decided that going to Italy would be an easy way of taking the child safe to Venice, where Byron was then residing. Shelley wrote the following to Byron on September 24, 1817:

"My health is in a miserable state, so that some care will be required to prevent it speedily terminating in death. Such an event it is my interest and duty to prevent, nor am I indifferent to the pleasures of this scene of things. They recommend Italy as a certain remedy for my disease."

On March 12, 1818, Shelley left England for Italy. Shortly before the travelers left, Mrs. Clairmont had little Alba baptized by the name of Allegra, the father's name being entered in the register as Lord Byron. On March 21, Shelley sent Byron a letter telling him that Allegra was on her way to him. From Milan on April 13, he wrote again inviting Byron to take charge of Allegra and visit him in a house he proposed to take on Lake Como, but the house was not taken and the two poets did not meet until the following August, when Shelley accompanied Claire to

2. Ibid., p. 182.
Venice. While at Milan Shelley met a Venetian who told him such news of Byron's manner of life as made it seem unadvisable to send Allegra to him. Byron had written making it clear that he could receive Allegra only with the understanding that Claire's parting with the child should be final. However, Claire was resolved to send Allegra, and acting against Shelley's advice, sent her to Venice with Elsie, a Swiss nurse, who had been with the baby from the first. Byron put Allegra in the charge of Mrs. Hoppner, wife of the Consul-General at Venice.

In August Elsie wrote letters to Claire which made her decide to go to Venice immediately. She persuaded Shelley to go with her in the hope that Byron would relent, and let her see her child. They visited the Hoppners first, and Claire saw Elsie and Allegra there. They decided not to let Byron know of Claire's being there for fear he would immediately leave Venice. Shelley called upon Byron that same day, and Byron was delighted to see him. Their first conversation consisted in the object to Shelley's visit, and Byron agreed to let Allegra spend a week with Claire. It seems that Byron was never able to repulse Shelley when they were face to face. The whole system of Byron's opinions would change under Shelley's influence.

After the discussion much against Shelley's will, for he wanted to get back to Claire at Mrs. Hoppner's, Byron took him in his gondola across the laguna to the island of Lido. There Byron's horses were waiting, and to Shelley's delight they rode and talked. This memorable ride on the Lido was afterwards immortalized by Shelley in his "Julian And Maddalo".
"I rode one evening with Count Maddalo
Upon the bank of land which breaks the flow.
Of Adria towards Venice; ... I loved all waste
And solitary places; where we taste
The pleasure of believing what we see
Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be:
And such was this wide ocean, and this shore
More barren than its billows; and yet more
Than all, with a remembered friend I love
To ride as then I rode." 1

Shelley writes the following to Mary from Venice relating everything in its order:

"At three o'clock I called on Lord Byron; he was delighted to see me. He took me in his gondola across the Laguna to a long sand island, which defends Venice from the Adriatic. When we disembarked, we found his horses waiting for us and we rode along the sands of the sea, talking. Our conversation consisted in histories of his wounded feelings, and questions as to my affairs, and great professions of friendship and regard for me. He said, that if he had been in England at the time of the Chancery affair, he would have moved heaven and earth to have prevented such a decision. 2 We talked of literary matters, his Fourth Canto, which he says, is very good, and indeed repeated some stanzas of great energy to me." 3

Byron was led to believe that Mrs. Shelley with her children and Claire were not at Padua. He offered to lend Shelley and his household for two months his villa I Cappuccini, a large commodious house beautifully situated among the Euganean Hills, which he had himself rented two years before, and to allow Allegra to go and stay there with her mother. Shelley joyfully accepted this generous offer, and he immediately wrote to Mary to come at once and join them. As soon as Mary received Shelley's letter she decided to set forth for Este without further delay. Clare, one of her babies,

2. An Allusion to the decision of Chancellor Eldon whereby Shelley's two children by his first marriage were denied to him and placed under the care of their maternal grandfather.
was taken dangerously ill on the way and died on September 24, shortly after reaching Venice. Claire was then at the villa with Allegra and little William. Mary and Shelley stayed with the Hoppners at Venice until the 28, seeing Byron each day.

Shelley's first impressions of Byron at Venice were favorable, for Byron showed only his more agreeable side. It seems that by encountering Shelley again Byron was much taken out of the unworthy life he was then leading, and thrown from it into his better and truer self. In a letter to Peacock written October 8, 1818, Shelley says:

"I saw Lord Byron and really hardly knew him again; he is changed into the liveliest and happiest-looking man I ever met; he read in the first Canto of his "Don Juan" - a thing in the style of Beppo, but infinitely better. ..."

On October 12, Shelley and his wife went again to Venice and remained there till near the end of the month. Shelley spent several evenings with Byron at his Palazzo on the Grand Canal. He now saw a great deal of the life Byron was leading, and of the ruin which it was working in his character, than had been visible to him during his first visit to Venice. In writing to Peacock from Naples on the 22nd of December, he speaks in scathing terms of what he saw of Byron in Venice.

"I remonstrated with him in vain on the tone of mind from which such a view of things alone arises. ... The fact is, that first, the Italian women with whom he associates, are perhaps the most contemptible of all who exist under the moon - the most ignorant, the most disgusting, the most bigoted, countesses (who) smell so strongly of garlic that an ordinary Englishman cannot approach them. Well, Lord Byron is familiar with the lowest"

sort of these women, the people his gondolieri pick up in the streets. He associates with wretches who seem almost to have lost the gait and physiognomy of man, and who do not scruple to avow practices which are only not named, but I believe seldom even conceived in England. He says he disapproves, but he endures. He is heartily and deeply discontented with himself, and contemplating in the distorted mirror of his own thoughts the nature and the destiny of men, what can he behold but objects of contempt and despair? But that he is a great poet, I think the address to Ocean proves. And he has a certain degree of candour while you talk to him but unfortunately it does not outlast your departure. No, I do not doubt, and, for his sake, I ought to hope that his present career must end soon in some violent circumstance." 1

Byron's own sense of degradation can be seen in his tragedy of "Marino Faliero" finished in 1820 which shows his bitter hatred for the Venice which at first he had declared to be so great.

"Thou den of drunkards with the blood of Princes! Gehenna of the waters! thou Sea-Sodom! Thus I devote thee to the Infernal Gods! Thee and thy serpent seed!" 2

Byron was never more keen or productive intellectually than he was in Venice and continued to do some of his best work. It was during the first two years of his residence in Italy that he finished "Manfred", wrote "The Lament Of Tasso", "Beppo", the Fourth Canto of "Childe Harold", "Mazeppa", and the first Canto of "Don Juan". Shelley had thought of writing a lyrical drama on the madness of Tasso. The idea was never carried out and the only fragments of the tragedy of Tasso which we have are a short scene and an unfinished song. It is said that he was kept from attempting "Tasso" by the appearance of Byron's "Lament Of Tasso", and his reluctance to enter into competition with one to whose

1. Rilys, op. cit. p. 250.
2. Mayne, Ethel, Byron. p. 295
genius he assigned a pre-eminence over his own. ¹

Shelley's happier impression of Byron is recorded in his famous poem "Julian And Maddalo". Dowden supposes it to have been written probably between his first and second visits to Venice. This certainly seems most likely both from the favourable impressions it gives to Byron, and from the description of little Allegra playing with the billiard balls in Byron's house, as the child during Shelley's visits to Venice later was with Claire in Este. "Julian And Maddalo" was mainly written in the summer house adjacent to the villa. It gives us portraits of the two great poets, Byron as Count Maddalo, and Shelley as Julian. Both poets are idealized yet each is recognizable. It records a conversation between Count Maddalo and Julian as they ride on the Lido towards sundown, and their visit to a Venetian madhouse where they listened to the melancholy talk of a maniac. The poem is also interesting for its famous picture of little Allegra in lines of gentle pathos which have never been surpassed:

"A lovelier toy of 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, yet gleam  
With such deep meaning as we never see  
But in the human countenance; with me  
She was a special favorite;  
... we sat there, rolling billiard balls about,  
When Count Maddalo entered." ²

