Byron and Scott made a greater immediate impact on European literature than any other British writers. Shakespeare took over two hundred years to make his presence felt, but the poems of Byron and the novels of Scott were translated into French and published as quickly as possible. Very few nineteenth-century writers were not influenced by them, starting with Pushkin, who studied and imitated both.

On the few occasions on which they met (the first in John Murray’s front room – see illustration) they got on swimmingly, though their ideologies and different lifestyles might have precluded much greater intimacy. Scott’s Toryism and Byron’s confused anarcho-Whiggism should have clashed; but as we go through their sparse but increasingly relaxed correspondence, we see how an ocean of goodwill and magnanimity on Scott’s part, coupled with overwhelming reverence and artistic enthusiasm on Byron’s, create great mutual respect and affection – at a distance.

Neither man is prepared to be frank about the debt he owes the other. It has been claimed that Scott gave up writing poetry because “Byron bet me” (that is, “beat me”); and Scott is surely being autobiographical when he writes, in his review of *Childe Harold III*:

> … no human invention can be infinitely fertile, as even the richest genius may be, in agricultural phrase, *cropped out*, and rendered sterile, and as each author must necessarily have a particular style in which he is supposed to excel, and must therefore be more or less a mannerist; no one can with prudence persevere in forcing himself before the public when from failure in invention, or from having rendered the peculiarities of his style over trite and familiar, the veteran ’lags superfluous on the stage,’ a slighted mute in those dramas where he was once the principle personage.

Roderick Speer has recently argued that the reason for the greater historical weight behind *Don Juan* is a result of Byron’s awe at Scott’s achievement in the Waverley Novels. This is a theme for more lengthy analysis.

Of Byron’s ottava rima works, Scott says as little as possible. Murray sends him a copy of *Beppo* but he declines to review it, saying “Beppo I shall not meddle with for various reasons”; he mentions “Don Juan which I have not seen”; and he returns a copy of the poem to James Ballantine thereby indicating, presumably, that he has none of his own.

I have included Scott’s two *Quarterly* reviews, of *Childe Harold III* and IV, since they seem to me letters to Byron. Scott’s prolixity cannot disguise the paternal affection and concern which he feels for the younger man, even as it accentuates the theoretically impossible gulf between them: few readers other than Scott, for instance, would find *Darkness* incomprehensible. For evidence that Byron read the reviews with great attention, and stored much away for future use, see the notes.

I believe that Scott did not write the final section of the second review.

---

1: “I made a search yesterday and to-day for letters of Lord Byron to send to Tom Moore, but I could only find two. I had several others, and am shocked at missing them. The one which he sent me with a silver cup I regret particularly. It was stolen out of the cup itself by some vile inhospitable scoundrel, for a servant would not have thought such a theft worth while” – Scott’s Journal (Edinburgh 1927), p.630, January 1st 1829.
5: Grierson V 110.
6: Grierson XII 433.
7: Grierson V 419.
8: Grierson XI 216.
My thanks to David McClay, Rachel Beattie, and their colleagues at the National Library of Scotland. I am also very grateful to John and Virginia Murray for permission to quote (where necessary) texts from Byron’s Letters and Journals, ed. Leslie A. Marchand (John Murray 1973-1994). This is referred to as BLJ.


From English Bards and Scotch Reviewers (1809):

Behold! in various throngs the scribbling crew,
For notice eager, pass in long review:
Each spurs his jaded Pegasus apace, 145
And Rhyme and Blank maintain an equal race;
Sonnets on sonnets crowd, and ode on ode;
And Tales of Terror jostle on the road;
Immeasurable measures move along;
For simpering Folly loves a varied song,
To strange mysterious Dullness still the friend,
Admires the strain she cannot comprehend.
Thus lays of Minstrels * – may they be the last! –
On half-strung harps whine mournful to the blast.
While mountain spirits prate to river sprites,
That dames may listen to the sound at nights;
And goblin brats, of Gilpin Horner’s brood,
Decoy young border-nobles through the wood,
And skip at every step, Lord knows how high,
And frighten foolish babes, the Lord knows why; 160
While high-born ladies in their magic cell,
Forbidding Knights to read who cannot spell,
Despatch a courier to a wizard’s grave,
And fight with honest men to shield a knave.

* See the “Lay of the Last Minstrel,” passim. Never was any plan so incongruous and absurd as the groundwork of this production. The entrance of Thunder and Lightning prologuing to Bayes’ Tragedy, unfortunately takes away the merit of originality from the dialogue between Messieurs the Spirits of Flood and Fell in the first canto. There we have the amiable William of Deloraine, “a stark moss-trooper,” videlicet, a happy compound of poacher, sheep-stealer, and highwayman. The propriety of his magical lady’s injunction not to read can only be equalled by the candid acknowledgement of his independence of the trammels of spelling, although, to use his own elegant phrase, “’twas his neck-verse at hairibee,” i.e. the gallows.

The biography of Gilpin Horner, and the marvellous pedestrian page, who travelled twice as fast as his master’s horse, without the aid of seven-league boots, are chef-d’œuvres in the improvement of taste. For incidents we have the invisible, but by no means sparing, box on the ear, bestowed on the page, and the entrance of a Knight and Charger into the castle, under the very natural disguise of a wain of hay. Marmion, the hero of the later romance, is exactly what William of Deloraine would have been, had he been able to read and write. The poem was manufactured for Messrs. CONSTABLE, MURRAY, and MILLER, worshipful Booksellers, in consideration of the receipt of a sum of money, and truly, considering the inspiration, it is a very creditable production. If Mr. SCOTT will write for hire, let him do his best for his paymasters, but not disgrace his genius, which is undoubtedly great, by a repetition of black letter Ballad imitations.

Next view in state, proud prancing on his roan, 165
The golden-crested haughty Marmion,
Now forging scrolls, now foremost in the fight,
Not quite a Felon, yet but half a Knight,
The gibbet or the field prepared to grace;
A mighty mixture of the great and base. 170
And think’st thou, SCOTT! by vain conceit perchance,
On public taste to foist thy stale romance,

9: Scott published The Lay of the Last Minstrel (featuring Gilpin Horner) in 1805 and Marmion in 1808.
Though MURRAY with his MILLER may combine
To yield thy muse just half-a-crown per line?
No! when the sons of song descend to trade,
Their bays are sear, their former laurels fade.
Let such forego the poet’s sacred name,
Who rack their brains for lucre, not for fame:
Still for stern Mammon may they toil in vain!
And sadly gaze on Gold they cannot gain!
Such be their meed, such still the just reward
Of prostituted Muse and hireling bard!
For this we spurn Apollo’s venal son,
And bid a long “Good night to Marmion.” *

* “Good night to Marmion” – the pathetic and also prophetic exclamation of HENRY BLOUNT, Esquire, on the death of honest Marmion.

These are the themes that claim our plaudits now;
These are the Bards to whom the Muse must bow;
While MILTON, DRYDEN, POPE, alike forgot,
Resign their hallowed Bays to WALTER SCOTT.

from Scott to Robert Southey, August 7th 1809:
(Source: text from Grierson II 214)

... In the meantime, it is funny to a whelp of a young Lord Byron abusing me, of whose circumstances he knows nothing, for endeavouring to scratch out a living by my pen. God help the bear, if having little else to eat, he must not even suck his own paws. I can assure the noble imp of fame it is not my fault that I was not born to a park and £5000 a-year, as it is not his lordship’s merit, although it may be his great good fortune, that he was not born to live by his literary talents and success.

March 10th 1812: Childe Harold I and II published.

Scott to Byron, from Edinburgh, July 3rd 1812:
(Source: Grierson 1811-14, pp.136-9)
[The right Honble / Lord Byron / &c &c &c / Care of Mr. Murray]
Scott initiates the correspondence.

MY LORD, – I am uncertain if I ought to profit by the apology which is afforded me, by a very obliging communication from our acquaintance, John Murray of Fleet Street, to give your Lordship the present trouble. But my intrusion concerns a large debt of gratitude due to your Lordship, and a much less important one of explanation, which I think I owe to myself, as I dislike standing low in the opinion of any person whose talents rank so highly in my own as your Lordship’s most deservedly do.

The first count, as our technical language expresses it, relates to the high pleasure I have received from the Pilgrimage of Childe Harold, and from its precursors; the former, with all its classical associations, some of which are lost on so poor a scholar as I am, possesses the additional charm of vivid and animated description, mingled with original sentiment; – but besides this debt, which I owe your Lordship in common with the rest of the reading public, I have to acknowledge my particular thanks for your having distinguished by praise, in the work which your Lordship rather dedicated in general to satire, some of my own literary attempts. And this leads me to put your Lordship right in the circumstances respecting the sale of Marmion, which had reached you in a distorted and misrepresented form, and which, perhaps, I have some reason to complain, were given to the public without more particular inquiry. The poem, my Lord, was not written upon contract for a sum of money – though it is too true that it was sold and published in a very unfinished state (which I have since regretted) to enable me to extricate myself from some engagements which fell suddenly upon me by the unexpected misfortunes of a very near relation. So that, to quote statute and precedent, I really come under the case cited by Juvenal, though not quite in the extremity of the classic author –

10: Mu. does not move to 50 Albemarle Street until September 1812.
11: Scott is being very polite indeed: nothing in EBSR can be construed as praising him.
12: Scott is objecting politely to EBSR 165-88, with their reference to prostituted Muse and hireling bard.
Esurit, intactam Paridi nisi vendit Agaven.  

And so much for a mistake, into which your Lordship might easily fall, especially as I generally find it the easiest way of stopping sentimental compliments on the beauty, &c. of certain poetry, and the delights which the author must have taken in the composition, by assigning the readiest reason that will cut the discourse short, upon a subject where one must appear either conceited, or affectedly rude and cynical.

As for my attachment to literature, I sacrificed for the pleasure of pursuing it very fair chances of opulence and professional honours, at a time of life when I fully knew their value; and I am not ashamed to say, that in deriving advantages in compensation from the partial favour of the public, I have added some comforts and elegancies to a bare independence. I am sure your Lordship’s good sense will easily put this unimportant egotism to the right account, for – though I do not know the motive would make me enter into controversy with a fair or an unfair literary critic – I may be well excused for a wish to clear my personal character from any tinge of mercenary or sordid feeling in the eyes of a contemporary of genius. Your Lordship will likewise permit me to add, that you would have escaped the trouble of this explanation, had I not understood that the satire alluded to had been suppressed, not to be reprinted. For in removing a prejudice on your Lordship’s own mind, I had no intention of making any appeal by or through you to the public, since my own habits of life have rendered my defence as to avarice or rapacity rather too easy.

Leaving this foolish matter where it lies, I have to request your Lordship’s acceptance of my best thanks for the flattering communication which you took the trouble to make Mr. Murray on my behalf, and which could not fail to give me the gratification which I am sure you intended. I dare say our worthy bibliopolist overcoloured his report of your Lordship’s conversation with the Prince Regent, but I owe my thanks to him nevertheless for the excuse he has given me for intruding these pages on your Lordship. Wishing you health, spirit, and perseverance, to continue your pilgrimage through the interesting countries which you have still to pass with Childe Harold, I have the honour to be, my Lord, your Lordship’s obedient servant,

WALTER SCOTT

P.S. – Will your Lordship permit me a verbal criticism on Childe Harold, were it only to show I have read his Pilgrimage with attention? “Nuestra Dama de la Pena” means,¹ I suspect, not our Lady of Crime or Punishment, but our Lady of the Cliff; the difference, is, I believe, merely in the accentuation of “pena.”

---

Byron to Scott, from 8 St James’s Street London, July 6th 1812:
(Source: text from NLS 3883; LJ II 131-5; BLJ II 182-3)

Byron replies to Scott at once.

St. James’s Street.
July sixth 1812.

Sir,

I have just been honoured with your letter. – I feel sorry that you should have thought it worth while to notice the “evil works of my nonage” as the thing is suppressed voluntarily, & your explanation is too kind not to give me pain. – The satire was written when I was very young & very angry, & fully bent on displaying my wrath & my wit, & now I am haunted by the ghosts of my wholesale Assertions. – I cannot sufficiently thank you for your praise and now waving myself, let me talk to you of the Prince R¹.

1:2

He ordered me to be presented to him at a ball, & after some sayings peculiarly pleasing from royal lips, as to my own attempts, he talked to me of you & your immortalties; he preferred you to every bard past & present, & asked which of your works pleased me most, it was a difficult question. – I answered, I thought the “Lay” he said his own opinion was nearly similar; in speaking of the others I told him that I thought you more particularly the poet of Princes, as they never appeared more fascinating than in Marmion & the Lady of the Lake, he

---

¹: Juv. Sat. VII, 82-7 (“… if he does not sell his [virgin] Agave to Paris”).
²: See CHP I 20, 4, where the Portuguese is in fact Nossa Señora de Pena.
was pleased to coincide & to dwell on {the} description of your James’s no less royal than poetical. –
He spoke alternately of Homer & yourself & seemed well acquainted with both, so that (with the exception of the Turks & your humble servant) you were in very good company. –
I defy Murray to have exaggerated his R. H.‘s opinion of your powers, nor can I pretend to enumerate all he said on the subject, but it may give you pleasure to hear that it was conveyed in language which would only suffer by my attempting to transcribe it, & with a tone & taste which gave me a very high idea of his abilities &

accomplishments, which I had hitherto considered as confined to manners, certainly superior to those of any living gentleman. – – This interview was accidental; – I never went to the levee, for having seen the courts of Mussulman & Catholic sovereigns. 15 my curiosity was sufficiently allayed, & my politics being as perverse as my rhymes, I had in fact “no business there.” – – –
To be thus praised by your Sovereign must be gratifying to you & if that gratification is not allayed by the communication being made through me, the bearer of it will consider himself very fortunately & sincerely,

y‘ obliged
& obed‘ Ser‘

Byron.
P.S.
Excuse this scrawl scratched in a great hurry and just after a journey. 16 –

Scott to Byron, from Abbotsford, July 16th 1812:
(Source: Grierson 1811-14, pp.140-1)
Scott answers almost at once.