In the preface to this poem the following estimate of Lord Byron is given which helps us to understand the relation of the two friends at this time:

2. Shelley's Complete Works, Julian And Maddalo, p. 189
"He is a person of the most consummate genius and capable if he would direct his energies to such an end, of becoming the redeemer of his degraded country. But it is his weakness to be proud: he derives, from a comparison of his own extraordinary mind with the dwarfish intellects that surround him, an intense apprehension of the nothingness of human life. His passions and his powers are incomparably greater than that of other men. ... I say that Maddalo is proud, because I can find no other word to express the concentrated and impatient feelings which consume him; ... in social life no human being can be more gentle, patient, and unassuming than Maddalo. His more serious conversation is a sort of intoxication; men are held by it as by a spell." 1

In the following lines a vivid account of Byron's disposition and manner is finely expressed:

"The sense that he was greater than his kind
Had struck, methinks, his eagle spirit blind,
By gazing on its own exceeding light." 2

While riding along the Lido they talked of God, of free will and of destiny. Byron, of course taking the side of fatalism, the impotence of mankind, and Shelley answering thus:

"... it is our will
That thus enchains us to permitted ill -
We might be otherwise - we might be all
We dream of happy, high, majestic.
Where is the love, beauty, and truth we seek
But in our mind? and if we were not weak
Should we be less in deed than in desire?"

"... How vainly to be strong! said Maddalo:
You talk Utopia." 3

It was that same endless debate of theirs, with Shelley believing that things are dependent on man, that a man's life is of his own making, and Byron urging that evil is an external reality against which all human efforts must shadow itself. Calvinism versus Radicalism. 4

1. Shelley's Complete Poetical Works, Julian And Maddalo, p. 185.
2. Ibid., p. 187.
3. Ibid., p. 189.
Late in October at Este Shelley composed the first draft of "Lines Written Among The Euganean Hills." Here he praises Venice for having sheltered Byron and speaks of him as

"A tempest-sleeping Swan
Of the songs of Albion,
Driven from his ancestral streams
By the night of evil dreams,
Found a nest in thee;
... Though thy sins and slaveries foul
Over cloud a sunlike soul?
As the ghost of Homer clings
Round the Commander's wasting springs;
As divinest Shakespeare's might
Fills Avon and the world with light
Like omniscient power which he
Imaged 'mid mortality;
... - so thou art.
Mighty spirit - so shall be
The City that did refuge thee."

The first act of "Prometheus Unbound" was the third of Shelley's great enterprise at Este.

After a visit of twelve days, Shelley on October 24, returned to the Villa I Cappuccini in order to get Allegra and take her back to her father again. November was not far off, and Shelley knew he must leave Este and go south to a warmer climate on account of his health. On October 29, Shelley with Allegra was again in Venice, and the sojourn at Byron's villa ended.

1. Shelley's Complete Poetical Works, Lines Written Among The Euganean Hills, p. 552.
CHAPTER III

SHELLEY’S VISIT TO BYRON AT RAVENNA

Between 1818 and 1820, the two poets were separated, though they were in constant correspondence about Allegra and her mother. Shelley, due to his restless activity and impatience of change, was ever ready to move somewhere else after he spent a few weeks at one place. In this he was the direct opposite of Byron, who was forever planning moves and changes, and journeys here and there, but who, in practice, tended to remain in any congenial place, and in a very short time have attachments of one kind or another. Early in November the Shelley’s left Venice for Rome and from there went to Naples where they spent the next three months. With the first days of spring came the desire to spend a few months’ residence in Rome. By the early part of March they were settled there and remained until the following June. The Shelleys then spent the summer at Leghorn, and the following autumn and winter at Florence.

While at Florence there arrived a connection of the Shelley family, Miss Sophia Stacy, who was gifted with a very sweet and well-trained voice. Shelley enjoyed her singing and he often said he should like his friend Byron to hear her. He wrote asking him over but Byron was prevented at the time by illness from coming.

1. Angeli, Helen Rossetti, Shelley And His Friends In Italy, p. 102
The cold months at Florence proved harmful to Shelley, and shortly after the arrival of the new year they moved to Pisa, where Shelley remained except for excursions and temporary absences for the rest of his life.

With Byron's restoration to health in the spring of 1819, he began a definite reform in his way of living. In April, 1819, Byron met Teresa Guiccioli, the daughter of Count Gamba of Ravenna, and married but a short time before to an old and wealthy widower, of the same city, Count Guiccioli. Byron became infatuated with her. About the middle of April, Madame Guiccioli had been obliged to leave Venice with her husband and go to Ravenna. Around the first of June, Byron at her request, followed her to Ravenna and in August went with her to Bologna. He stayed here while the Countess and the Count went for a short visit to some of his Ravennese estates in the latter part of August. He was quite distracted about Allegra as the Hoppners were about to travel in Switzerland, and Mrs. Hoppner desired, before departing to make adequate arrangements for the little girl. An English lady, Mrs. Vavassour, a widow with no children of her own offered to adopt and provide for Allegra if Lord Byron would consent to give up all claim to her. Byron refused to surrender all paternal authority. When the Hoppners started on their Swiss trip, Allegra was at first with a maid of Mrs. Hoppner's choosing, left in the house of one of the men-servants' wives. But as soon as Byron settled at Bologna he sent for her, and she was with him there when the Guicciolis departed. In September,
Count Guiccioli was called away to Ravenna on business, and this time he did not take his wife. On account of her ill health, it was decided, with the consent of the Count, that she should go to Venice with Lord Byron as her companion. They resided at Lord Byron's Villa at La Mira until a month later the Count came demanding a promise from the Countess that all intercourse of any kind should cease between her and Lord Byron. Byron now arranged everything for his departure for England and had even fixed the day, when accounts reached him from Ravenna that the Countess was alarmingly ill. In consequence of her relapse the husband gave his consent for renewed intercourse with Byron, and he was invited to Ravenna. On December 24, 1819, he reached Ravenna bringing Allegra with him, and Venice was done with forever.

Since Claire had parted from Allegra at Este in October, 1818, she had not seen her child and had received but little news from Venice. Claire wrote to Byron frequently begging the privilege of seeing her child. He not only refused her request but declined to write to her. Shelley did what he could for Claire by urging Byron to treat her with more indulgence, but he did not wish to interfere so far as to provoke Byron's resentment. Yet there can be no doubt that the ill feeling which ultimately arose between the two exiled poets was partly on account of Claire, though Byron's pride and selfishness had something to do with it. In May Byron received a letter again from Claire begging for a visit with her
child, and he answered by declaring he would put Allegra in a convent if she did not remain silent. The Shelleys became terribly uneasy. Claire's impulse was to start immediately for Ravenna and endeavour to come to an understanding with Byron. Shelley was to accompany her, but, on second thoughts, he decided that this would be unadvisable as Claire's presence would only tend to exasperate Byron. Claire, being terribly alarmed, wrote again to Byron, and this time he answered not to her but to Shelley. Shelley answered expressing regret that he should have written to Claire in such a harsh tone though admitting that in her letters which he did not see she might have said vexatious things. We know no more until August 28, when Byron again wrote, declining all correspondence with Claire. Shelley answered on September 17, saying now that any of her letters which he had seen he had thought extremely childish and absurd.

"I wonder, however," he added, "at your being provoked at what Claire writes. ... The weak and the foolish are in this respect like kings - they can do no wrong." 2

There the matter ends for that year.

When Allegra was four years old Byron placed her in the convent at Bagna Cavallo twelve miles away from Ravenna, his present place of abode. He told Hoppner that she was quite beyond the control of the servants, and he had no resource but to place her there for a time. He added that he had never intended to give her an English education, since she was a natural child, it would

2. Ibid., p. 545.
make "her after-settlement doubly difficult. Abroad, with a fair foreign education and a portion of five or six thousand pounds, she might and may marry very respectively." Moreover, he wished her to be a Roman Catholic, "which I look upon as the best religion." Claire wrote him a long and angry letter imploring him to allow her to place Allegra at her own expense (which would, of course, have been Shelley's) in one of the very best English boarding-schools. The question as to Allegra's education did not directly concern Shelley, but whatever hurt Claire was a matter of much concern to him. Yet when Byron wrote to him he did not hesitate in upholding Byron's decision, though sympathising with Claire. He did not feel that Byron had acted unworthily towards Allegra, and in defending Byron's actions he hoped their friendship would renew itself and increase in strength.

The incident which is to develop in this connection is the worst thing we are told of Byron. Sending Claire's letter to Hoppner, he wrote across the top:

"The moral part of the letter upon the Italians comes with an excellent grace from the writer now living with a man and his wife — and having planted a child in the Fl— Foundling, etc." 3

This referred to a calumny against Shelley which Hoppner had heard in the spring of 1820, from Elsie, the Swiss nurse, and Paolo Foggi who, after having betrayed her, had been induced to marry her. Shortly afterwards Paolo was dismissed from Shelley's service and out of revenge had spread this scandal saying that Claire in

2. Ibid., p. 360.
3. Ibid., p. 361.
the winter following their stay at Ete had given birth to a child, of which Shelley was the father and had placed the child in a foundling hospital. Byron had at first half-heartedly defended Shelley, against whom Hoppner's feeling had wholly turned; but soon he wrote:

"The story is true, no doubt, though Ete is but Queen's evidence. ... Of the facts, however, there can be little doubt; it is just like them." 1

In July Madame Guiccioli's father and brother were banished from Ravenna on political grounds, and she herself had fled to Florence for the present. They decided to go to Switzerland, and, it seems, Byron at first consented but later was opposed to the idea and was now inclined to seek a home in Tuscany or Lucca.

On August 2, 1821, Byron wrote to Shelley earnestly requesting that he come to Ravenna to give him aid and counsel in deciding where and how to settle himself and the Cus dei family on leaving Ravenna. Byron no doubt informed Shelley in his letter that he would soon be leaving Ravenna, and naturally Shelley's thoughts turned to Allegra in the convent at Bega Cavallio. Shelley had approved Byron's action in placing Allegra in a convent while Byron was only a few miles distant, but he felt that the child's position would be different if Byron should go to Switzerland.

Shelley set off the next day, this time without Claire's knowledge. At ten o'clock on the night of August 8, he reached Palazzo Guiccioli and was received very cordially by Lord Byron. They sat up until five the next morning discussing politics, poetry and personal affairs. Not having been in personal touch with Byron since Venice, Shelley was greatly surprised by the moral and physical

improvement he found in him. The following extract from a letter Shelley wrote to Mary from Ravenna August 7, 1821, expresses his opinions of Byron.

"Lord Byron is very well and was delighted to see me. He has, in fact, completely recovered his health, and lives a life totally the reverse of that which he led at Venice. He has a permanent sort of liaison with Countess Guiccioli, who is now at Florence, and seems from her letters to be a very amiable woman. ... Lord Byron had almost destroyed himself in Venice: his state of debility was such that he was unable to digest any food; he was consumed by hectic fever, and would speedily have perished, but for this attachment, which reclaimed him from the excesses into which he threw himself, from carelessness and pride, mired in politics and literature.

Shelley wrote from Ravenna with the greatest enthusiasm concerning Byron’s poetry, though they differed more than ever in their ideas on the subject, and Shelley was very far from agreeing with Byron’s theories. Shelley writes:

"We talked a great deal of poetry and such matters last night; and, as usual, differed - and I think more than ever. He affects to patronize a system of criticism fit only for the production of mediocrity; and, although all his finer poems and passages have been produced in defiance of this system, yet I recognize the pernicious effects of it in the "Doge of Venice"; and it will cramp and limit his future efforts, however great they may be, unless he gets rid of it. I have read only parts of it, or rather he himself read them to me, and gave me the plan of the whole." 2

During the first evening of his stay with Byron at Ravenna Shelley learned about the vile slanders which had been started against him by Paolocchi and Elate, and learned further that the Hoppners had believed the story and on this account had withdrawn their friendship. Shelley begged Mary to write at once to the

Hoppner and make an explanation, which she did. Byron had
promised Mr. Hoppner that the accusations should be concealed
from Shelley and now, by the letter from Mary Mr. Hoppner must
learn that his secret had been betrayed. Byron confessed to
Shelley that he had broken his word to Hoppner, and asked that
he be permitted to have Mary's letter to end with his com-
ments. But Mary's letter of vindication, entrusted to Byron
under a promise that he would forward it to the Hoppners, did
not pass out of his hands, and was found among papers of his
after his death.

Having as far as possible dismissed from his mind the pain-
ful impressions left by Lord Byron's disclosure, Shelley occupied
himself in visiting the antiquities of Ravenna. He went alone
as Byron seems to have taken so little interest in these wonder-
ful antiquities.

In the late afternoons and evenings they would ride through
the pine forest which stretches forty miles along the Adriatic
coast and divides Ravenna from the sea. In some quiet spot they
would set up a pumpkin for pistol-shooting, and Shelley, even
though he had had less practice of late than Byron, was delighted
to find that he was almost his equal as a marksman.

Literature was their chief topic. They even criticised each
other's respective works. Byron was silent as to "Adonais", loud
in praise of "Prometheus Unbound", and in censure of "The Cenci";
Shelley was cool towards "Marino Faliero", but enthusiastic over
"Don Juan". Even Byron himself must have been satisfied with
the new Canto V of which Shelley says:

"He has read to me one of the unpublished Cantos of 'Don Juan', which is astonishingly fine. It puts him not only above but far above all the poets of the day. Every word has the stamp of immortality. I despair of rivaling Lord Byron, as well as I may, and there is no other with whom it is worth contending. ... it fulfills in a certain degree, what I have longed preached, of producing something wholly new, and relative to the age, and yet surpassingly beautiful. It may be vanity, but I think I see the trace of my earnest exhortations to him to create something wholly new."

In "Don Juan" Shelley thought he saw Byron's accession to his request made in a letter written to Byron from England in 1817, for "something wholly new."

The domineering force of Byron's genius depressed Shelley. He acknowledged the marvellous ease and power of Byron's poetic style. In his opinion the Cain Volume contained "finer poetry than had appeared in England since the publication of 'Paradise Regained.'" There was no taint of bitterness or envy in Shelley's attitude throughout toward Byron for he was a great admirer of Byron's poetry, although he was conscious of the fact that his own poetry and his genius was not given justice. To Peacock Shelley writes:

"I write nothing, and probably shall write no more. It offends me to see my name classed among those who have no name. If I cannot do something better, I had rather do nothing, and the assured cause to the downfall of which I dedicate what powers I may have had—flourishes like a cedar and covers England with the boughs. My motive was never the infirm desire to fame; and if I continue an author, I feel that I should desire it. This cup is justly given to one only of an age; indeed, participation would make it worthless; and unfortunate they who seek it and find it not."

3. Angeli, Helen Rossetti, Shelley And His Friends In Italy, p. 221.
In his relations with Byron Shelley was always divided between admiration for the man's intellect — for Byron the poet and genius — an exasperation with his less noble aspect, with his childish waywardness, his obstinate pride, his unreasonableness, and moral perversity. On his side Byron, though too sincere and honest to attempt to depreciate Shelley's poetic genius, was not the man to seek to glorify a serious rival.