ABBOTSFORD, NEAR MELROSE, 16th July 1812

MY LORD, – I am much indebted to your Lordship for your kind and friendly letter; and much gratified by the Prince Regent’s good opinion of my literary attempts. I know so little of courts or princes, that any success I may have had in hitting off the Stuarts is, I am afraid, owing to a little old Jacobite leaven which I sucked in with the numerous traditionary tales that amused my infancy. It is a fortunate thing for the Prince himself that he has a literary turn, since nothing can so effectually relieve the ennui of state, and the anxieties of power.

I hope your Lordship intends to give us more of Childe Harold. I was delighted that my friend Jeffrey – for such, in despite of many a feud, literary and political, I always esteem him – has made so handsomely the amende honorable for not having discovered in the bud the merits of the flower; and I am happy to understand that the retraction so handsomely made was received with equal liberality. These circumstances may perhaps some day lead you to revisit Scotland, which has a maternal claim upon you, and I need not say what pleasure I should have in returning my personal thanks for the honour you have done me. I am labouring here to contradict an old proverb, and make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear, – namely, to convert a bare haugh and brae, of about 100 acres, into a comfortable farm. Now, although I am living in a gardener’s hut, and although the adjacent ruins of Melrose have little to tempt one who has seen those of Athens, yet, should you take a tour which is so fashionable at this season, I should be very happy to have an opportunity of introducing you to anything remarkable in my fatherland. 17 My neighbour, Lord Somerville, would, I am sure, readily supply the accommodations which I want, unless you prefer a couch in a closet, which is the utmost hospitality I have at present to offer. The fair, or shall I say the sage, Apreece that was, Lady Davy that is, is soon to show us how much science she leads captive in Sir Humphrey; so your Lordship sees, as the citizen’s wife says in the farce, “Threadneedle Street has some charms,” since they procure us such celebrated visitants. As for me, I would rather cross-question your Lordship about the outside of Parnassus, than learn the nature of the contents of all the other mountains in the world. Pray, when under “its cloudy canopy” did

15: B. had never been in a Catholic court. See his letter to his mother, August 11th 1809: “My next stage is Cagliari in Sardinia, where I shall be presented to his Sardinian Majesty, I have a most superb uniform as a court dress, indispensable in travelling” (BLJ I 221); but the nearest he got was the opera.
16: The neat legibility of the letter is immaculate.
17: B. never visits Scott at Abbotsford.
you hear anything of the celebrated Pegasus? Some say he has been brought off with other curiosities to Britain, and now covers at Tattersall’s.\(^{18}\) I would fain have a cross from him out of my little moss-trooper’s Galloway, and I think your Lordship can tell me how to set about it, as I recognise his true paces in the high-mettled description of Ali Pacha’s military court.\(^{19}\)

A wise man said – or, if not, I, who am no wise man, now say – that there is no surer mark of regard than when your correspondent ventures to write nonsense to you. Having, therefore, like Dogberry, bestowed all my tediousness upon your Lordship,\(^{20}\) you are to conclude that I have given you a convincing proof that I am very much your Lordship’s obliged and very faithful servant.

WALTER SCOTT

There is a lost letter from Byron to Scott, dated September 27th, that should go here. In it Byron seems to have discussed Southey, and perhaps his own indebtedness to Scott’s poetry in *The Giaour* (soon to be joined by *The Bride of Abydos*).

Scott to Byron, from Abbotsford, November 6th 1813:
(Source: text from Grierson 1811-1814 pp.372-5)

My dear Lord

I was honored with your Lordship’s letter of the 27 Septr.\(^{21}\) and have sincerely to regret that there is such a prospect of your leaving Britain without my achieving your personal acquaintance. I honestly wish your Lordship had come down to Scotland this season for I have never seen a finer and you might have renewed all your old associations with Caledonia & made such new ones as were likely to suit you. I dare promise you would have liked me well enough for I have many properties of a Turk – never trouble myself about futurity – am as lazy as the day is long – delight in collecting silver mounted pistols & ataghans & go out of my own road for no one – all which I take to be attributes of your good Moslem – Moreover I am somewhat an admirer of royalty and in order to maintain this part of my [  ] I shall take care never to be connected with a court but stick to the ignotum pro mirabile.\(^{22}\)

The author of the Queen’s Wake\(^{23}\) will be delighted with your approbation. He is a wonderful creature for his opportunities, which were far inferior to those of the generality of Scottish peasants. Burns for instance (not that their extent of talents is to be compared for an instant) had an education not much worse than the sons of many gentlemen in Scotland. But poor Hogg literally could neither read nor write till a very late period of his life & when he distinguished himself by his poetical talent could neither spell nor write grammar. When I first knew him he used to send me his poetry & was both indignant & horrified when I pointed out to him parallel passages in authors whom he had never read but whom all the world would have sworn he had copied. An evil fate has hitherto attended him & bafled every attempt that has been made to place him in a road to independence. But I trust he may be more fortunate in future.

I have not yet seen Southey in the Gazette as Laureate.\(^{24}\) He is a real poet such as we read of in former times with every atom of his soul and every moment of his time dedicated to literary pursuits in which he differs from almost all those who have shared publick acclaim with him, your Lordships habits of society for example and my own professional and official avocations must necessarily connect as much more with our respective classes in the usual routine of pleasure or business than if we had not any other <business> {pleasure} than Vacare Musis. But Southey’s ideas are all poetical and his whole soul dedicated to the pursuit of literature.\(^{25}\) In this respect as well as in many others he is a most striking and interesting character.

I have not yet got the copy of the letter from Murray I am very much interested in all that concerns the Giaour which is universally approved of among our mountains. I have heard no objection except

---

18: The horse-breeding centre at Newmarket.
19: Scott implies that he has influenced B.; see CHP II sts.56-66. He can not know that B. really had written to his mother on November 12th 1809, “... I shall never forget the singular scene on entering Tepaleen at five in the afternoon as the Sun was going down, it brought to my recollection (with <the> {some} change of dress however) Scott’s description of Branksome Castle in his lay, & the feudal system.”
21: This letter has not been found.
22: “Wondered at because unknown”.
23: James Hogg.
24: Southey had accepted the Laureateship after Scott had turned it down.
25: But B. writes at Beppo (1817), 75, 1-4: *One hates an Author that’s all Author: fellows / In foolscap Uniforms turned up with Ink; / So very anxious, clever, fine, and jealous, / One don’t know what to say to them, or think …*
26: *The Giaour* is at this time between its sixth and seventh editions; but Scott may know only the first edition.
by one or two genius’s who run over poetry as a cat does over a harpsichord and they affect to
complain of obscurity. On the contrary I hold every real lover of the art as obliged to you for
condensing the narrative by giving us only those striking scenes which you have shown to be so
susceptible of poetic ornament & leaving to imagination the “says I’s & says he’s” and all the minutiae
of <narrative> detail which might be proper in giving evidence before [a] court of justice. The truth is
I think poetry is most striking when the mirror can be held up to the reader and the scene kept
constantly before his eyes for it requires most uncommon powers to support a direct and downright
narrative nor can I remember many instances of its being successfully maintained even by our greatest
bards.

As to those who have done me the honor to take my rhapsodies for their model I can only say
they have exemplified the ancient adage “One fool makes many” nor do I think I have yet had much
reason to <think> suppose I have given rise to any thing of distinguished merit. The worst is it drawz
on my letters and commendatory verses to which my sad & sober thanks in humble prose are deemd a
most unusual and ungracious reply. Of this sort of plague your Lordship must ere now have had more
than your share but I think you can hardly have met with so original a request as concluded the letter of
a bard I this morning received who limited his demands to be placed on his due station on Parnassus &
invested with a post in the Edinburgh Custom House.

What an awakening of dry bones seems to be taking place on the continent! I could as soon have
believed in the resurrection of the romans as in that of the Russians – yet it seems vivid and active
renovation of national spirit. It will certainly be strange enough if that tremendous pitcher has
travelled to so any fountains should be at length broken on the banks of the Saale but from the highest
to the lowest we are the fools of fortune. Your Lordship will probably recollect where the oriental tale
occurs of a Sultan who consulted Solomon on the proper inscription for a signet ring requiring that the
maxim which it conveyed should be at once proper for moderating the presumption of <property>
prosperity and comforting the pressure of adversity – the apothegm supplied for both purposes being
comprehended in the words “And this also shall pass away”

When your Lordship sees Rogers will you remember me kindly to him. I hope to be in London
next Spring & renew my acquaintance with my friends there. It will be an additional motive if I could
flatter myself that your Lordship’s stay in the country will permit me the pleasure of waiting upon you
I am with sincere respect & regard Your Lordship’s truly
Honoured & obliged humble
Serv
Walter Scott

Abbotsford
6 <Edin> November
[pencilled: 1813]

I go to Edin.b. next week multum gemens

Scott to Byron, from Edinburgh, February 11th 1814:
(Not in Grierson)

Byron (or Murray) has sent Scott The Bride of Abydos.

My dear Lord

I have delayed thanking you for the Bride of Abydos untill I should have it in my power to send
you a life of Dean Swift with which I have been for some time busy not for acquittal of my debt but
merely to show that I am sensible of it – However it has happened to me like all or most tardy debtors
that my delay[s] of acknowledgement have very much incurred the burthen of my obligation – For I
really think the Corsair which I received two days since is the most delightful of these three poems
delightful as they all are. It is the good old form of Drydens fables to me always the most delightful

27: Page turn.
28: B. denied that he was one of these: “Scott I no further meant to follow than in his Lyric measure – which is
Gray’s – Milton’s & any one’s who likes it” (to Mu., October 12th 1813: BLJ III 141).
29: The battle of Leipzig, which led to the abdication of Napoleon, was in mid-October 1813.
30: Ecclesiastes 12, 6: Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at
the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.
31: Published December 1813.
32: Scott is extremely polite. The Corsair is the first of B.’s Tales which does not borrow its form from him.
preface\textsuperscript{33} and am not at all mortified by the idea that some part of it may be owing to the particularity which the generous & liberal always feel for those who have attempted with more or less success their own walk to fame. There is only one particular line in which I hope and almost think you will be a false prophet & that is when you

1:2

you say you will not soon write again. In our free masonry, my Lord, we may be allowed to talk with some freedom – and therefore judging from the usual symptoms I rather hope that you will not keep your word on this occasion, and that your repose will be no longer than such rapid [ ] may demand.

There is a thing I cannot forbear telling you though I am writing to a man whom I never saw about one whom I never spoke to above twice. I met Lord Elgin (to whom I am just known) in a sale-room today & to my surprize He began to talk of the Corsair of which he seems to be a vast admirer. [He] drew a very lively description of one who had been captured by the frigate in which he saild from the Levant; & who seemed by Lord E’s description to be much such a character as your heroe. I had a curious account of [ ] practised by the pirates & privateers in the Levant which was recorded in the Journal of a common sailor who had just served on board one of them. The journal was found when the man then a King’s seaman was put in confinement & his chest examined. I had the copy from Sir Edw\textsuperscript{34} Pellews Secretary & its authenticity appeared undoubted. I caused it to be published in one of the late volumes of the Edinburgh Annual Register and from the manner in which the unfortunate journalist describes his first sensations of horror & then his becoming gradually reconciled to the shedding of blood it is a curious record of the gradual hardening of the human heart.

Adieu my dear Lord accept my gralulor [“gratitude”? “garrulity”?] in good part – write on when you have no better amusement & we will ask no better than to read on when you will permit us

Believe me very sincerely
& respectfully your truly obliged
Walter Scott

Edin. – 11 fe.\textsuperscript{35} [pencilled: 1814]

\textbf{July 7th 1814: Waverley published (anonymously).}

\textbf{Scott to Byron, summer / autumn 1814:}\textsuperscript{34}
(Source: text from Grierson 1815-17, pp.2-4)

My Lord, – I have long owed you my best thanks for the uncommon pleasure I have had in perusing your Turkish fragment.\textsuperscript{35} But I should hardly have ventured to offer them, well knowing how you must be overwhelmed by volunteer intrusions of approbation – (which always look as if the writer valued his opinion at fully more than it may be worth) – unless I had to-day learned that I have an apology for entering upon the subject, from your having so kindly sent me a copy of the poem. I did not receive it sooner, owing to my absence from Edinburgh, where it had been lying quietly at my house in Castle Street; so that I must have seemed ungrateful, when, in truth, I was only modest. The last offence may be forgiven, as not common in a lawyer and poet; the first is said to be equal to the crime of witchcraft, but many an act of my life hath shown that I am no conjurer. If I were, however, ten times more modest than twenty years’ attendance at the Bar renders probable, your flattering inscription would cure me of so fashionable a malady. I might, indeed, lately have had a legal title to as much supremacy on Parnassus as can be conferred by a sign-manual, for I had a very flattering offer of the Laurel; but as I felt obliged, for a great many reasons, to decline it, I am altogether unconscious of any other title to sit high upon the forked hill.

To return to the Giaour; I had lent my first edition, but the whole being imprinted in my memory,\textsuperscript{36} I had no difficulty in tracing the additions, which are great improvements, as I should have conjectured aforehand merely from their being additions. I hope your Lordship intends to proceed with this fascinating style of composition. You have access to a stream of sentiments, imagery, and manners,

\textsuperscript{33}: “… the stanza of Spenser is perhaps too slow and dignified for narrative; though, I confess, it is the measure most after my own heart; and Scott alone, of the present generation, has hitherto completely triumphed over the fatal facility of the of the octo-syllabic verse; and this is not the least victory of his fertile and mighty genius.”
\textsuperscript{34}: Grierson dates this letter earlier than where he places it, adducing the dates of \textit{The Giaour}’s later editions.
\textsuperscript{35}: Scott has been reading one of the later editions of \textit{The Giaour} – having known its first edition, which is much shorter than the later ones.
\textsuperscript{36}: Scott’s memory had enabled him, for example, to recite Coleridge’s \textit{Christabel} to Byron by heart.
which are so little known to us as to convey all the interest of novelty, yet so endeared to us by the early perusal of Eastern tales, that we are not embarrassed with utter ignorance upon the subject.\textsuperscript{37} Vathek, bating some passages, would have made a charming subject for a tale. The conclusion is truly grand. I would have given a great deal to know the originals from which it was drawn. Excuse this hasty scrawl, and believe me, my Lord, your Lordship’s most obliged, very humble servant,

Walter Scott.