"If we purred the snake", he confessed to Trelawny, "it might not turn out a profitable investment." Byron did at times express his admiration of Shelley's powers. He, no doubt, better than any of Shelley's friends, understood and appreciated the value of his poetry. Byron was the one man who had full opportunity to estimate Shelley correctly, for his genius. For Shelley as a man Byron entertained the deepest admiration, respect and liking. In his Journal he refers to Moore, Scott, and Shelley as the only literary men he liked personally — the first two being of the world and Shelley a "visionary out of it." 1-4

Shelley's impressions of Byron whom he had not seen for almost three years and of his extraordinary household is given in his letters to Mary and Peacock. He described his life from day to day under Byron's regime and although not to his liking, he felt he could endure it for a short visit. He wrote the following to Peacock:

1. Ingpen, op. cit., p. 398.
3. Ibid., p. 223.
4. Ibid., p. 223.
"Lord Byron gets up at two. I get up, quite contrary to my usual custom (but one must sleep or die, like Southey's Sea-snake ("Khehama,")) at twelve. After breakfast we sit talking till six. From six till eight we gallop through the pine forest which divides Havanna from the sea; we then come home and dine and sit up gossiping till six in the morning. I don't suppose this will kill me in a week or fortnight, but I shall not try it long. Lord Byron's establishment consists, besides servants, of ten horses, eight enormous dogs, three monkeys, five cats, an eagle, a crow, and a falcon; and all these except the horses walk about the house, which every now and then resounds with their inarbitrated quarrels as if they were the masters of it."

Shelley adds in a postscript:

"After I have sealed my letter, I find that my enumeration of the animals in this Circean Palace was defective, and that in a material point. I have just met on the grand staircase five peacocks, two guinea-hens, and an Egyptian crane. I wonder who all these animals were, before they were changed to these shapes."

On the 9 of August Shelley writes this to Mary:

"Lord Byron is greatly improved in every respect, in genius, in temper, in moral views, in health, in happiness. He lives in considerable splendour but within his income, which is now about four thousand pounds a year; one hundred of which he devotes to purposes of charity. He has had mischievous passions but these he seems to have subdued, and he is becoming what he should be a virtuous man."

Byron had Shelley write to the Countess Guiccioli (whom he did not know) and ask her to give up the Swiss project and choose Pisa as her residence. It was a very delicate question but Byron knew he could rely on Shelley's perfect good feeling and judgment.

Shelley writes to Mary:

"He has made me write a long letter to her to engage her to remain — an odd thing enough for an utter stranger to write on subjects of the utmost delicacy to his friend's mistress. But it seems destined that I am always to have some active part in everybody's affairs whom I approach."

2. Ibid., p. 504.
4. Ibid., p. 894.
Shelley's letter to the countess had the desired effect of convincing her and her brother not to go to Switzerland but instead to go to Pisa.

In the course of their talk Shelley was able to mention their mutual friend Leigh Hunt, who was in sore straits in England and whom Shelley would have liked to bring to Italy. Shelley was wondering how Hunt could be employed in Italy when Byron thought of the idea of inviting him to come to Pisa and "go shares" with Shelley and himself in a periodical to be published there, in which each of the contracting parties should publish all their original compositions and share the profits. An association with Byron would have made Leigh Hunt's fortune and Shelley without giving his host time to change his mind hurriedly wrote to Hunt, urging him to come. Shelley found it impossible to request directly a contribution from Byron for Hunt's relief. The reason for his reluctance he explained in a letter to Mary on August 9, 1821:

"I am sure if I asked it would not be refused; yet there is something in me that makes it impossible. Lord Byron and I are excellent friends, and were I reduced to poverty, or were I a writer who had no claims to a higher station than I possess, or did I possess a higher than I deserve, we should appear in all things as such, and I would freely ask him any favour. Such is not the case. The demon of mistrust and pride lurks between two persons in our situation, poisoning the freedom of our intercourse. This is a task and a heavy one, which we must pay for being human. I think the fault is not on my side, nor is it likely - I being the weaker. I hope that in the next world these things will be better managed. What is passing in the heart of another, rarely escapes the observations of one who is a strict anatomist of his own." I

And to Leigh Hunt he complains of the "Canker of Aristocracy" which existed in the midst of "many generous and exalted qualities in Byron's character, and which needed to be cut out. 1"

In a letter to Mary August 16, 1821, Shelley says:

"Lord Byron has certainly a great regard for us — the regard of such a man is worth — some of the tribute we must pay to the base passions of humanity in any intercourse with those within their circle; he is better worth it than those on whom we bestow it from mere custom." 2

The period from August, 1821, to January, 1822, is that of Shelley's greatest admiration for Byron. Byron was very loth to see Shelley depart, and kept him as long as possible, even threatening that in his absence and that of his mistress he risked falling back into bad habits of life.

"I then talk, and he listens to reason;" Shelley writes, "and I earnestly hope that he is too well aware of the terrible and degrading consequences of his former mode of life, to be in danger from the short interval of temptation that will be left him." 3

The countess asked as a favour that Shelley would not leave Ravenna without Byron. He replied courteously, but did not feel obliged to comply with her wishes. Shelley took his leave after a visit of ten days duration. The result of this visit was Byron's decision to come to Pisa.

1. Dowden, op. cit., p. 305.
2. Ingersen, op. cit., p. 306.
CHAPTER LV

THE MOVE TO PISA

As soon as Shelley returned to Pisa he engaged the Palazzo Lanfranchi for Byron in compliance with his urgent request to procure for him a handsome dwelling in Pisa. Shelley and Mary had planned to winter in Florence, but since English visitors were numerous in that city, they decided that with Lord Byron, the Williamses, and other friends in Pisa, it would be better for them to remain there, too.

Towards the end of August the Countess Guiccioli and her father and brother arrived in Pisa, and shortly afterwards made the acquaintance of Mary. They had to wait fully two months before the arrival of Byron. On the 21 of October Shelley wrote to Byron:

"The countess is very patient, though sometimes she seems apprehensive that you will never leave Ravenna." I

On the 28 of October Lord Byron left Ravenna and arrived in Pisa on the first of November with his troop of carriages, dogs, horses, monkeys, fowls, and servants establishing himself quietly in Palazzo Lanfranchi for ten months, interrupted only by a temporary residence of six weeks in the neighborhood of Leghorn. The Palazzo Lanfranchi was a fine sixteenth-century building and

Byron called it a famous feudal palace. The Shelleys were installed nearly opposite in the Tre Palazzi di Chiesa—a far less sumptuous abode. The Gambas and Countess Guiccioli had become part of the Shelley circle.

Byron's life in the old feudal building followed in the main the kind of life he had led at Ravenna. He rose late, received visitors in the afternoons, played billiards, rode or practiced pistol-shooting with Shelley, and sat up late to talk with him. Occasionally he entertained strangers as he seemed to be more sociable here than either at Venice or at Ravenna. On occasions Shelley's presence would be required at one of Byron's weekly dinners at the Palazzo Lanfranchi, "when," he writes, "my nerves are generally shaken to pieces by sitting up till three o'clock in the morning." ¹ Byron's dinners became famous in Pisa, though he himself was most sparing in his diet, partly on account of his health and partly for fear of growing fat; while Shelley still adhered, more or less strictly, to his meagre vegetarian diet. Byron's brilliant and often bitter wit and Shelley's eloquence and learning combined to immortalize these feasts.² Byron's conversations with his ridiculing and cynicism was often wearisome to others, but with Shelley he never talked any other way but confidentially and seriously. He refers to Shelley at this time as the most companionable man under thirty "he had ever met." ³ Mephistopheles, in Goethe's

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¹ Dowden, op. cit., p. 514.
² Angell, op. cit., p. 246.
"Faust," calls the serpent who tempted Eve "my aunt, the renowned snake;" and Byron insisted that Shelley was one of her nephews, walking along on the tip of his tail; his bright eyes, slim figure, and noiseless movements strengthened, if they did not suggest, the comparison. 1 Shelley, who was always attracted by the subject of snakes, did not resent the name, but accepted Byron's title, in a poem of 1821 addressed to Jane Williams, identified himself with the serpent shut out of Paradise. But if Byron called Shelley a snake, he recognized in him the most remarkable man he knew, the best judge of poetry, and the most generous. Byron admired him, envied him, and sometimes watched him surreptitiously with a secret longing to catch him out.

Byron's friends at home were very fearful regarding Shelley's influence on him. Alarm and anxiety for Byron's morals and principles were aroused in English literary circles on account of his friendship with Shelley and his intended coalition with Shelley and Hunt in the Journal. Moore wrote repeatedly warning him against the snares of the snake. Dr. John Watkins, in an anonymous publication of 1822, concerning Byron's association with Shelley says:

"Yet Lord Byron continued to live on terms of intimacy with this person; he is actually associated with him at the present moment, in some new literary projects in Italy." 3

1. Dowden, op. cit., p. 514.
2. Maurois, Andre, Byron, p. 464
Byron himself says:

"To-day I had another letter warning me against the snake. He alone, in this age of humbug, dares stem the current as he did to-day the flooded Arno in his skiff, although I could not observe he made any progress. The attempt is better than being swept along as all the rest are, with the filthy garbage secured from its banks." 1

In a letter to Moore Byron writes:

"As to poor Shelley, who is another bugbear to you and the world, he is, to my knowledge, the least selfish and the mildest of men — a man who has made more sacrifice of his fortune and feelings for others than any I have ever heard of. With his speculative opinions I have nothing in common, nor desire to have." 2

Shelley's influence, which was so much dreaded by Moore and the literary men of London, did not make an absolute infidel of Byron, but it can be seen very clearly from Byron's letters and conversations of this period that Shelley did exercise a considerable influence over his mind and outlook on life. Byron wrote in the following strain to his publisher:

"As to a poem in the old way, to interest the women as you call it, I shall attempt of that kind nothing further. I follow the bias of my own mind, without considering whether women or men are or not to be pleased." 3

Shelley could scarcely have expressed himself differently. In a letter to Moore on March 4, 1822, we see again the Shelley influence:

"... I think it (society) as now constituted, fatal to all great original undertakings of every kind. I never courted it then, when I was young and high in blood, and one of its 'ruled darlings'; and do you think I would do so now, when I am living in a clearer atmosphere?" 4

1. Dowden, op. cit., p. 516.
2. Ibid., p. 516.
4. Ibid., p. 244.
Moore wrote to Byron intimating that he believed the tone assumed in "Cain" could be easily attributed to Shelley's influence but Shelley wanted Moore to be assured that he had not the smallest influence over Byron in this particular. He made it known that "Cain" was conceived many years ago, and was begun before he saw him the year before at Ravenna. Shelley said he would be very happy if he could attribute to himself, however, indirectly, any participation in that immortal work. When Byron wrote his drama "Cain" he nevertheless must have read "Queen Mab" for through this play there are many echoes of Shelley's poem. Byron was writing his poem 'The Deformed Transformed", and handing it to Shelley, as he was in the habit of doing his daily compositions, he said:

"Shelley, I have been writing a Faustish kind of Drama: tell me what you think of it". After reading it attentively, Shelley returned it. "Well", said Lord Byron, "how do you like it?" "Least", replied he, "of anything I ever saw of yours. It, is a bad imitation of 'Faust'; and besides, there are two entire lines of Southey in it." Lord Byron changed color immediately, and asked hastily what lines? Shelley repeated:

'And water shall see thee,
And fear thee, and flee thee.'

"They are in 'the curse of Kehema'".

Lord Byron without making a single observation, instantly threw the poem into the fire."

Whether it was hatred of Southey or respect of Shelley's opinions which made him destroy the copy is not known. However, two years later "The Deformed Transformed" was published and it seems that

1. Moore, Thomas, Life Of Lord Byron With His Letters And Journals. VI 2. Ibid., p. 415.
he must have had another copy of the manuscript or had rewritten it omitting the 'Kehama' lines.

Companionship with Byron had made Shelley once more a rider, and the exercise on horseback, had improved his health. When Byron first came to Pisa, he invited his friends to practice pistol-shooting in the garden of Lanfranchi Palace, but he learned that all firing within the city walls was forbidden by the governor. He discovered a quiet place in a vineyard near the city that could be used for this purpose, and here each afternoon Byron and his pistol-club - Shelley, Williams, Medwin, Taffe and Gasba would ride. They would often place a half crown in the slit of a cane fixed in the ground and use this for a mark. Both Byron and Shelley were excellent marksmen.

Early in December the news reached the Pisa circle that a man who had insulted the Host at Lucca was sentenced to be burned. This so horrified Shelley that he proposed to Byron that himself, Byron, Medwin, and Taffe should immediately arm and go forth to force the man's release. Byron was willing but the scheme fell through when they heard the man's sentence had been changed to the gallows instead of the stake.

Shelley for a time enjoyed his association with Byron. He wrote to Peacock January 11, 1822, the following:

"Lord Byron is established here, and we are constant companions. No small relief this, after the dreary solitude of the understanding and the imagination in which we past (sic) the first years of our expatriation,做起 all sorts of miseries and discomforts."
Of course you have seen his last volume, and if you before thought him a great poet, what is your opinion now that you have read "Oenin?" The "Foscarri" and "Ravanapalus", I have not seen; but as they are in the style of his later writings, I doubt not they are very fine.

... I get up, or at least wake, early; read and write till two; go to Lord Byron's, and ride, or play at billiards, as the weather permits. ...

The month of January added a new and most important member to the Pisan circle. This was Captain Edward Trelawny who came to Pisa in order to be near Byron and Shelley, the two poets whose writings he so much admired, and whom he was anxious to meet. Both Byron and Shelley were greatly attracted by Trelawny and a very sincere friendship at once began between the two latter.

Byron talked very eagerly of getting up a play in his great hall at the Lanfranchi. It was to be "Othello" with Byron - Iago; Trelawny - Othello; Williams - Cassio; Mrs. Williams - Emelia. A difficulty over Desdemona's part arose, however, and the Countess Guiccioli put her veto on the theatricals.

Before the close of February difficulties arose between Shelley and Byron. At no other time did Byron's character present itself to Shelley in colors so dark. Shelley was under the impression that Allegra was not to be left behind in the convent at Bagna Cavallo when Byron came to Pisa, and he naturally was very much disappointed when Byron arrived without her. No sooner was Byron in Pisa than trouble with Claire began. She was now in Florence and on hearing that Byron left Allegra in the convent she

1. Ingpen, Roger, Letters Of Percy Bysshe Shelley, V. 11 928
was quite distressed. Mr. Tighe, a member of the Shelley circle went to the convent to obtain information about the child's surroundings. Mr. Tighe said the Shelleys were not to know about his journey for they would be sure to tell Byron. He sent an alarming report as there was a fever ravaging the district. Claire sent a letter to Byron asking him to put Allegro with some respectable family in Pisa or Florence and she would consent never to go near her; nor should even Shelley or Mary visit the child without his consent. This appeal left Byron unmoved except to become angered more than ever against Claire. Claire wrote again and again and received no answer. She hastened to Pisa to consult with the Shelleys and they were now convinced Allegro should be taken out of Byron's hands at the first favourable opportunity. With nothing decided Claire returned to Florence and Shelley made an appeal to Byron's feelings on her behalf. It was of no avail and Shelley became very angry with him. There is an account in a copy by Claire (and therefore to be taken with caution) of a letter from a Miss Elizabeth Parker of Shelley's interview with Byron.

"... he declared that he could with pleasure have knocked Lord Byron down; for when he mentioned Claire's alarm and distraction and declining health, "he saw a gleam of malicious satisfaction pass over Lord Byron's countenance." 'I saw his look,' said Shelley; 'understood its meaning; I despised him, and I came away. Afterwards he said, 'It is foolish of me to be angry with him; he can no more help being what he is than the door can help being a door.'