April 7th 1815: Byron and Scott meet for the first time; they are introduced by Murray.

From Thomas Moore’s \textit{Life of Byron} (1830-1), I pp.614-19.

It was in the course of this spring that Lord Byron and Sir Walter Scott became, for the first time, personally acquainted with each other. Mr. Murray, having been previously on a visit to the latter gentleman, had been intrusted by him with a superb Turkish dagger as a present to Lord Byron; and the noble poet, on their meeting this year in London,—the only time when these two great men had ever an opportunity of enjoying each other’s society,—presented to Sir Walter, in return, a vase containing some human bones that had been dug up from under a part of the old walls of Athens. The reader, however, will be much better pleased to have these particulars in the words of Sir Walter Scott himself, who, with that good-nature which renders him no less amiable than he is admirable, has found time, in the midst of all his marvellous labours for the world, to favour me with the following interesting communication.\textsuperscript{38}—[p.615]

“My first acquaintance with Byron began in a manner rather doubtful. I was so far from having any thing to do with the offensive criticism in the Edinburgh, that I remember remonstrating against it with our friend, the editor, because I thought the ‘Hours of Idleness’ treated with undue severity. They were written, like all juvenile poetry, rather from the recollection of what had pleased the author in others than what had been suggested by his own imagination; but, nevertheless, I thought they contained some passages of noble promise. I was so much impressed with this, that I had thoughts of writing to the author; but some exaggerated reports concerning his peculiarities, and a natural unwillingness to intrude an opinion which was uncalled for, induced me to relinquish the idea.

When Byron wrote his famous Satire, I had my share of flagellation among my betters. My crime was having written a poem (Marmion, I think) for a thousand pounds; which was no otherwise true than that I sold the copy-right for that sum. Now, not to mention that an author can hardly be censured for accepting such a sum as the booksellers are willing to give him, especially as the gentlemen of the trade made no complaints of their bargain, I thought the interference with my private affairs was rather beyond the limits of literary satire. On the other hand, Lord Byron paid me, in several passages, so much more praise than I deserved, that I must have been more irritable than I have ever felt upon such subjects, not to sit down contented, and think no more about the matter.

I was very much struck, with all the rest of the world, at the vigour and force of imagination displayed in the first Cantos of Childe Harold, and the other splendid productions which Lord Byron flung from him to the public with a promptitude that savoured of profusion. My own popularity, as a poet, was then on the wane, and I was unaffectedly pleased to see an author of so much power and energy taking the field. Mr. John Murray happened to be in Scotland that season, and as I mentioned to

\textsuperscript{37} Scott seems to imply that B.’s Turkish Tales are not as original as they seem.

\textsuperscript{38} Moore’s note: A few passages at the beginning of these recollections have been omitted, as containing particulars relative to Lord Byron’s mother, which have already been mentioned in the early part of this work. Among these, however, there is one anecdote, the repetition of which will be easily pardoned, on account of the infinitely greater interest as well as authenticity imparted to its details by coming from such an eye-witness as Sir Walter Scott:—“I remember,” he says, “having seen Lord Byron’s mother before she was married, and a certain coincidence rendered the circumstance rather remarkable. It was during Mrs. Siddons’s first or second visit to Edinburgh, when the music of that wonderful actress’s voice, looks, manner, and person, produced the strongest effect which could possibly be exerted by a human being upon her fellow-creatures. Nothing of the kind that I ever witnessed approached it by a hundred degrees. The high state of excitation was aided by the difficulties of obtaining entrance and the exhausting length of time that the audience were contented to wait until the piece commenced. When the curtain fell, a large proportion of the ladies were generally in hysteries.

I remember Miss Gordon of Ghight, in particular, harrowing the house by the desperate and wild way in which she shrieked out Mrs. Siddons’s exclamation, in the character of Isabella, ‘Oh my Byron! Oh my Byron!’ A well-known medical gentleman, the benevolent Dr. Alexander Wood, tendered his assistance: but the thick-presssed audience could not for a long time make way for the doctor to approach his patient, or the patient the physician. The remarkable circumstance was, that the lady had not then seen Captain Byron, who, like Sir Toby, made her conclude with ‘Oh!’ as she had begun with it.”
him the pleasure I should have in making Lord Byron’s acquaintance, he had the kindness to mention
my wish to his Lordship, which led to some correspondence. [p.616]

It was in the spring of 1815 that, chancing to be in London, I had the advantage of a personal
introduction to Lord Byron. Report had prepared me to meet a man of peculiar habits and a quick
temper, and I had some doubts whether we were likely to suit each other in society. I was most
agreeably disappointed in this respect. I found Lord Byron in the highest degree courteous, and even
kind. We met, for an hour or two almost daily, in Mr. Murray’s drawing-room, and found a great deal
to say to each other. We also met frequently in parties and evening society, so that for about two
months I had the advantage of a considerable intimacy with this distinguished individual. Our
sentiments agreed a good deal, except upon the subjects of religion and politics, upon neither of which
I was inclined to believe that Lord Byron entertained very fixed opinions. I remember saying to him,
that I really thought, that if he lived a few years he would alter his sentiments. He answered, rather
sharply, ‘I suppose you are one of those who prophesy I will turn Methodist.’ I replied, ‘No—I don’t
expect your conversion to be of such an ordinary kind. I would rather look to see you retreat upon
the Catholic faith, and distinguish yourself by the austerity of your penances. The species of religion to
which you must, or may, one day attach yourself must exercise a strong power on the imagination.’ He
smiled gravely, and seemed to allow I might be right.

On politics, he used sometimes to express a high strain of what is now called Liberalism; but it
appeared to me that the pleasure it afforded him as a vehicle of displaying his wit and satire against
individuals in office was at the bottom of this habit of thinking, rather than any real conviction of the
political principles on which he talked. He was certainly proud of his rank and ancient family, and, in
that respect, as much an aristocrat as was consistent with good sense and good breeding. Some
disgusts, how adopted I know not, seemed to me to have given this peculiar and, as it appeared to me,
contradictory cast of mind: but, at heart, I would have termed Byron a patrician on principle.

Lord Byron’s reading did not seem to me to have been very extensive either in poetry or history.
Having the advantage of him in that respect, and possessing a good competent share of such reading as
is little read, I was sometimes able to put under his eye objects which had [p.617] for him the interest
of novelty. I remember particularly repeating to him the fine poem of Hardyknute, an imitation of the
old Scottish Ballad, with which he was so much affected, that some one who was in the same
apartment asked me what I could possibly have been telling Byron by which he was so much agitated.

I saw Byron, for the last time, in 1815, after I returned from France. He dined, or lunched, with me
at Long’s in Bond Street. I never saw him so full of gaiety and good-humour, to which the presence of
Mr. Mathews, the comedian, added not a little. Poor Terry was also present. After one of the gayest
parties I ever was present at, my fellow-traveller, Mr. Scott, of Gala, and I set off for Scotland, and I
never saw Lord Byron again. Several letters passed between us—one perhaps every half year. Like the
old heroes in Homer, we exchanged gifts:—I gave Byron a beautiful dagger mounted with gold, which
had been the property of the redoubted Elfi Bey. But I was to play the part of Diomed, in the Iliad, for
Byron sent me, some time after, a large sepulchral vase of silver. It was full of dead men’s bones, and
had inscriptions on two sides of the base. One ran thus:—’The bones contained in this urn were found
in certain ancient sepulchres within the land walls of Athens, in the month of February, 1811.’ The
other face bears the lines of Juvenal:

\[ \text{Expende—quot libras in duce summo invenies,} \]
\[ \text{—Mors sola fatetur quantula hominum corpuscula.”} \]

Juv. x. 39

To these I have added a third inscription, in these words—’The gift of Lord Byron to Walter Scott.’ 40

There was a letter with this vase more valuable to me than the gift itself, from the kindness with which
[p.618] the donor expressed himself towards me. I left it naturally in the urn with the bones,—but it is
now missing. As the theft was not of a nature to be practised by a mere domestic, I am compelled to
suspect the inhospitality of some individual of higher station,—most gratuitously exercised certainly,

39: JUV. SAT. X 147-8 and 172-3 “Weigh [Hannibal]: how many pounds will you find in that great leader? Only
death shows how contemptible the bodies of men are” (B.’s motto for the Ode to Napoleon).
40: Moore’s note: Mr. Murray had, at the time of giving the vase, suggested to Lord Byron, that it would increase
the value of the gift to add some such inscription; but the feeling of the noble poet on this subject will be
understood from the following answer which he returned:

April 9, 1815.

Thanks for the books. I have great objection to your proposition about inscribing the vase,—which is, that it would
appear ostentatious on my part; and of course I must send it as it is, without any alteration.

Yours, &c.
since, after what I have here said, no one will probably choose to boast of possessing this literary curiosity.

We had a good deal of laughing, I remember, on what the public might be supposed to think, or say, concerning the gloomy and ominous nature of our mutual gifts.

I think I can add little more to my recollections of Byron. He was often melancholy,—almost gloomy. When I observed him in this humour, I used either to wait till it went off of its own accord, or till some natural and easy mode occurred of leading him into conversation, when the shadows almost always left his countenance, like the mist rising from a landscape. In conversation he was very animated.

I met with him very frequently in society; our mutual acquaintances doing me the honour to think that he liked to meet with me. Some very agreeable parties I can recollect,—particularly one at Sir George Beaumont’s, where the amiable landlord had assembled some persons distinguished for talent. Of these I need only mention the late Sir Humphry Davy, whose talents for literature were as remarkable as his empire over science. Mr. Richard Sharpe and Mr. Rogers were also present.

I think I also remarked in Byron’s temper starts of suspicion, when he seemed to pause and consider whether there had not been a secret, and perhaps offensive, meaning in something casually said to him. In this case, I also judged it best to let his mind, like a troubled spring, work itself clear, which it did in a minute or two. I was considerably older, you will recollect, than my noble friend, and had no reason to fear his misconstruing my sentiments towards him, nor had I ever the slightest reason to doubt that they were kindly returned on his part. If I had occasion to be mortified by the display of genius which threw into the shade such pretensions as I was then supposed to possess, I might console myself that, in my own case, the materials of mental happiness had been mingled in a greater proportion. [p.619]

I rummage my brains in vain for what often rushes into my head unbidden,—little traits and sayings which recall his looks, manner, tone, and gestures; and I have always continued to think that a crisis of life was arrived in which a new career of fame was opened to him, and that had he been permitted to start upon it, he would have obliterated the memory of such parts of his life as friends would wish to forget.”

Scott to Byron, from the White Horse, Piccadilly, September 13th 1815:
(Source: text from Grierson 1832-1832, pp.424-5)

MY DEAR LORD,—We are at present guests with some old friends from whom I cannot easily disengage myself so soon as tomorrow evening. But I am much more desirous to see you than Kean or Garrick if he could be called to life again.41 Murray tells me you are to be in his shop by three o’clock when I hope to have the pleasure I have long wished [for] of making your personal acquaintance. I beg your Lorship to accept (though a late) a most sincere congratulation upon your late change of condition.42 I am with much respect and regard your Lordship’s most faithful and obliged

WALTER SCOTT
CORNER WHITE HORSE STREET PICADILLY

Scott to Byron, from Edinburgh, January 5th 1816:
(Source: text from NLS Ms.42537; Grierson 1815-17 pp.161-2)
[The Right Honble / Lord Byron / &c &c &c / Piccadilly London]

My dear Lord Byron

I had an early visit from a fair lady this morning who was in great anxiety lest a paragraph, which had appeared in one of our papers should appear to Lady Byron or you to have been inserted with her knowledge, or with the presumptuous purpose of converting your kindness into the foundation of a theatrical puff — Mrs. Henry Siddons,43 who thinks on this and other subjects very like a lady, seems particularly distressed at the indiscreet zeal of the friend, who, in a sincere wish to serve her, has injudiciously and, as she thinks, indelicately brought into view circumstances of private attention, which, while she feels the honour attending them, are not proper to be paraded before the public. I had no hesitation to say that I thought it impossible your Lordship or Lady Byron would attach any consequence to this <bxxxxe> blunder of a good friend of mine, who is a zealous admirer of M’s. Siddons & the Drama as well

41: Scott implies B. to be an actor.
42: Refers to B.’s marriage (January 2nd 1815).
43: Mrs Henry Siddons (1783-1815) was Sarah Siddons’ daughter-in-law, and an admired actress. She was co-manager of the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh.
as of your Lordship, and would, to my knowledge, be the last man upon earth to be guilty of
disrespect to <any xxxxxxx> you or indelicacy to her.

Having thus far pleaded my cause like a good Advocate before I was in possession of facts, I
have just got the paragraph which I enclose, & unless the

1:2

thoughtless mention of Lady Byron’s name, I think you will not find much to complain of, since
it only represents your Lordship as anxious to do your duty in securing to the public of London
an actress of Mrs. Siddons’ eminence. However, she is unhappy lest your Lordship should
<misinp> misinterpret this unlucky paragraph into an abuse of Lady Byron’s goodness & yours,
and you will do a great kindness in reassuring her on the subject by a few lines addressed either
to her or to me.