1. Mayne, Ethel, Byron, p. 369
2. Ibid., She was an orphan girl sent by Mrs. Godwin to live with Lady Mounteneshell, a firm and affectionate friend of Claire's.
3. Ibid., pp. 369ff.
The following is an extract of a letter Shelley wrote to Claire:

"It is of vital importance, both to me and yourself, to Allegra even, that I should put a period to my intimacy with Lord Byron, and that without eclat. ...but for your immediate feelings, I would suddenly and irrevocably leave the country which he inhabits, nor ever enter it but as an enemy to determine our differences without words." 1

The relation between Shelley and Byron was altogether a very strange one. Shelley was every now and again fascinated by Byron's genius and personality though not for long; he was always deeply impressed by his best works; though widely differing in his poetical opinions. This fascination has a paralyzing effect upon him which is frequently shown in his letters and conversations. He wrote to Hunt in March expressing a strong repugnance to close companionship with Byron any longer. He states:

"Particular circumstances, or rather, I should say, particular dispositions in Lord Byron's character, render the close and exclusive intimacy with him in which I find myself intolerable to me, ..." 2

In April, 1822, he again writes to Hunt:

"Certain it is, that Lord Byron has made me bitterly feel the inferiority which the world has presumed to place between us and which subsists no where in reality but in our own talents not our own but Fortune's. 3

In a letter to Horace Smith in May, 1822, he wrote:

"I do not write, I have lived too long near Lord Byron, and the sun has extinguished the glow worn." 4

Towards the end of March occurred an incident which for a

1. Dowden, op. cit., p. 239.
2. Ingpen, op. cit., p. 946.
3. Campbell, Olive Ward, Shelley And The Utopians, p. 33
time looked as if it might prove serious. The Pisan party were returning from their evening ride, when a mounted dragoon came rushing by, breaking their ranks and nearly upsetting Mr. Taaffe. Byron and Shelley rode after the man and stopped him, demanding his name and address. Sergeant-Major Masi having drunk too freely, replied with oaths and announced they were all arrested. Byron and Gamba dashed past the gate and its guard to bring arms from the Palazzo Lanfranchi. Before the others could follow, Masi knocked Shelley from his horse with his sword. Masi then fled and the party pursued him into Pisa, making so much commotion that one of Byron's servants, thinking Byron had been killed, rushed forward from the palace and struck him with a pitch fork, wounding the fellow somewhat seriously. Shelley called the whole matter "a trifling piece of business;" but it was strictly investigated by the authorities. Masi was found to be in the wrong, but at a later period it served the government as one ground among others for exiling Count Gamba and his father from Tuscany, which led to Byron's final departure from Pisa. This made such a great stir in Pisa that Byron and Shelley felt so ill at ease there that they were disposed to look somewhere else for residence. Byron determined to go to Leghorn and Shelley engaged the Casa Magni on the Gulf of Spezzia near Lerici. In February a scheme had been conceived of forming a summer colony at Spezzia and Shelley and Williams had gone there to rent the houses. Mary feared the colony too large for unity, since Byron and the

1. Symonds, John, *Shelley*, p. 188
countess and her brother, Trelawny and Captain Roberts were all to be of the party. Only one house at all suitable could be found; "however, a trifle such as not finding a house," writes Mary, could not stop Shelley; the one was to serve for all." 1

By this time suitable weather for sea-side residence, the scheme had been abandoned. Even were houses for so large a party to be obtained near Spezia, Shelley could hardly have endured a whole summer of Lord Byron's close companionship; for he expressed himself as unwilling to continue the close and exclusive intimacy which had recently subsisted between them.

After Byron moved to Leghorn, Shelley invited Claire to come to Pisa and become one of their summer party at the sea-side. She arrived on April 16, and on April 23, Shelley received from Byron the news of Allegra's death. Byron wrote:

"The blow was stunning and unexpected; for I thought the danger over, between her stated amelioration and the arrival of the express. But I have borne up against it as best I can, and so far successfully, that I can go about the usual business of life with the same appearance of composure and even greater.

There is nothing to prevent your coming to-morrow; but perhaps, to-day, and yesterday evening, it was better not to have set. I do not know that I have anything to reproach in my conduct, and certainly nothing in my feeling and intention towards the dead but it is a moment when we are apt to think that, if this or that had been done, such event might have been prevented, and inevitable. I suppose that Time will do his usual work - Death has done his." 2

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1. Dovden, op. cit., p. 584.
Shelley resolved that Claire should not be told of her loss while still in Pisa, Byron's near neighborhood. She and Mary accompanied by Trelawny left immediately for Spezzia where it was decided that they were to settle as best they could. By the first of May they arrived at Lerici and took the Casa Magni which looked more like a boat or a bathing house than a place to live in. Claire wrote at once to Byron who sent the letter to Shelley. From the contents of Shelley's letter to Byron of May 8, we know that whatever Claire wrote was what was in her heart:

"I had no idea", he wrote, "that her letter was written in that temper;" and added that he and Mary would not have allowed it to be sent if they had suspected its contents. 1

Shelley wrote to Byron on the day following the announcement to Claire of the death of Allegra, conveying Claire's request to see the coffin before sending it to England, a portrait of Allegra and a lock of her hair. Byron was willing to let Claire's wishes regulate the funeral, but she left the matter to him. He acceded to all her requests but Shelley succeeded in dissuading Claire from visiting the coffin at Leghorn partly because of his own poor health which would have suffered in accompanying her on such a journey. Claire received the portrait and a lock of hair and on May 21, she returned to Florence, never again seeing or hearing from Byron. Allegra's body was sent to England and buried at the entrance to Harrow Church. The two poets, having separated without any unpleasant words, Byron to Leghorn and Shelley at the Casa Magni, were not much together thereafter.

1. Mayne, op. cit., p. 371. (footnote)
CHAPTER V

LAST DAYS

Shortly after Trelawny's arrival at Pisa the party decided to have boats built for excursions on the sea. Shelley's was to be an open boat carrying sail, and Byron's a large deck schooner so that he could enter into competition with his friends. The construction of both was given to a Genoese builder under the direction of Trelawny's friend, Captain Roberts. Such was the birth of the ill-fated Don Juan which cost the lives of Shelley and Williams, and of the Bolivar which carried Byron off to Genoa before he finally set sail for Greece.

Shelley's boat was originally to have been built in partnership with Trelawny and Williams, and Trelawny had chosen the name Don Juan, to which Shelley raised no objections. Shelley through difficulties pertaining to Claire and also to Hunt had drawn away from personal relations with Byron, and was resolved that in the future they should move apart.

Before the boat was received the partnership was dissolved, perhaps because Trelawny's close connection with Byron probably alienated Shelley. She became the property of Shelley alone, and he and Mary named her the Ariel. Lord Byron took offense at this and was determined that the boat should be called after his poem. He sent a letter to Captain Roberts to have the name printed on the main sail, which was accordingly done. On May 12,

Shortly after they had settled at Casa Magni Shelley received his boat from Genoa. He was equally determined that the name should be of his own choice. He spent twenty-one days trying to efface the name but without any success, and finally he had the name cut out by a sailmaker.

The few weeks that were to follow before the terrible catastrophe of early July were amongst the happiest in Shelley's life. He felt he had reached a mental standpoint where he could survey his past achievements and look forward with definite assurance, "if the heaven above me is calm for the passing moment", to a future of yet worthier accomplishments.

In a letter to John Gisborne June 18, 1822, Shelley shows he has drawn away from personal relations with Byron, and was resolved that from now on they should move apart.

"I trust in not yet arrived, but I expect him every day. I shall see little of Lord Byron nor shall I permit Hunt to form the intermediate link between him and me. I detest all society — almost all, at least — and Lord Byron is a nucleus of all that is hateful and tiresome in it... I write little now. It is impossible to compose except under the strong excitement of an assurance of finding sympathy of what you write,... Lord Byron is in this respect fortunate. He touched a chord to which a million hearts responded, and the coarse music which he produced to please them, disciplined him to the perfection to which he now approaches."

Shelley used all his tact and influence to keep Byron interested in the Liberal project, but it was the kind of diplomacy he disliked. Hunt continually urged Shelley to ask Byron for funds on his behalf. Shelley having sent all he himself could

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possibly spare at last complied, and Byron advanced two hundred pounds to Hunt accepting Shelley's bond for guarantee of payment on his succeeding to his inheritance. Byron, at first, had been more eager than Shelley for Leigh Hunt's arrival in Italy to edit and contribute to the proposed new Review, and so continued until his English correspondents had worked on his fears. They did not oppose but cleverly insinuated that he was jeopardising his fame and fortune.

In June Leigh Hunt and his family arrived in Genoa after having planned on arriving since November. Byron's purpose with regard to the Liberal was wavering, for Hunt arrived in Italy not as an editor of the Journal "The Examiner", but as one out of work, a dependent on himself and Shelley. Byron had been counting on the aid of the examiner to help him make the Liberal a success. Even Shelley was distressed when he learned the truth what should have been told before the Hunt family left England.

On June 22, 1822, Shelley writes the following to Horace Smith:

"Lord Byron continues at Leghorn, and has just received from Genoa a most beautiful little yacht, which he caused to be built there. He has written two cantos of "Don Juan", but I have not seen them. I have just received a letter from Hunt who has arrived at Genoa. As soon as I hear that he has sailed, I shall weigh anchor in my little schooner and give him chase to Leghorn, where I must occupy myself in some arrangements with Lord Byron for him. Between ourselves, I greatly fear this alliance will not succeed; for I could never have been regarded as more than the link of the two thunderbolts, cannot now consent to be even that; and how long the alliance may continue I will not prophesy. Pray do not hint my doubts on the subject to any one, or they might do harm to Hunt; and they may be groundless." 1

1. Ingpen, op. cit., pp. 989f.
That anything belonging to him should be a perpetual reminder
of Byron would be hateful and intolerable to Shelley. \(^1\) Shelley
still acknowledged the genius of Byron. He was troubled too,
by what the psychologists might call an inferiority complex;
his association with Byron always discouraged him and weakened
his confidence in his own poetic powers. \(^2\) In May, 1822, he wrote
to Horace Smith:

"I do not write; I have lived too long near Lord Byron
and the sun has extinguished the glow worm; I cannot hope with
St. John that the 'light come into the world, and the world
knew it not.'" \(^3\)

On the first of July Shelley learned that Hunt and his family
had sailed for Leghorn from Genoa, and he set sail on that same
day at noon with Williams in the Ariel to meet him. It was after
sunset when they arrived and they were unable to land as the Health
Office was closed. They anchored astern of Lord Byron's schooner,
the Bolivar, from which they procured cushions and made up their
beds on deck.

Hunt on his arrival, had visited Lord Byron who was now
settled in the Villa Dupey. A violent quarrel had just broken out
between the Gamba servants and Byron's servants. Poor Hunt had
a fiery reception. The Gambas were banished from Tuscany and they
talked of taking Byron's schooner Bolivar on Lake Geneva - to
France - to America. Byron in consequence would instantly leave

2. Stovall, Floyd, Desire And Restraint In Shelley, p. 268.
3. Ibid., p. 268.
the country with them, and Hunt supposed he was going to abandon
him, alone in Italy, on the very day of his arrival. That even-
ing Shelley turned up aboard the Ariel. Shelley wondered what
would become of Hunt and of the project of the Journal if Byron
should decide to leave Italy. In action Shelley was admirable;
he sailed up against the current of human wills just as, in his
cockleshell of a boat, he did the stream of the Arno. 1 Byron
must remain in Italy; he must keep faith with the newspaper; he
must give a poem for its first number. Overwhelmed by the onset,
Byron yielded all along the line. 2

Without leaving Byron time to recover Shelley hurried the
Hunts off to the rooms prepared for them at Pisa in the Palazzo
Lafranchi. This time it was with them that he had to battle.
They complained about everything, believing Lord Byron was lodg-
ing them in a damp ground floor and keeping all the other floors
for himself. They thought the furniture which Shelley had bought
them with Byron’s money was shoddy. Shelley settled them in and
calmed them down. The same day that Shelley helped to settle the
Hunts in Pisa, Byron and Countess Guiccioli arrived there. It was
Shelley’s task on the one hand, to keep up Hunt’s courage, and on
the other, if possible, to hold Byron to the agreement concerning
the Journal. Shelley found Byron so irritable and so uncertain on
the fulfillment of his promise in regard to Leigh Hunt, that ex-
cept for fear of imperiling Hunt’s prospects, Shelley would then

2. Dowden, op. cit., p. 566.
have ended his associations with Byron. It was doomed to be their last meeting. It was Shelley's determination for Hunt's sake to hold Byron to his promise as to the Liberal which Hunt was to edit and to which it had been planned that he, Byron and Shelley should contribute their original work as produced. He succeeded with Byron so far as to get his promise to give the copyright of the "Vision of Judgment" for the first number of the Journal, a promise which Byron kept. Shelley writes Mary:

"He offers him the copyright of the "Vision of Judgment" for the first number. This offer, if sincere, is more than enough to set up the journal; and, if sincere, will set everything right."

With the success of his effort on Hunt's behalf, Shelley became better spirited. By Sunday, July 7, Shelley's work had all been done, and he spent the day showing sights of Pisa to Hunt. They visited the Leaning Tower and listened to the pealing organ in the Duomo. Before departing that night Shelley said to Mrs. Hunt:

"If I die tomorrow I have lived to be older than my father; I am ninety years of age."

Almost Hunt's last words to him were entreaties to remain on shore if the weather were violent next day. He borrowed, for reading on the voyage, Hunt's copy of Keats's newest publication which contained "Hyperion". "Keep it", said Hunt, "till you give it to me before you leave this city tomorrow. Then interlock that verse with your own hands."

The friends parted, and Shelley took a deep breath, to ease his fears to Hunt. He arrived:

2. Dowden, op. cit., p. 566.
3. Ibid., p. 566.
post-chaise to Leghorn. Monday forenoon Shelley spent at Leghorn taking care of necessary business. A light breeze blowing in the direction of Lerici, sprang up, and Captain Roberts fearing a storm was brewing, asked them to remain until the morrow. Williams was eager to return home and declared that in seven hours they would be there. Shelley would not say no to his friends' desire. Early in the afternoon they set sail on their return voyage to Lerici with Charles Vivian, the sailor lad they had hired, as their only companion. Trelawny, who was then taking charge of Byron's boat, the Bolivar, proposed to accompany them in to the offing, but not having obtained a port-clearance from the Health Office he was not permitted to go. From the Bolivar as he watched them start, a Genoese mate remarked to Trelawny: "The devil is brewing." 1 Then a sea-fog hid the Don Juan and he saw them no more. In a short time the storm was upon them, with wind, rain, and thunder, but it did not last more than twenty minutes; and at its end Trelawny looked out anxiously for Shelley's boat. She was nowhere to be seen, and nothing could be heard of her.

On the morning of the third day after the storm, Trelawny rode to Pisa, called at the Lanfranchi Palace and inquired if a letter had been received from Casa Magni. When informed that there was none, he told his fears to Hunt. He writes:

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I then went up stairs to Byron. When I told him his lip quivered, and his voice faltered as he questioned me. 1

Corrieurs were dispatched to search the sea-coast, and to bring the Belivar from Leghorn. Meanwhile Mrs. Shelley and Mrs. Williams waited at Casa Negri in an agony of suspense. For days nothing was known. At last on July 19 news came to Trelawny that two bodies had been washed ashore. They proved to be the corpses of Shelley, found near Via Reggio, and Williams, found three miles away at the Bocca Lericcio. The sailor boy, Charles Vivian, though cast up on the same day near Mazz, was not heard of until the 28th. Both were so disfigured that recognition was difficult. Trelawny says:

"The tall slight figure, the jacket, the volume of Sophocles in one pocket, and Keats' poems in the other, doubled back as if the reader in the act of reading had hastily thrust it away, were all too familiar to me to leave a doubt on my mind that this mutilated corpse was any other than Shelley's." 2

The bodies were buried in the sand but by the quarantine laws of the coast they were not permitted to have possession of them. In order to get around these laws, it was suggested that the bodies be burned and then the ashes could be preserved. It was then decided that the remains of Shelley would be buried near his friend Keats and his son Williams, and that Williams' remains should be taken to England.