I have got a most enthusiastic letter from our Irish tragedian, almost mad with gratitude to
your kindness. Hogg, after playing a great part in [the] grand drama of football, which was
enacted in the open air by 2000 performers, has returned to his cottage among the hills, & is
there, again, I suppose, smothered up with snow & living beneath the wreaths like an Esquimaux.
Jeffrey is well, drinking champagne & writing criticisms. I dont know any other person here that
your Lordship cares for –

My best respects attend Lady Byron & I am always, my dear Lord, most truly yours
Walter Scott

Edin. all good things attend you through 1816 —
5 January

1:3 blank.

1:4 [at ninety degrees to address:] Should you meet Lady Compton in Society pray be
acquainted with her – it is worth while for she is a very clever young woman and skilled in
legendary lore –

April 25th 1816: Byron leaves England for good.

from Scott to J.B.S.Morritt, November 26th 1816:
(Source: Grierson 1815-17, 296-7)

By the way, I have just received Childe Harold, part 3rd. Lord Byron has more avowedly identified
himself with his personage than upon former occasions, and in truth does not affect to separate them. It
is wilder and less sweet, I think, than the first part, but contains even darker and more powerful
pourings forth of the spirit which boils within him. I question whether there ever lived a man who,
without looking abroad for subjects excepting as they produced an effect on himself, has contrived to
render long poems turning almost entirely upon the feelings, character, and emotions of the author, so
deeply interesting. We gazed on the powerful and ruined mind which he presents us as on a shattered
castle, within whose walls, once intended for nobler guests, sorcerers and wild demons are supposed to
hold their Sabbaths. There is something dreadful in reflecting that one gifted so much above his
fellow-creatures, should thus labour under some strange mental malady that destroys his peace of mind
and happiness, altho’ it cannot quench the fire of his genius. I fear the termination will be fatal in one
way or other, for it seems impossible that human nature can support the constant working of an
imagination so dark and so strong. Suicide or utter insanity is not unlikely to close the scene.
“Orandum sit,” as the sapine Partridge says, “ut sit mens sana in corpore sano”.

from John Murray to Byron, from 50, Albemarle Street, London, February 18th 1817:
(Source: text from NLS Ms.43495; LJM 196-8)
Evidence that Byron read Scott’s review of Childe Harold III, which follows, knowing it to be by
Scott. Murray has sent him proofs.

My Lord

London Feb. 18 – 1817

---

44: Charles Maturin, whose tragedy Bertram is put on on May 9th 1816, with Byron’s encouragement. Kean plays
the lead and Hobhouse writes the prologue.
I inclose the Sheets of an Article on Childe Harold torn from my “Mail Coach” Copy of the Edinburgh Review,\(^45\) – I hope you received some ten days since the pages on the same subject in the Quarterly and then I think you ought to feel compleatly satisfied – as I am – like Mahomed your fame is suspended between these two literary attractives.\(^46\) – Jeffery & Walter Scott are the authors of these critiques – and so you may be satisfied that I am ready for another Copy right whenever you are. (letter continues)

Scott’s review of Childe Harold III and The Prisoner of Chillon.
(Source: text from Quarterly Review XVI, October 1816, issued February 1817, pp.172-208)

Anonymous.


We have felt ourselves very much affected by the perusal of these poems, nor can we suppose that we are singular in our feelings. Other poets have given us their literary productions as the subject of criticism, impersonally as it were, and generally speaking, abstracted from their ordinary habits and feelings; and all, or almost all, might apply to their poetical effusions, though in somewhat a different sense, the *l’envoy* of Ovid.

Sine me, Liber, ibis in urbem.\(^47\)

The work of the poet is indeed before the public, but the character, the habits of the author, the events of his life and the motives of his writing, are known but to the small circle of literary gossips, for whose curiosity no food is too insipid. From such, indeed, [p.173] those supposed to be in intimacy with the individual have sometimes undergone an examination which reminds us of the extravagances of Arabella in the Female Quixote,\(^48\) who expected from every lady she met in society a full and interesting history of her life and adventures, and which could only be answered in the words of the ‘Weary Knife-grinder,’—‘Story! God bless you, I have none to tell, Ma’am!’\(^49\)—The time therefore appeared to be passed when the mere sin of having been dipped in rhyme was supposed to exclude the poet from the usual business and habits of life, and to single him out from the herd as a marked deer expected to make sport by his solitary exertions for escape. Whether this has arisen from the diminished irritability of the rhyming generation, or from the peculiar habits of those who have been distinguished in our time, or from their mental efforts having been early directed to modify and to restrain the excess of their enthusiasm, we do not pretend to conjecture; but it is certain, that for many years past, though the number of our successful poets may be as great as at any period of our literary history, we have heard little comparatively of their eccentricities, their adventures, or their distresses. The wretched Dermody\(^50\) is not worth mentioning as an exception, and the misfortunes of Burns arose from circumstances not much connected with his powerful poetical genius.

It has been, however, reserved for our own time to produce one distinguished example of the Muse having descended upon a bard of a wounded spirit, and lent her lyre to tell, and we trust to soothe, afflictions of no ordinary description, afflictions originating probably in that singular combination of feeling which has been called the poetical temperament, and which has so often saddened the days of those on whom it has been conferred. If ever a man could lay claim to that character in all its strength and all its weakness, with its unbounded range of enjoyment, and its exquisite sensibility of pleasure and of pain, it must certainly be granted to Lord Byron. Nor does it require much time or a deep acquaintance with human nature to discover why these extraordinary powers should in many cases have contributed more to the wretchedness than to the happiness of their possessor.

The ‘imagination all compact,’\(^51\) which the greatest poet who ever lived has assigned as the distinguishing badge of his brethren, is in every case a dangerous gift. It exaggerates, indeed, our expectations, and can often bid its possessor hope, where hope is lost to reason: but the delusive pleasure arising from these visions of imagination, resembles that of a child whose notice is attracted by a fragment of glass to which a sun-beam has given momentary splendor. He hastens to the spot

\(^45\): Mu. refers to Jeffery’s review of CHP III and PoC (Ed. Rev. XXVI liv, Dec. 1816, pp.278-310).
\(^46\): Mahomet’s sarcophagus was said to be suspended between two magnets.
\(^47\): Ovid, *Tristia* I, first line (“Without me, book, you will go into the city”); cp DJ I, final stanza.
\(^48\): Charlotte Lennox, *The Female Quixote; or, the Adventures of Arabella* (1752).
\(^49\): From John Hookham Frere’s *Anti-Jacobin* parody of Southey’s *Needy Knife-Grinder*.
\(^50\): Thomas Dermody, dissipated author of *Harp of Erin, Stranger in Ireland*, and so on.
with breathless impatience, and finds the object of his curiosity and expectation is equally vul-
gar and worthless. Such is the man of quick and exalted powers of imagination. His fancy
overestimates the object of his wishes, and pleasure, fame, distinction, are alternately pursued, attained,
and despised when in his power. Like the enchanted fruit in the palace of a sorcerer, the objects of his
admiration lose their attraction and value as soon as they are grasped by the adventurer’s hand, and all
that remains is regret for the time lost in the chase, and astonishment at the hallucination under the
influence of which it was undertaken. The disproportion between hope and possession which is felt by
all men, is thus doubled to those whom nature has endowed with the power of gilding a distant prospect
by the rays of imagination. These reflexions, though trite and obvious, are in a manner forced from us
by the poetry of Lord Byron, by the sentiments of weariness of life and enmity with the world which
they so frequently express—and by the singular analogy which such sentiments hold with incidents of
his life so recently before the public. The works before us contain so many direct allusions to the
author’s personal feelings and private history, that it becomes impossible for us to divide Lord Byron
from his poetry, or to offer our criticism upon the continuation of Childe Harold, without reverting to
the circumstances in which the commencement of that singular and original work first appeared.

Distinguished by title and descent from an illustrious line of ancestry, Lord Byron shewed, even in
his earliest years, that nature had added to those advantages the richest gifts of genius and fancy. His
own tale is partly told in two lines of Lara:

'Left by his Sire, too young such loss to know,
Lord of himself, that heritage of woe.'

His first literary adventure and its fate are well remembered. The poems which he published in his
minority had, indeed, those faults of conception and diction which are inseparable from juvenile
attempts, and in particular might rather be considered as imitations of what had caught the ear and
fancy of the youthful author, than as exhibiting originality of conception and expression. It was like the
first essay of the singing bird catching at and imitating the notes of its parent, ere habit and mind have
given the fullness of tone, confidence, and self-possession which renders assistance unnecessary. Yet
though there were many, and those not the worst judges, who discerned in these juvenile productions, a
depth of thought and felicity of expression which promised much at a more mature age, the errors did
not escape the critical lash; and certain brethren of ours\textsuperscript{53} yielded to the opportunity of pouncing upon a
titled author, and to that which most readily besets our fraternity, and to which we dare not pronounce
ourselves wholly inaccessible, the temptation, namely, of shewing our own wit, and entertaining our
readers \textsuperscript{p.175} with a lively article without much respect to the feelings of the author, or even to the
indications of merit which the work may exhibit. The review was read and raised mirth; the poems
were neglected, the author was irritated, and took his revenge in keen iambics,\textsuperscript{54} not only on the
offending critic, but on many others, on whose conduct or writings the juvenile bard had found, or
imagined he had found, some cause of offence. The satire which has been since suppressed, as
containing opinions hastily expressed, contained a spirit at least sufficiently poignant for all the
purposes of reprisal; and though the verses might, in many respects, be deemed the offspring of hasty
and indiscriminating resentment, they bore a strong testimony to the ripening talents of the author.
Having thus vented his indignation against the critics and their readers, and put many, if not all the
laughers on his side, Lord Byron went abroad, and the controversy was forgotten for some years.

It was in 1812, when Lord Byron returned to England,\textsuperscript{55} that Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage made its
first appearance, producing an effect upon the public, at least equal to any work which has appeared
within this or the last century. Reading is indeed so general among all ranks and classes, that the
impulse received by the public mind upon such occasions is instantaneous through all but the very
lowest classes of society, instead of being slowly communicated from one set of readers to another, as
was the case in the days of our fathers. ‘The Pilgrimage,’ acting on such an extensive medium, was
calculated to rouse and arrest the attention in a peculiar degree. The fictitious personage, whose
sentiments, however, no one could help identifying with those of the author himself, presented himself
with an avowed disdain of all the attributes which most men would be gladly supposed to possess.
Childe Harold is presented as one satiated by indulgence in pleasure, and seeking in change of place
and clime a relief from the tedium of a life which glided on without an object. The assuming of such a
character as the medium of communicating his poetry and his sentiments indicated a feeling towards
the public, which, if it fell short ofcontemning their favour, disdained, at least, all attempt to propiti ate

\textsuperscript{52}: Lara, ll.12-13.
\textsuperscript{53}: Scott alludes to Henry Brougham’s Edinburgh Review critique of Hours of Idleness.
\textsuperscript{54}: EBSR.
\textsuperscript{55}: B. returned in 1811; it was in 1812 that Scott and B. first communicated.
them. Yet the very audacity of this repulsive personification, joined to the energy with which it was supported, and to the indications of a bold, powerful, and original mind which glanced through every line of the poem, electrified the mass of readers, and placed at once upon Lord Byron’s head the garland for which other men of genius have toiled long, and which they have gained late. He was placed pre-eminent among the literary men of his country by general acclamation. Those who had so rigorously censured his juvenile essays, and perhaps ‘dreaded such another field,’ were the first to pay warm and, we believe, sincere homage to his natural efforts; while others, who saw in the sentiments of Childe Harold much to regret and to censure, did not withhold their tribute of applause to the depth of thought, the power and force of expression, the beauty of description, and the energy of sentiment which animated the ‘Pilgrimage’. If the volume was laid aside for a moment, under the melancholy and unpleasing impression that it seemed calculated to chase hope from the side of man, and to dim his prospects both of this life and of futurity, it was immediately and almost involuntarily assumed again, as our feeling of the author’s genius predominated over our dislike to contemplate the gloomy views of human nature which it was his pleasure to place before us. Something was set down to the angry recollection of his first failure, which might faintly authorize so high a mind to hold the world’s opinion in contempt; something was allowed for the recent family losses to which the poem alluded, and under the feeling of which it had been partly written: and it seemed to most readers as if gentler and more kindly features were, at times, seen to glance from under the cloud of misanthropy, which the author had flung around the hero. Thus, as all admired the Pilgrimage of Childe Harold, all were prepared to greet the author with that fame which is the poet’s best reward, and which is chiefly and most justly due to one who, in these exhausted days, strikes out a new and original line of composition.

It was amidst such feelings of admiration that Lord Byron entered, we may say for the first time, the public stage on which he has, for four years, made so distinguished a figure. Every thing in his manner, person, and conversation, tended to maintain the charm which his genius had flung around him; and those admitted to his conversation, was of a nature far beyond what these hereditary claims could of themselves have conferred, and his reception was enthusiastic beyond any thing we have ever witnessed, or even heard reported. We have already noticed that Lord Byron is not one of those literary men of whom it may be truly said, Minuit præsentia famam. A countenance, exquisitely modeled to the expression of feeling and passion, and to dim his prospects both of this life and of futurity, it was immediately and almost involuntarily assumed again, as our feeling of the author's genius predominated over our dislike to contemplate the gloomy views of human nature which it was his pleasure to place before us. Something was set down to the angry recollection of his first failure, which might faintly authorize so high a mind to hold the world's opinion in contempt; something was allowed for the recent family losses to which the poem alluded, and under the feeling of which it had been partly written: and it seemed to most readers as if gentler and more kindly features were, at times, seen to glance from under the cloud of misanthropy, which the author had flung around the hero. Thus, as all admired the Pilgrimage of Childe Harold, all were prepared to greet the author with that fame which is the poet’s best reward, and which is chiefly and most justly due to one who, in these exhausted days, strikes out a new and original line of composition.

It is well known how wide the doors of society are opened in London to literary merit even of a degree far inferior to Lord Byron’s, and that it is only necessary to be honourably distinguished by the public voice to move as a denizen in the first circles. This passport was not necessary to Lord Byron who possessed the hereditary claims of birth and rank. But the interest which his genius attached to his presence, and to his conversation, was of a nature far beyond what these hereditary claims could of themselves have conferred, and his reception was enthusiastic beyond any thing we have ever witnessed, or even heard reported. We have already noticed that Lord Byron is not one of those literary men of whom it may be truly said, Minuit præsentia famam. A countenance, exquisitely modeled to the expression of feeling and passion, and to dim his prospects both of this life and of futurity, it was immediately and almost involuntarily assumed again, as our feeling of the author's genius predominated over our dislike to contemplate the gloomy views of human nature which it was his pleasure to place before us. Something was set down to the angry recollection of his first failure, which might faintly authorize so high a mind to hold the world's opinion in contempt; something was allowed for the recent family losses to which the poem alluded, and under the feeling of which it had been partly written: and it seemed to most readers as if gentler and more kindly features were, at times, seen to glance from under the cloud of misanthropy, which the author had flung around the hero. Thus, as all admired the Pilgrimage of Childe Harold, all were prepared to greet the author with that fame which is the poet’s best reward, and which is chiefly and most justly due to one who, in these exhausted days, strikes out a new and original line of composition.

It is well known how wide the doors of society are opened in London to literary merit even of a degree far inferior to Lord Byron’s, and that it is only necessary to be honourably distinguished by the public voice to move as a denizen in the first circles. This passport was not necessary to Lord Byron who possessed the hereditary claims of birth and rank. But the interest which his genius attached to his presence, and to his conversation, was of a nature far beyond what these hereditary claims could of themselves have conferred, and his reception was enthusiastic beyond any thing we have ever witnessed, or even heard reported. We have already noticed that Lord Byron is not one of those literary men of whom it may be truly said, Minuit præsentia famam. A countenance, exquisitely modeled to the expression of feeling and passion, and to dim his prospects both of this life and of futurity, it was immediately and almost involuntarily assumed again, as our feeling of the author's genius predominated over our dislike to contemplate the gloomy views of human nature which it was his pleasure to place before us. Something was set down to the angry recollection of his first failure, which might faintly authorize so high a mind to hold the world's opinion in contempt; something was allowed for the recent family losses to which the poem alluded, and under the feeling of which it had been partly written: and it seemed to most readers as if gentler and more kindly features were, at times, seen to glance from under the cloud of misanthropy, which the author had flung around the hero. Thus, as all admired the Pilgrimage of Childe Harold, all were prepared to greet the author with that fame which is the poet’s best reward, and which is chiefly and most justly due to one who, in these exhausted days, strikes out a new and original line of composition.

60: “Presence weakens a reputation”.
61: Scott speaks of himself.
Heed not the gloom that still shall sink:
My thoughts their dungeon know too well;
Back to my breast the captives shrink,
And bleed within their silent cell."\(^{62}\)

It was impossible to behold this interesting countenance, expressive of a dejection belonging neither to the rank, the age, nor the success of this young nobleman, without feeling an indefinable curiosity to ascertain whether it had a deeper cause than habit or constitutional temperament. It was obviously of a degree incalculably more serious than that alluded to by Prince Arthur—

\[-------\]

\[I\] remember when I was in France,
Young gentlemen would be as sad as night
Only for wantonness \[-------\] \(^{63}\)

But however derived, this, joined to Lord Byron’s air of mingling his amusements and sports as if he contemned them, and felt, that his sphere was far above the frivolous crowd which surrounded him, gave a strong effect of colouring to a character whose tints were otherwise romantic. Noble and far descended, his mind fraught with ancient learning and modern accomplishment, the pilgrim of distant and savage countries, eminent as a poet among the first whom Britain has produced, and having besides [p.178] cast round him a mysterious charm from the sombre tome of his poetry, and the occasional melancholy of his deportment, Lord Byron occupied the eyes, and interested the feelings of all. The enthusiastic looked on him to admire, the serious with a wish to admonish, and the soft with a desire to console. Even literary envy, a base sensation, from which, perhaps, this age is more free than any other,\(^{64}\) forgave the man whose splendour dimmed the fame of his competitors. The generosity of Lord Byron’s disposition, his readiness to assist merit in distress, and to bring it forward where unknown, deserved and entertained the general regard of those who partook of such merit, while his poetical effusions, poured forth with equal force and fertility, shewed at once a daring confidence in his own powers, and a determination to maintain, by continued effort, the high place he had obtained in British literature. This rapidity of composition and publication we have heard blamed as endangering the fame of the author, while it gave such proofs of talent. We are inclined to dispute the proposition, at least in the present instance.

We are sometimes tempted to blame the timidity of those poets, who, possessing powers to arrest the admiration of the public, are yet too much afraid of censure to come frequently forward, and thus defraud themselves of their fame, and the public of the delight which they might afford us. Where success has been unexpectedly, and perhaps undeservedly, obtained by the capricious vote of fashion, it may be well for the adventurer to draw his stake and leave the game, as every succeeding hazard will diminish the chance of his rising a winner. But they cater ill for the public, and give indifferent advice to the poet, supposing him possessed of the highest qualities of his art, who do not advise him to labour while the laurel around his brows yet retains its freshness. Sketches from Lord Byron are more valuable than finished pictures from others; nor are we at all sure that any labour which he might bestow in revisal would not rather efface than refine those outlines of striking and powerful originality which they exhibit, when flung rough from the hand of the master. No one would have wished to condemn Michel Angelo to work upon a single block of marble, until he had satisfied, in every point, the petty criticism of that Pope, who, neglecting the sublime and magnificent character and attitude of his Moses, descended to blame a wrinkle in the fold of the garment. Should it be urged, that thus stimulating genius to unsparing exertion, we encourage carelessness and hurry in the youthful candidates for literary distinction, we answer, it is not the learner to whom our remarks apply; they refer to him only, who, gifted by nature with the higher power of poetry, an art as difficult as it is enchanting; has made himself master, by application and study, of the mechanical [p.179] process, and in whom, we believe, frequent exertions upon new works awaken and emulate that genius, which might be cramped and rendered tame, by long and minute attention to finish to the highest possible degree any one of the number. If we look at our poetical library we shall two, generally speaking, the most distinguished poets have been the most voluminous, and that those who, like Gray, limited their productions to a few poems, anxiously and sedulously corrected and revised, have given them a stiff and artificial character, which, far from disarming criticism, has rather embittered its violence, while the Aristarch, like Achilles assailing Hector, meditates dealing the mortal wound through some

---

\(^{62}\): Byron, *Impromptu in reply to a Friend*; printed with CHP I and II.

\(^{63}\): Shakespeare, *King John*, IV i 14-16.

\(^{64}\): Perhaps ironical at Scott’s own expence.
unguarded crevice of the supposed impenetrable armour, with which the cautious bard has vainly invested himself. Our opinion must necessarily be qualified by the caution, that as no human invention can be infinitely fertile, as even the richest genius may be, in agricultural phrase, *cropped out*, and rendered sterile, and as each author must necessarily have a particular style in which he is supposed to excel, and must therefore be more or less a mannerist, no one can with prudence persevere in forcing himself before the public when from failure in invention, or from having rendered the peculiarities of his style over trite and familiar, the veteran ‘lags superfluous on the stage,’ a slighted mute in those dramas where he was once the principle personage. To this humiliation vanity frequently exposes genius, and it is no doubt true that a copious power of diction joined to habitual carelessness in composition, has frequently conduced to it. We would therefore be understood to recommend to authors, while a consciousness of the possession of vigorous powers, carefully cultivated, unites with the favour of the public, to descend into the arena, and continue their efforts vigorously while their hopes are high, their spirits active, and the public propitious, in order that, on the slightest failure of nerves or breath, they may be able to withdraw themselves honourably from the contest gracefully, giving way to other candidates for fame, and cultivating studies more suitable to a flagging imagination than the fervid art of poetry. This, however, is the affair of the authors themselves: should they neglect this prudential course, the public will no doubt have more indifferent books on their table than would otherwise have loaded it; and as the world always seizes the first opportunity of recalling the applause it has bestowed, the former wreaths of the writers for a time will be blighted by their immediate failure. But these evils, so far as the public is concerned, are greatly overbalanced by such as arise from the timid caution, which bids genius suppress its efforts, until they shall be refined into unattainable perfection—and we cannot but repeat our conviction that poetry being, in its higher classes, an art which has for its elements [p.180] sublimity and unaffected beauty, is more liable than any other to suffer from the labour of polishing, or from the elaborate and composite style of ornament, and alternate affectation of simplicity, and artifice, which characterize the works, even of the first poets, when they have been over-anxious to secure public applause, by long and reiterated correction. It must be remembered that we speak of the higher tones of composition; there are others of a subordinate character, where extreme art and labour are not bestowed in vain. But we cannot consider over-anxious correction as likely to be employed with advantage upon poems like those of Lord Byron, which have for their object to rouse the imagination, and awaken the passions.

It is certain, to return to the subject from which we have gone somewhat astray, that the rapidity with which Lord Byron’s poems succeeded each other, during four years, served to arrest as well as to dazzle and delight the public; nor did there appear room to apply to him, in the height of his fame and the flower of his age, the caution which we might whisper to other bards of popular celebrity. The Giaour, The Bride of Abydos, The Corsair, Lara, The Siege of Corinth, followed each other with a celerity, which was only rivalled by their success; and if at times the author seemed to pause in his poetic career, with the threat of forbearing further adventure for a time, the public eagerly pardoned the breach of a promise by keeping which they must have been sufferers. Exquisitely beautiful in themselves, these tales received a new charm from the romantic climes into which they introduced us, and from the oriental costume so strictly preserved and so picturesquely exhibited. Greece, the cradle of the poetry with which our earliest studies are familiar, was presented to us among her ruins and her sorrows. Her delightful scenery, once dedicated to those deities who, though dethroned from their own Olympus, still preserve a poetical empire, was spread before us in Lord Byron’s poetry, varied by all the moral effect derived from what Greece is and what she has been, while it was doubled by comparisons, perpetually excited, between the philosophers and heroes who formerly inhabited that romantic country, and their descendants, who either stoop to their Scythian conquerors, or maintain, among the recesses of their classical mountains, an independence as wild and savage as it is precarious. The oriental manners also and diction, so peculiar in their picturesque effect that they can cast a charm even over the absurdities of an eastern tale, had here the more honourable occupation of decorating that which in itself was beautiful, and enhancing by novelty what would have been captivating without its aid. The powerful impression produced by this peculiar species of poetry confirmed [p.181] us in a

65: B. learns the words “mannerist” and “mannerism” from here: “I certainly am a devil of a mannerist – & must leave off but what could I do, without exertion of some kind – I should have sunk under my imagination and reality. – My <best> [best] respects to Mr. Gifford – to Walter Scott & to all friends. –” (to Murray, March 9th 1817: text from NLS Ms.43489 f.192; BLJ V 183-5): “If you think [that] it [Beppo] will do you or the work – or works any good – you may – or may not put my name to it – but first consult the knowing ones; – it will at any rate shew them – that <One> I can write cheerfully, <xxxxxxx> & repel the charge of monotony & mannerism.” – (to Murray, March 25th 1818: text from NLS Ms.43489; LJ IV 216-18; BLJ VI 24-5).
66: Scott speaks of himself.
67: Scott pursued this path, and wrote novels instead of poetry.
principle, which, though it will hardly be challenged when stated as an axiom, is very rarely complied with in practice. It is, that every author should, like Lord Byron, form to himself, and communicate to the reader, a precise, defined and distinct view of the landscape, sentiment, or action which he intends to describe to the reader. This simple proposition has been so often neglected that we feel warranted in giving it a little more consideration and illustration than plain men may at first sight think necessary.

An author occasionally forgets that it is his business rather to excite than to satiate the imagination of his readers; rather to place before him such a distinct and intelligible sketch as his own imagination can fill up, than, by attempting to exhaust all that can be said on the subject, to confuse the apprehension and weary the attention. There should be, even in poetical description, that *keeping* and *perspective* which is demanded in the sister art of painting, and which alone can render the scenes presented by either distinct, clear and intelligible. Here the painter has, in some degree, the advantage of the poet, for *perspective* is the very foundation of his art. The most stupid bungler that ever took brush in hand is aware that his objects must diminish as they withdraw from the eye, that he is not entitled to render the rocks of his distance too distinct, and that the knowledge that such things do actually exist will not justify him in painting with minuteness the lichens and shrubs, which grow on their surface and in their crevices, at a distance from which these minute objects cannot be discovered by the eye. Yet suppose such a novice a follower of the Muses, and he will not hesitate a moment to transgress this wholesome rule. Everything which he knows to exist in fact, he will, with the confused minuteness of a Chinese painter, labour to introduce into his description, and, by confounding that which is important to his purpose with that which is subordinate, he will produce a mass of images more or less splendid, according to the vivacity of his imagination, but perplexing, incongruous and unsatisfactory, in all respects, to the reader, who, in vain, endeavours to reduce them in his own mind into one distinct landscape whose parts shall bear a just proportion to each other. Such a poet has assembled, perhaps, excellent materials for composition, but he does not present them in intelligible arrangement to the reader, and he fails to produce upon the mind of others the desired effect, probably because the picture has never been presented to his own with sufficient accuracy.

This is more particularly the case with such authors as, lacking the erudition of Southey or the personal experience of Lord Byron, attempt to lay their scene in countries or ages with the costume and manners of which they are but imperfectly acquainted. Such adventurers are compelled to draw heavily on their slender stock of knowledge on every occasion, and to parade, as fully as they can, before the eye of the reader, whatsoever their reading has gleaned concerning their subject. Without Chatterton’s genius, they fall into Chatterton’s error, who, not considering that in the most ancient authors scarcely one word in ten has become obsolete, wrote a set of poems in which every second word was taken from a glossary, and necessarily remitted to one, under the idea that he was imitating the language of the ancients. Thus, when a poet deals in materials of which he is not fully master, he is obliged, at the risk of outraging both taste and nature, to produce as frequently, and detain before the reader as long as possible, those distinctive marks by which he means to impress him with the reality of his story; and the outrage is committed in vain; for it is not enough for the representation of an eastern landscape, that the foreground should be encumbered with turbans and sabres, and the fantastic architecture of the kiosk or the mosque, if the distance be not marked by those slight but discriminating touches which mark the reality of the scene, the lightly indicated palm-tree, which overhangs the distant fountain, or the shadowy and obscure delineation of the long column of the caravan retreating through the distance; or the watchman who rests on his lance while his tribe slumber around him, as in the following exquisite picture taken from one of the poems before us.