"To do this," says Trelawny, "in their far advanced state of decomposition, and to obviate the obstacles offered by the quarantine laws, the ancient custom of burning and reducing the body to ashes was suggested." 3

2. Trelawny, Ibid., p. 80.
3. Ibid., p. 82.
Permission after some difficulty was obtained for the removal of
the bodies from the government by the English Embassy at Florence.
Trelawny had an iron furnace made at Leghorn, and on August 19, at
noon, in the presence of Byron, Leigh Hunt, and Captain Shirley,
an English friend, and attended by some soldiers and the Health
Officer, Williams' body was disinterred from the sand and placed
in the furnace. When the body was reduced to ashes, they were
collected and placed in a small oak box and placed in Byron's car-
rriage. Byron remarked: "Don't repeat this with me, let my carcass
rot where it falls." 1 It was Byron's wish that the skull which
was of unusual beauty, should be preserved; but it almost instantly
fell to pieces. Frankincense and salt were thrown into the furnace,
and wine and oil poured over the body. Byron was silent and thought-
ful. Shelley's heart was not consumed but seemed impregnable to
the fire and Trelawny plunged his hand into the flames and snatched
it, burning his hand severely. Byron could not face this scene and
swam off to the Bolivar. Leigh Hunt looked on from the carriage
and Trelawny collected the ashes and placed them in a box which he
took on board Byron's boat and conveyed them to Leghorn. From here
he consigned Shelley's ashes to the English Consul at Rome where
they were buried with the usual ceremonies in the beautiful Protes-
tant cemetery described by himself in the closing stanzas of the
Adonais. The exact circumstances which closed the scene of the
Ariel and her occupants can never be known.

1. Trelawny, op. cit., p. 97.
The death of Shelley seemed to have affected Lord Byron's mind less with grief for the actual loss of his friends, than with bitter indignation against those who had, through life, so grossly misrepresented him. It moved Byron more than he cared to admit. Byron's tribute to that exquisite nature is familiar. He wrote to Murray on August 3rd:

"You were all brutally mistaken about Shelley, who was without exception the best and least selfish man I ever knew. I never knew one that was not a beast in comparison." 2

On the 6th he wrote the following to Moore:

"There is another man gone about whom the world was ill-naturedly, and ignorantly, and brutally mistaken. It will perhaps do him justice now, when he can no more bear for it."

To Lady Blessington at Genoa in 1823, he spoke still more feelingly:

"He was the most gentle, most amiable, and least worldly-minded person I ever met; full of delicacy, disinterested beyond all other men, and possessing a degree of genius, joined to a simplicity, as rare as it is admirable. He had joined to himself, a beau ideal of all that is fine, high-minded, and noble, and he acted up to this ideal, even to the very letter... I have seen nothing like him, and never shall again, I am certain." 5

Shelley's death ended the Pisan circle. Trelawny writes:

"The fine spirit that had animated and held us together was gone! Left to our own devices we degenerated apart. Shelley's solidity had checked Byron's flippancy, and induced him occasionally to act justly, and talk seriously; now he seemed more sordid and selfish than ever... He behaved unkindly to Mrs. Shelley. ... In all the transactions between Shelley and Byron in which expenses had occurred, and they were many, the former as was his custom, had paid all the latter promising to repay; but no one ever repaid Shelley. Byron did not see the necessity of his setting the example; and now that Mrs. Shelley was left destitute by her husband's death, Byron did nothing for her. He regretted this

2. Mayne, Ethel, Byron, p. 369
3. Ibid., p. 369.
4. Ibid., p. 369.
when too late, for in his voyage to Greece he alluded to Shelley, saying, 'Ire, you did what I should have done, let us square accounts to-morrow; I must pay my debts.' I merely observed, 'Money is of no use at sea, and when you get on shore you will have none to spare; he probably thought so too, for he said nothing more on the subject.'

Byron was loyal to Shelley's memory but it could not be said that he mourned him. He was indebted to Shelley, for some of Shelley's best verses were to express his admiration of Byron's genius. Byron knew him to be exempt from the egotism, pedantry, coxcombry, and more than all, the rivalry of authorship and that he was the trustiest and most discriminating of his admirers. Godwin said:

"Shelley must have been of great use to Byron, as from the commencement of their intimacy at Geneva, he could trace an entirely new vein of thought emanating from Shelley, which ran through Byron's subsequent works and was so peculiar that it could not have arisen from any other source."

The first issue of the "Liberal" appeared October 10, 1822, a few months after Shelley's death. It was published in England by the editor's brother, John Hunt, and it was at once fiercely attacked on all sides. The periodical was short lived, ceasing with its fourth number in July, 1822; and the relations between Byron and Hunt, which had from the first been strained, ended in a complete rupture; - were any similar number of pages ever printed at a greater price of happiness, friendship, even life itself? In a letter written to Mrs. Shelley regarding Hunt Byron says:

"As to friendship, it is a propensity in which my genius is very limited. I do not know the male human being, except Lord Claire, the friend of my infancy, for whom I feel anything that deserves the name. All my others are men-of-the-world friendships. I did not even feel it for Shelley, however much I admired, and esteemed him; so that you see not even vanity could

1. Trelawny, op. cit., pp. 101f. (1906)
2. Ibid., p. 36. (1906)
3. Ibid., pp. 144f.
bribe me into it, for, of all men, Shelley thought highest of my talents — and perhaps, of my disposition.”

Whilst the “Liberal” was halting onward to its natural doom, the attention of Lord Byron was attracted towards the struggles of Greece. In the spring of 1823 he accordingly made preparations to leave and go to Greece. He wanted to be anywhere away from recent associations and embarked for Greece with Trelawny and the young Count Camba, where his tragic death added the last stone to the pillar of his fame. In December, 1823, he sailed for Missolonghi to share in the struggle for the liberation of Greece. Unfortunately while here he was seized with a rheumatic fever and died on the 19th of April, 1824, at the age of thirty-six. Byron has furnished more fitting words for his epitaph than any one else would be likely to provide. These lines of Israel Berruocio in “Marino Faliero”:

“They never fall who die
In a great cause; the blood may soak their gore,
Their heads may sodden in the sun, their limbs,
Be strung to city gates and castle walls —
But still their spirit walks abroad.
... and conduct the world at last to freedom.”

But notwithstanding all misadventures, the nearly two years including his summer residence at Leghorn, which Byron spent at Pisa, are the years of his life which the admirers of his poetry can regard with least apology. He had the daily companionship of Shelley — Byron was always at his best with Shelley — and the rest of that congenial company which included Edward and Jane Williams, Trelawny, Medwin, Tassef and, of course, the Gambas.

1. Halleck, Anna Bensenson, With Byron In Italy, pp. 316ff.
Leigh Hunt, after the death of both his partners, found himself and family stranded, almost as beggars, in a foreign land. They lingered on in Italy till September, 1826, when they returned to England.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Byron and Shelley's names are joined as often as any two in English letters. The name of one is irresistibly suggested by the name of the other and the connection is a vital one. An intimacy begun in the first instance of admiration for each other's literary achievement, sprang up between the two poets. They were contemporaries, and their lives interlaced in many ways and profoundly affected each other. The course of Shelley's relation with Byron is largely concerned with Claire and Allegra and as we have seen led finally to mutual suspicion between the two.

In life, in habits, in modes of thought they were entirely different, yet they were alike in one sad respect. We cannot read their biographies without feeling a pity that men of such rare genius should die prematurely and in tragic circumstances. What Shelley and Byron might have become if they had lived several years longer, instead of being cut off before they had the opportunity of giving the world the work of mature manhood, we can not say. Had they lived what might the world not have received from their pens! Perhaps it is better that they remain where destiny placed them. No doubt their names will be spoken with reverence, and the literary influence of both will be felt over the civilized world to the end of time.
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