The Boy was sprung to manhood: in the wilds
Of fiery climes he made himself a home,
And his soul drank their sunbeams: he was girt
With strange and dusky aspects; he was not
Himself like what he had been; on the sea
And on the shore he was a wanderer;
There was a mass of many images
Crowded like waves upon me, but he was
A part of all; and in the last he lay
Reposing from the noon-tide sultriness,
Couched among fallen columns, in the shade
Of ruined walls that had survived the names
Of those who reared them; by his sleeping side

68: Scott alludes to his own use of obscure Scots words and phrases, and Byron’s use of Turkish ones.
Stood camels grazing, and some goodly steeds
Were fastened near a fountain; and a man
Clad in a flowing garb did watch the while,
While many of his tribe slumbered around:
And they were canopied by the blue sky,
So cloudless, clear, and purely beautiful,
That God alone was to be seen in Heaven.\hfill 69

This is true *keeping*—an Eastern picture perfect in its foreground, and distance, and sky, and no part of which is so dwelt upon or laboured as to obscure the principal figure. It is often in the slight and almost imperceptible touches that the hand of the master is shewn, and that a single spark, struck from his fancy, lightens with a long train of illumination that of the reader.

It is another remarkable property of the poetry of Lord Byron, that although his manner is frequently varied—although he appears to have assumed for an occasion the characteristic stanza and style of several contemporaries,\hfill 70 yet not only is his poetry marked in every instance by the strongest cast of originality, but in some leading particulars, and especially in the character of his heroes, each story so closely resembled the other, that managed by a writer of less power, the effect would have been an unpleasing monotonity. All, or almost all, his heroes, have somewhat the attributes of Childe Harold:—all, or almost all, have minds which seem at variance with their fortunes, and exhibit high and poignant feelings of pain and pleasure; a keen sense of what is noble and honourable, and an equally keen susceptibility of injustice or injury, under the garb of stoicism and contempt of mankind. The strength of early passion, and the glow of youthful feeling, are uniformly painted as chilled or subdued by a train of early imprudences or of darker guilt, and the sense of enjoyment tarnished, by too intimate and experienced an acquaintance with the vanity of human wishes. These general attributes mark the stern features of all Lord Byron’s heroes, from those which are shaded by the scalloped hat of the illustrious Pilgrim,\hfill 71 to those which lurk under the turban of Alp, the Renegade. The public, ever anxious in curiosity or malignity to attach to fictitious characters real prototypes, were obstinate in declaring that in these leading traits of character Lord Byron copied from the individual features reflected in his own mirror. On this subject the noble author entered, on one occasion, a formal protest, though, it will be observed, without entirely disavowing the ground on which the conjecture was formed.

‘With regard to my story, and stories in general, I should have been glad to have rendered my personages more perfect and amiable, if possible, inasmuch as I have been sometimes criticised, and considered no less responsible for their deeds and qualities than if all had been personal. Be it so – if I have deviated into the gloomy vanity of “drawing from self,” the pictures are probably like, since they are unfavourable; and if not, those who know me are undeceived, and those who do not, I have little interest in undeceiving. I have no particular desire that any but my acquaintance should think the author better than the beings of his imagining; but I cannot help a little surprise, and perhaps amusement, at some odd critical exceptions in the present instance, when I see several bards (far more deserving, I allow) in very reputable plight, \hfill 72 and quite exempted from all participation in the faults of those heroes, who, nevertheless, might be found with little more morality than “The Giaour,” and perhaps – but no – I must admit Chile Harold to be a very repulsive personage; and as to his identity, those who like it must give him whatever “alias” they please.’\hfill 72

It is difficult to say whether we are to receive this passage as an admission or a denial of the opinion to which it refers: but Lord Byron certainly did the public an injustice, if he supposed it imputed to him the criminal actions with which many of his heroes were stained. Men no more expect to meet in Lord Byron the Corsair, who “knew himself a villain,”\hfill 73 than they looked for the hypocrisy of Kehama on the shores of the Derwent Water,\hfill 74 or the profligacy of Marmion on the banks of the Tweed: yet even in the features of Conrad, those who have looked on Lord Byron will recognise some likenesses.
Saw more than marks the crowd of vulgar men;
They gaze and marvel how – and still confess
That thus it is, but why they cannot guess.
Sun-burnt his cheek, his forehead high and pale –
The sable curls in wild profusion veil;
And oft perchance his rising lip reveals
The haughtier thought it curbs, but scarce conceals.
Though smooth his voice, and calm his general mien,
Still seems there something he would not have seen;
His features’ deepening lines and varying hue
At times attracted, yet perplexed the view.’

_The Corsair_, p.11.

And the ascetic regimen which the noble author himself observed, was no less marked in the description of Conrad’s fare.

‘Ne’er for his lip the purpling cup they fill,
That goblet passes him untasted still –
And for his fare – the rudest of his crew
Would that, in turn, have passed untasted too;
Earth’s coarsest bread, the garden’s homeliest roots,
And scarce the summer luxury of fruits,
His short repast in humbleness supply
With all a hermit’s board would scarce deny.’—_Id_.p.4.

The following description of Lara suddenly and unexpectedly returned from his distant travels, and reassuming his station in the society of his own country, has in like manner strong points of resemblance to the part which the author himself seemed occasionally to bear amid the scenes where the great mingle with the fair.

‘—Quickly seen,
Whate’er he be, ’twas not what he had been; [p.185]
That brow in furrowed lines had fixed at last,
And spake of passions, but of passion past;
The pride, but not the fire, of early days,
Coldness of mien, and carelessness of praise;
A high demeanour, and a glance that took
Their thoughts from others by a single look;
And that sarcastic levity of tongue,
The stinging of a heart the world hath stung,
That darts in seeming playfulness around,
And makes those feel that will not own the wound;
All these seemed his, and something more beneath
Than glance could well reveal, or accent breathe.
Ambition, glory, love, the common aim
That some can conquer, and that all would claim,
Within his breast appeared no more to strive,
Yet seemed as lately they had been alive;
And some deep feeling it were vain to trace
At moments lightened o’er his livid face.’—_Lara_, pp.6, 7.

We are not writing Lord Byron’s private history, though from the connection already stated between his poetry and his character, we feel ourselves forced upon considering his literary life, his deportment, and even his personal appearance. But we know enough even of his private story to give our warrant that, though his youth may have shared somewhat too largely in the indiscretions of those left too early masters of their own actions and fortunes, falsehood and malice alone can impute to him any real cause for hopeless remorse or gloomy misanthropy. To what, then, are we to ascribe the singular peculiarity which induced an author of such talent, and so well skilled in tracing the darker impressions which guilt and remorse leave on the human character, so frequently to affix features peculiar to himself to the robbers and corsairs which he sketched with a pencil as forcible as that of
Salvator\textsuperscript{75}—More than one answer may be returned to this question; nor do we pretend to say which is best warranted by the facts. The practice may arise from a temperament which radical and constitutional melancholy has, as in the case of Hamlet, predisposed to identify its owner with scenes of that deep and arousing interest which arises from the stings of conscience contending with the stubborn energy of pride, and delighting to be placed in supposed situations of guilt and danger, as some men love instinctively to tread the giddy edge of a precipice, or, by holding by some frail twig, to stoop forward over the abyss into which the dark torrent discharges itself. Or it may be that these disguises were assumed capriciously as a man might choose the cloak, poniard, and dark-lantern of a bravo, for his disguise at a masquerade. Or feeling his own powers in painting the sombre and the horrible, Lord Byron assumed in his fervour [p.186] the very semblance of the characters he describes, like an actor who presents on the stage at once his own person and the tragic character with which for the time he is invested. Nor is it altogether incompatible with his character to believe that, in contempt of the criticisms which on this account had attended Childe Harold, he was determined to shew to the public how little he was affected by them, and how effectually it was in his power to compel attention and respect, even when imparting a portion of his own likeness and his own peculiarities to pirates, and outlaws.

But although we do not pretend to ascertain the motive on which Lord Byron acted in bringing the peculiarities of his own sentiments and feeling so frequently before his readers, it is with no little admiration that we regard these extraordinary powers, which, amidst this seeming uniformity, could continue to rivet the public attention, and secure general and continued applause. The versatility of authors who have been able to draw and support characters as different from each other as from their own, has given to their productions the inexpressible charm of variety, and has often secured them against that neglect which in general attends what is technically called mannerism. But it was reserved to Lord Byron to present the same character on the public stage again and again, varied only by the exertions of that powerful genius, which searching the springs of passion and of feeling in their innermost recesses, knew how to combine their operations, so that the interest was eternally varying, and never abated, although the most important personage of the drama retained the same lineaments. It will one day be considered as not the least remarkable literary phenomenon of this age, that during a period of four years, notwithstanding the quantity of distinguished poetical talent of which we may be permitted to boast, a single author, and he managing his pen with the careless and negligent ease of a man of quality, and chusing for his theme subjects so very similar, and personages bearing so close a resemblance to each other,—did, in despite of these circumstances, of the unamiable attributes with which he usually invested his heroes, and of the proverbial fickleness of the public, maintain the ascendancy in their favour, which he had acquired by his first matured production. So however it indubitably has been; and those comparatively small circles of admirers excepted, which assemble naturally around individual poets of eminence, Lord Byron has been for that time, and may for some time continue to be, the Champion of the English Parnassus. If his empire over the public mind be in any measure diminished, it arises from no literary failure of his own, and from no triumph of his competitors, but from other circumstances so frequently [p.187] alluded to in the publication before us, that they cannot pass without some notice, which we will study to render as brief as it is impartial.

The poet thus gifted, thus honoured, thus admired, no longer entitled to regard himself as one defrauded of his just frame, and expelled with derision from the lists in which he had stood forward a candidate for honour, but crowned with all which the public could bestow, was now in a situation apparently as enviable as could be attained by mere literary celebrity. The sequel may be given in the words in which the author, adopting here more distinctly the character of Childe Harold than in the original poem, has chosen to present it to us, and to assign the cause why Childe Harold has resumed his pilgrim’s staff when it was hoped he had sat down for life a denizen of his native country. The length of the quotation will be pardoned by those who can feel at once the moral interest and poetical beauty with which it abounds.

\begin{quote}
VIII.

\begin{verbatim}
'Something too much of this:—but now 'tis past,
And the spell closes with its silent seal.
Long absent HAROLD re-appears at last;
He of the breast which fain no more would feel,
Wrung with the wounds which kill not, but ne’er heal,
Yet Time, who changes all, had altered him
In soul and aspect as in age: years steal
Fire from the mind as vigour from the limb;
\end{verbatim}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{75}: Salvador Rosa (1615-73), painter specializing in brigands, stormscapes and so on.
And life’s enchanted cup but sparkles near the brim.

IX.

‘His had been quaffed too quickly, and he found
The dregs were wormwood; but he filled again,
And from a purer fount, on holier ground,
And deemed its spring perpetual; but in vain!
Still round him clung invisibly a chain
Which galled for ever, fettering though unseen,
And heavy though it clanked not; worn with Pain,
Which pined although it spoke not, and grew keen,
Entering with every step, he took, through many a scene.

X.

‘Secure in guarded coldness, he had mix’d
Again in fancied safety with his kind,
And deemed his spirit now so firmly fix’d
And sheathed with an invulnerable mind,
That, if no joy, no sorrow lurk’d behind;
And he, as one, might ’midst the many stand
Unheeded, searching through the crowd to find
Fit speculation; such as in strange land
He found in wonder-works of God and Nature’s hand. [p.188]

XI.

‘But who can view the ripened rose, nor seek
To wear it? who can curiously behold
The smoothness and the sheen of beauty’s cheek,
Nor feel the heart can never all grow old?
Who can contemplate Fame through clouds unfold
The star which rises o’er her steep, nor climb?
Harold, once more within the vortex, roll’d
On with the giddy circle, chasing Time,
Yet with a nobler aim than in his youth’s fond prime.

XII.

‘But soon he knew himself the most unfit
Of men to herd with man; with whom he held
Little in common; untaught to submit
His thoughts to others, though his soul was quell’d
In youth by his own thoughts; still uncompell’d,
He would not yield dominion of his mind
To spirits against whom his own rebell’d;
Proud though in desolation; which could find
A life within itself, to breathe without mankind.

XIII.

‘Where rose the mountains, there to him were frie nds;
Where rolled the ocean, thereon was his home;
Where a blue sky, and glowing clime, extends,
He had the passion and the power to roam;
The desert, forest, cavern, breaker’s foam,
Were unto him companionship; they spake
A mutual language, clearer than the tome
Of his land’s tongue, which he would oft forsake
For Nature’s pages glass’d by sunbeams on the lake.

XIV.

‘Like the Chaldean, he could watch the stars,
Till he had peopled them with beings bright
As their own beams; and earth, and earth-born jars,
And human frailties, were forgotten quite:
Could he have kept his spirit to that flight
He had been happy; but this clay will sink
Its spark immortal, envying it the light
To which it mounts, as if to break the link
That keeps us from yon heaven which woos us to its brink.

XV.
But in Man’s dwellings he became a thing
Restless and worn, and stern and wearisome,
Drooped as a wild-born falcon with clipt wing,
To whom the boundless air alone were home:
Then came his fit again, which to o’ercome,
As eagerly the barr’d-up bird will beat
His breast and beak against his wiry dome [p.189]
Till the blood tinge his plumage, so the heat
Of his impeded soul would through his bosom eat.

XVI.
‘Self-exiled Harold wanders forth again,
With nought of hope left, but with less of gloom;
The very knowledge that he lived in vain,
That all was over on this side the tomb,
Had made Despair a smilingness assume,
Which, though ‘twere wild,—as on the plundered wreck
When mariners would madly meet their doom
With draughts intemperate on the sinking deck,—
Did yet inspire a cheer, which he forbore to check.
Canto III.—p.7—11.

The commentary through which the meaning of this melancholy tale is rendered obvious, has been long before the public, and is still in vivid remembrance; for the errors of those who excel their fellows in gifts and accomplishments are not soon forgotten. Those scenes, however most painful to the bosom, were rendered yet more so by public discussion; and it is at least possible that amongst those who exclaimed most loudly on this unhappy occasion, were some in whose eyes literary superiority exaggerated Lord Byron’s offence. The scene may be described in a few words:—the wise condemned—the good regretted—the multitude, idly or maliciously inquisitive, rushed from place to place, gathering gossip, which they mangled and exaggerated while they repeated it; and imprudence, ever ready to hitch itself into notoriety, hooked on, as Falstaff enjoins Bardolph,76 blustered, bullied, and talked of ‘pleading a cause’ and ‘taking a side.’

The family misfortunes which have for a time lost Lord Byron to his native land have neither chilled his poetical fire, nor deprived England of its benefit. The Third Canto of Childe Harold exhibits, in all its strength and in all its peculiarity, the wild, powerful and original vein of poetry which, in the preceding cantos, first fixed the public attention upon the author. If there is any difference, the former seem to us to have been rather more sedulously corrected and revised for publication, and the present work to have been dashed from the author’s pen with less regard to the subordinate points of expression and versification. Yet such is the deep and powerful strain of passion, such the original tone and colouring of description, that the want of polish in some of its minute parts rather adds to than deprives the poem of its energy. It seems, occasionally, as if the consideration of mere grace was beneath the care of the poet, in his ardour to hurry upon the reader the ‘thoughts that glow and words that burn;’77 and that the occasional roughness of the verse corresponded with the stern tone of thought, and of mental suffering which it expresses. We have [p.190] remarked the same effect produced by the action of Mrs. Siddons, when, to give emphasis to some passage of overwhelming passion, she has seemed willfully to assume a position constrained, stiffened, violent, diametrically contrary to the rules of grace, in order, as it were, to concentrate herself for the utterance of grief, or passion which disdained embellishment. In the same manner, versification, in the hands of a master-bard, is as

76: Shakespeare, *Henry IV* II, ii 156.
77: Gray, *The Progress of Poesy* III, 4 (should be “words that breathe”).
frequently correspondent to the thoughts it expresses as to the action it describes, and the ‘line labours and the words move slow’ 78 under the heavy and painful thought; wrung, as it were, from the bosom, as when Ajax is heaving his massy rock. It is proper, however, to give some account of the plan of the poem before we pursue these observations.

The subject is the same as in the preceding Cantos of the ‘Pilgrimage’. Harold wanders over other fields and amid other scenery, and gives thought to the various thoughts and meditations which they excite in his breast. The poem opens with a beautiful and pathetic, though abrupt, invocation to the infant daughter of the author, and bespeaks at once our interest and our sympathy for the self-exiled Pilgrim.

I.
‘Is thy face like thy mother’s, my fair child!
Ada! sole daughter of my house and heart?
When last I saw thy young blue eyes they smiled,
And then we parted,—not as now we part,
But with a hope:—
Awaking with a start,
The waters heave around me; and on high
The winds lift up their voices; I depart,
Whither I know not—but the hour’s gone by,
When Albion’s lessening shores could grieve or glad mine eye.

II.
‘Once more upon the waters! yet once more!
And the waves bound beneath me as a steed
That knows his rider. Welcome to their roar!
Swift be their guidance, wheresoe’er it lead!
Though the strain’d mast should quiver as a reed,
And the rent canvas fluttering strew the gale,
Still must I on; for I am as a weed,
Flung from the rock, on Ocean’s foam to sail
Where’er the surge may sweep, or tempest’s breath prevail.’
Canto III, pp. 3, 4.

The theme of Childe Harold is then resumed, and the stanzas follow which we have already quoted, and which, it must be allowed, identify the noble author more intimately than in the former Cantos. We do not mean to say that all Childe Harold’s feelings and adventures must be considered as those of Lord Byron, but merely that there is much of Lord Byron in the supposed Pilgrim.

On the plan itself we may briefly remark, that the localities of which it necessarily treats connect it with the real as well as the beautiful. An ingenious friend has well observed, that the plain, the rock, the hillock, which marks the scene of some distinguished event, has frequently an effect more powerful on the mind than even the monuments of art designed expressly to preserve its memory. These localities have also the merit of imperishability, and carry back their associations to periods far more remote than art can refer to. Pictures fade and statues moulder and temples decay, and cities perish: but the sod of Marathon is immortal—and he who has trod e it has identified himself with Athenian story in a manner which neither painter, nor poet, nor sculptor could have accomplished for him. Shakespeare, who nothing escaped, hints, in the celebrated passage already quoted, that it is one of the highest offices of poetry to connect our ideas with some ‘local habitation.’ In this respect, poetry has been falsely characterised as dealing in fiction. History may do so perhaps too often; but poetry, at least good poetry, is connected only with the realities either of visible or of moral nature. It is therefore with no ordinary pleasure that we follow the Pilgrim through scenes to which his poetry gives new interest, while it recalls that attached to them by historical or moral associations.

He arrives on Waterloo—a scene where all men, where a poet especially, and a poet such as Lord Byron, must needs pause, and amid the quiet simplicity of whose scenery is excited a moral interest, deeper and more potent even than that which is produced by gazing upon the sublimest efforts of Nature in her most romantic recesses.

That Lord Byron’s sentiments do not correspond with ours is obvious, and we are sorry for both our sakes. For our own—because we have lost that note of triumph with which his harp would otherwise have rung over a field of glory such as Britain never reaped before; and on Lord Byron’s

account,—because it is melancholy to see a man of genius duped by the mere cant of words and phrases, even when facts are most broadly confronted with them. If the poet has mixed with original, wild, and magnificent creations of his imagination, prejudices which he could only have caught by the contagion which he most professes to despise, it is he himself must be the loser. If his lofty muse has soared in all her brilliancy over the field of Waterloo without dropping even one leaf of laurel on the head of Wellington, his merit can dispense even with the praise of Lord Byron. 79 And as, when the images of Brutus were excluded from the triumphal procession, his memory became only the [p.192] more powerfully imprinted on the souls of the Romans,—the name of the British hero will be but more eagerly recalled to remembrance by the very lines in which his praise is forgotten.

We would willingly avoid mention of the political opinions hinted at by Childe Harold, and more distinctly expressed in other poems of Lord Byron,—the more willingly, as we strongly suspect that these effusions are rather the sport of whim and singularity, or at best the suggestion of sudden starts of feeling and passion, than the expressions of any serious or fixed opinion. A French author, (Le Censeur du Dictionnaire des Girouettes,) 80 who has undertaken the hardy task of vindicating the consistency of the actors in the late revolutions and counter-revolutions of his country, gives it as his decided opinion, that poets in particular are not amenable to censure whatever political opinions they may express, or however frequently these opinions may exhibit marks of inconsistency.—'Le cerveau d’un poète est un cire molle et flexible où s’imprime naturellement tout ce qui le flatte, le séduit et l’alimente. La muse du chant n’a pas de parti ; c’est une étourderie sans conséquence, qui folâtre également et sur de riches gazons et sur d’arides bruyères. Un poète en délire chante indifféremment Titus et Thamas, Louis XII et Cromwell, Christine du Suède et Fanchon la Vieleuse.' 81

We suspect that Lord Byron will not feel much flattered by the opportunity we have given him of sheltering himself under the insignificance which this Frenchman attaches to the political opinions of poets. But if he renounces the defence arising from the difficulties of resisting a tempting subject, and the pleasure of maintaining a paradox, it will be difficult for him to escape the charge of inconsistency. For to compare Waterloo to the battle of Canne, 82 and speak of the blood which flowed on the side of the vanquished as lost in the cause of freedom, is contrary not only to plain sense and general opinion, but to Lord Byron’s own experience, and to the testimony of that experience which he has laid before the public. Childe Harold, in his former Pilgrimage, beheld in Spain the course of the ‘tyrant and of the tyrant’s slaves’. 83 He saw ‘Gaul’s vulture with her wings unfurled’, 84 and indignantly expostulated with Fate on the impending destruction of the patriotic Spaniards.

And must they fall,—the young, the proud, the brave,
To swell one bloated Chief’s unwholesome reign,
No step between submission and a grave,
The rise of rapine, and the fall of Spain! 85

Childe Harold saw the scenes which he celebrates,—and does he now compare to the field of Canne the plain of Waterloo, and mourn over the fall of the tyrant and the military satraps and slaves whose arms built his power, as over the fall of the cause of liberty? [p.193] We know the ready answer which will be offered by the few who soothe their own prejudices, or seek to carry their own purposes by maintaining this extravagant proposition. They take a distinction: Buonaparte, according to their creed, fell a tyrant in 1814, and revived a deliverer in 1815. A few months’ residence in the Isle of Elba had given him time for better thoughts, and had mortified within his mind that gorging ambition for which Russia was not too great, nor Hamburgh too small a morsel; which neither evaporated under the burning sun of Egypt nor was chilled by the polar snows; which survived the loss of millions of soldiers and an incalculable tract of territory, and burned as fiercely during the conferences of

79: Scott may not know that B. disliked Wellington because he had been to bed with Frances Wedderburn Webster, and B. hadn’t.
80: Published Paris, 1815. Scott’s quotation, which is accurate, is on p.216 (the last page).
81: “A poet’s brain is made of soft and flexible wax, where everything that flatters, seduces, and nourishes him is naturally printed. The Muse of song has no party; it is an inconsequential thoughtlessness, which romps equally on rich lawns and on arid heather. The delirious poet will sing Titus and Thamas, Louis XII and Cromwell, Christina of Sweden and Fanchon la Vieleuse”. Thamas may signify a Shah of Persia; Fanchon la Vieleuse is an 1803 comedy by Jean Nicholas Bouilly. The seeds are to be found here of B.’s hireling poet who sings The Isles of Greece in DJ III.
82: CHP III 64 1: Cannae (216 BC) in which Hannibal beat the Romans under Aemlius Paulus.
83: CHP I 38, 5.
84: CHP I 52, 8.
Chatillon, when the despot’s fate was trembling in the scales, as at those of Tilsit, when that of his adversary had kicked the beam. All the experience which Europe had bought by oceans of blood and years of degradation ought, according to these gentlemen, to have been forgotten upon the empty professions of one whose word, whosoever or wheresoever pledged, never bound him an instant when interest or ambition required a breach of it. Buonaparte assured the world he was changed in temper, mind and disposition; and his old agent and minister (Fouché of Nantes) was as ready to give his security as Bardolph was to engage for Falstaff. When Gil Blas found his old comrades in knavery, Don Raphael and Ambrose de Lamela, administering the revenues of a Carthusian convent, he shrewdly conjectured that the treasure of the holy fathers was in no small danger, and grounded his suspicion on the old adage ‘Il ne faut pas mettre à la cave un ivrogne qui a renoncé au vin.’ But Europe—when France had given the strongest proof of her desire to recover what she termed her glory, by expelling a king whose reign was incompatible with foreign wars, and recalling Napoleon to whom conquest was as the very breath of his nostrils Europe, most deserving, had she yielded to such arguments, to have been crowned with ‘the diadem, hight foolscap’, is censured for having exerted her strength to fix her security, and confuting with her own warlike weapons those whose only law was arms, and only argument battle. We do not believe there lives any one who can seriously doubt the truth of what we have said. If, however, there were any simple enough to expect to hail Freedom restored by the victorious arms of Buonaparte, their mistake (had Lord Wellington not saved them from its consequences) would have resembled that of poor Slender, who, rushing to the embraces of Anne Page, found himself unexpectedly in the grip of a lubberly post-master’s boy. But probably no one was foolish enough to nourish such hopes, though there are some—their number is few—whose general opinions concerning the policy of Europe are so closely and habitually linked with their party prejudices, that they see in the victory of Waterloo only the triumph of Lord Castlereagh; and could the event have been reversed, would have thought rather of the possible change of seats in St. Stephen’s, than of the probable subjugation of Europe. Such were those who, hiding perhaps secret hopes with affected despondence, lamented the madness which endeavoured to make a stand against the Irresistible whose military calculations were formed on plans far beyond the comprehension of all other minds; and such are they who, confuted by stubborn facts, now affect to mourn over the consequences of a victory which they had pronounced impossible. But, as we have already hinted, we cannot trace in Lord Byron’s writings any systematic attachment to a particular creed of politics, and he appears to us to seize the subjects of public interest upon the side in which they happen to present themselves for the moment, with this qualification, that he usually paints them on the shaded aspect, perhaps that their tints may harmonize with the sombre colours of his landscape. Dangerous as prophecies are, we could almost hazard a prediction that, if Lord Byron enjoys that length of life which we desire for his sake and our own, his future writings may probably shew that he thinks better of the morals, religion, and constitution of his country, than his poems have hitherto indicated. Should we fail in a hope which we cherish fondly, the disgrace of false prophecy must rest with us, but the loss will be with Lord Byron himself.

Childe Harold, though he shuns to celebrate the victory of Waterloo, gives us a most beautiful description of the evening which preceded the battle of Quatre Bras, the alarm which called out the troops, and the hurry and confusion which preceded their march. We are not sure that any verses in our language surpass the following in vigour and in feeling. The quotation is again a long one, but we must not and dare not curtail it.

XXI.
‘There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium’s capital had gathered then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o’er fair women and brave men;
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes look’d love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage-bell;
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

XXII.
‘Did ye not hear it?—No; ’twas but the wind,

86: Le Sage, Gil Blas, Book 10 Chapter vii.
87: “Don’t put a reformed drunk in charge of the wine-cellar”.
88: CHP I 24, 3.
89: Shakespeare, The Merry Wives of Windsor, V v 177.
Or the car rattling o’er the stony street;
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined; [p.195]
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet—
But, hark!—that heavy sound breaks in once more,
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
Arm! arm! it is—it is—the cannon’s opening roar!

XXIII.
‘Within a windowed niche of that high hall
Sate Brunswick’s fated chieftain; he did hear
That sound the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with Death’s prophetic ear;
And when they smiled because he deemed it near,
His heart more truly knew that peal too well
Which stretch’d his father on a bloody bier,
And roused the vengeance blood alone could quell:
He rush’d into the field, and, foremost fighting, fell.

XXIV.
‘Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago
Blush’d at the praise of their own loveliness;
And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
Which ne’er might be repeated; who could guess
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise?

XXV.
‘And there was mounting in hot haste: the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war;
And the deep thunder peal on peal afar;
And near, the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier ere the morning star;
While thronged the citizens with terror dumb,
Or whispering, with white lips—“The foe! they come! they come!”

XXVI.
‘And wild and high the “Cameron’s Gathering” rose!
The War-note of Lochiel, which Albyn’s hills
Have heard, and heard, too, have her Saxon foes:
How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills,
Savage and shrill! but with the breath which fills
Their mountain-pipe, so fill the mountaineers
With the fierce native daring which instils
The stirring memory of a thousand years,
And Evan’s, Donald’s fame rings in each clansman’s ears! [p.196]

XXVII.
‘And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
Dewy with nature’s tear-drops as they pass,
Grieving, if aught inanimate e’er grieves,
Over the unreturning brave — alas!
Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
Which now beneath them, but above shall grow
In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
Of living valour, rolling on the foe
And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low.

XXVIII.
‘Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
Last eve in Beauty’s circle proudly gay,
The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,
The morn the marshalling in arms, the day
Battle’s magnificently stern array!
The thunder-clouds close o’er it, which when rent
The earth is covered thick with other clay,
Which her own clay shall cover, heaped and pent,
Rider and horse,—friend, foe,—in one red burial blent!’

A beautiful elegiac stanza on the Honourable Major Howard, a relation of Lord Byron; and several verses in which the author contemplates the character and fall of Napoleon, close the meditations suggested by the field of Waterloo. The present situation of Buonaparte ought to exempt him (unless when, as in the following pages, he is brought officially before us) from such petty warfare as we can wage. But if Lord Byron supposes that Napoleon’s fall was occasioned, or even precipitated by a ‘just habitual scorn of men and their thoughts,’ too publicly and rashly expressed, or as he has termed it in a note, ‘the continued obtrusion on mankind of his want of all community of feeling with or for them,’—we conceive him to be under a material error. Far from being deficient in that necessary branch of the politician’s art, which soothes the passions and conciliates the prejudices of those whom they wish to employ as instruments, Buonaparte possessed it in exquisite perfection. He seldom missed finding the very man that was fittest for his immediate purpose; and he had, in a peculiar degree, the art of moulding him to it. It was not, then, because he despised the means necessary to gain his end that he finally fell short of attaining it, but because confiding in his stars, his fortune, and his strength, the ends which he proposed were unattainable even by the gigantic means which he possessed. But if we are to understand that the projects of Napoleon intimated, too plainly for the subsistence of his power, how little he regarded human life or human happiness in the accomplishment of his personal views, and that this conviction heated his enemies and cooled his friends, his indeed may be called a scorn, but surely not a just scorn of his fellow-mortals.

But bidding adieu to politics, that extensive gulp whose eddies draw every thing that is British into their vortex, we follow with pleasure Childe Harold’s wanderings up the enchanted valley of the Rhine:

‘There Harold gazes on a work divine,
A Blending of all beauties; streams and dells,
Fruit, foliage, crag, wood, cornfield, mountain, vine,
And chiefless castles breathing stern farewells
From gray, but leafy walls, where Ruin greenly dwells.’

These ruins, once the shades of the robber-chivalry of the German frontier, where each free count and knight exercised within his petty domain the power of a feudal sovereign, call forth from the poet an appropriate commemoration of the exploits and character of their former owners. In a softer mood, the Pilgrim pours forth his greetings to one kind breast, in whom he can yet repose his sorrows, and hope for responsive feelings. The fall of Marceau is next commemorated; and Harold, passing with a fond adieu from the Rhin-tal, plunges into the Alps, to find among their recesses scenery yet wilder, and better suited to one who sought for loneliness in order to renew

‘Thoughts hid, but not less cherished than of old,
Ere mingling with the herd had penn’d “him” in their fold.’

---

90: On St Helena.
91: CHP III, 40, 3 (expanded).
92: CHP III, 41, authorial note.
93: CHP III, 46, 5-9.
94: Augusta: Scott refers to The Castled Crag of Drachenfels.
95: CHP III, 68, 9.
The next theme on which the poet rushes is the character of the enthusiastic and, as Lord Byron well terms him, ‘self-torturing sophist, wild Rousseau,’ a subject naturally suggested by the scenes in which that unhappy visionary dwelt, at war with all others, and by no means at peace with himself; an affected contemner of polished society, for whose applause he secretly panted, and a waster of eloquence in praise of the savage state in which his paradoxical reasoning, and studied, if not affected declamation, would never have procured him an instant’s notice. In the following stanza his character and foibles are happily treated.

LXXX.

‘His life was one long war with self-sought foes,
Or friends by him self-banished; for his mind
Had grown Suspicion’s sanctuary, and chose,
For its own cruel sacrifice, the kind,
’Gainst whom he raged with fury strange and blind.
But he was phrenzied,—wherefore, who may know?
Since cause might be which skill could never find;
But he was phrenzied by disease or woe,
To that worst pitch of all, which wears a reasoning show.’ [p.198]

In another part of the poem this subject is renewed, where the traveller visits the scenery of La Nouvelle Eloïse.

‘Clarens, sweet Clarens, birth-place of deep love,
Thine air is the young breath of passionate thought;
Thy trees take root in love; the snows above
The very Glaciers have his colours caught,
And sunset into rose-hues sees them wrought
By rays which sleep there lovingly.’

There is much more of beautiful and animated description, from which it appears that the impassioned parts of Rousseau’s romance have made a deep impression upon the feelings of the noble poet. The enthusiasm expressed by Lord Byron is no small tribute to the power possessed by Jean Jacques over the passions; and to say truth, we needed some such evidence, for, though almost ashamed to avow the truth, which is probably very much to our own discredit,—still, like the barber of Midas, we must speak or die;—we have never been able to feel the interest or discover the merit of this far-famed performance. That there is much eloquence in the letters we readily admit; there lay Rousseau’s strength. But his lovers, the celebrated St. Preux and Julie, have, from the earliest moment we have heard the tale (which we well remember) down to the present hour, totally failed to interest us. There might be some constitutional hardness of heart; but like Lance’s pebble-hearted cur, Crab, we remained dry-eyed while all wept around us.\(^{96}\) And still, on resuming the volume, even now, we can see little in the loves of these two tiresome pedants to interest our feelings for either of them; we are by no means flattered by the character of Lord Edward Bomston, produced as the representative of the English nation,—and, upon the whole, consider the dullness of the story as the best apology for its exquisite immorality. To state our opinion in language much better than our own, we are unfortunate enough to regard this far-famed history of philosophical gallantry as an ‘unfashioned, indelicate, sour, gloomy, ferocious medley of pedantry and lewdness; of metaphysical speculations, blended with the coarsest sensuality.’\(^{98}\) Neither does Rousseau claim a high rank with us on account of that Pythian inspiration which vented

‘Those oracles which set the world in flame,
Nor ceased to burn till kingdoms were no more.’\(^{99}\)

We agree with Lord Byron that this frenzied sophist, reasoning upon false principles, or rather presenting that show of reasoning which [p.199] is the worst pitch of madness, was a primary apostle of the French Revolution; nor do we differ greatly from his lordship’s conclusion that good and evil were together overthrown in that volcanic explosion. But when Lord Byron assures us, that after the successive changes of government by which the French legislators have attempted to reach a theoretic perfection of constitution, mankind must and will begin the same work anew, in order to do it better

\(^{96}\): CHP III, 99, 1-6.
\(^{97}\): Shakespeare, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, II iii 10 (“cruel-hearted cur”).
\(^{98}\): Scott’s note: Letter by a Member of the National Assembly (probably forged).
\(^{99}\): CHP III 81, 3-4.
and more effectually,—we devoutly hope the experiment, however hopeful, may not be renewed in our time, and that the ‘fixed passion’ which Childe Harold describes as ‘holding his breath,’ and waiting the ‘atonning hour,’ will choke in his purpose ere that hour arrives. Surely the voice of dear-brought experience should now at length silence, even in France, the clamour of empirical philosophy. Who would listen a moment to the blundering mechanic who should say, ‘I have burned your house down ten times in the attempt, but let me once more disturb your old-fashioned chimneys and vents, in order to make another trial, and I will pledge myself to succeed in heating it upon the newest and most approved principle’?

The poem proceeds to describe, in a tone of great beauty and feeling, a night-scene on the Lake of Geneva; and each natural object, from the evening grasshopper to the stars, ‘the poetry of heaven,’ suggests the contemplation of the connection between the Creator and his works. The scene is varied by the ‘fierce and fair delight’ of a thunder-storm, described in verse almost as vivid as its lightnings. We had marked it for transcript, as one of the most beautiful passages of the poem: but quotation must have bounds, and we have been already liberal. But the ‘live thunder leaping among the rattling crags’—the voice of the mountains, as if shouting to each other—the plashing of the big rain—the gleaming of the wide lake, lighted like a phosphoric sea,—present a picture of sublime terror, yet of enjoyment, often attempted, but never so well, certainly never better, brought out in poetry. The Pilgrim reviews the characters of Gibbon and Voltaire, suggested by their residences on the lake of Geneva, and concludes by reverting to the same melancholy tone of feeling with which the poem commenced. Childe Harold, though not formally dismissed, glides from our observation; and the poet, in his own person, renews the affecting address to his infant daughter:—

**CXV.**

> ‘My daughter! with thy name this song begun—
> My daughter! with thy name thus much shall end,
> I see thee not,—I hear thee not,—but none
> Can be so wrapt in thee; thou art the friend [p.200]
> To whom the shadows of far years extend:
> Albeit my brow thou never should’st behold,
> My voice shall with thy future visions blend,
> And reach into thy heart – when mine is cold—
> A token and a tone, even from thy father’s mould.

He proceeds in the same tone for several stanzas, and then concludes with this paternal benediction:—

> ‘Sweet be thy cradled slumbers o’er the sea,
> And from the mountains where I now respire,
> Fain would I waft such blessing upon thee,
> As, with a sigh, I deem thou might’st have been to me.’

Having finished the analysis of this beautiful poem, we have the difficult and delicate task before us, of offering some remarks on the tone and feeling in which it is composed. But before discharging this part of our duty, we must give some account of the other fasciculus with which the fertile genius of Lord Byron has supplied us.

The collection to which the Prisoner of Chillon gives name, inferior in interest to the continuation of Childe Harold, is marked, nevertheless, by the peculiar force of Lord Byron’s genius. It consists of a series of detached pieces, some of them fragments, and rather poetical prologues, than finished and perfect poems.

Some of our readers may require to be informed, that Chillon, which gives name to the first poem, is a castle on the lake of Geneva, belonging of old to the Dukes of Savoy, employed by them during the dark ages, as a state prison, and furnished of course with a tremendous range of subterranean dungeons, with a chamber dedicated to the purpose of torture, and all the apparatus of feudal tyranny. Here the early champions of the Reformation were frequently doomed to expiate their heretical opinions. Among the hardest of these was Bonnivard, whom Lord Byron has selected as the hero of his poem. He was imprisoned in Chillon for nearly six years, from 1530, namely, to 1536, and underwent all the

100: CHP III 84, 6.
101: CHP III 88, 1.
102: CHP III 93, 3
103: CHP III 92, 5.
104: CHP III 118, 6-9.
rigour of the closest captivity. But it has not been the purpose of Lord Byron to paint the peculiar character of Bonnivard, nor do we find any thing to remind us of the steady firmness and patient endurance of one suffering for conscience-sake. The object of the poem, like that of Sterne’s celebrated sketch of the prisoner, is to consider captivity in the abstract, and to mark it effects in gradually chilling the mental powers as it benumbs and freezes the animal frame, until the unfortunate victim becomes, as it were, a part of his dungeon, and identified with his chains. This transmutation we believe to be founded on fact: at least, in the Low Countries, where capital punishments are never inflicted, and where solitary confinement for life is substituted in the case of enormous crimes, something like it may be witnessed. On particular days in the course of the year, these victims of a jurisprudence which calls itself humane, are presented to the public eye upon a stage erected in the open market-place, apparently to prevent their guilt and their punishment from being forgotten. It is scarcely possible to witness a sight more degrading to humanity than this exhibition:— with matted hair, wild looks and haggard features, with eyes dazzled by the unwonted light of the sun, and ears deafened and astounded by the sudden change of the silence of a dungeon for the busy hum of men, the wretches sit more like rude images fashioned to a fantastic imitation of humanity, than like living and reflecting beings. In the course of time we are assured they generally become either madmen or idiots, as mind or matter happens to predominate, when the mysterious balance between them is destroyed. But they who are subjected to such a dreadful punishment are generally, like most perpetrators of gross crimes, men of feeble internal resources. Men of talents like Trenck have been known, in the deepest seclusion, and most severe confinement, to battle the foul fiend melancholy, and to come off conquerors, during a captivity of years. Those who suffer imprisonment for the sake of their country or their religion have yet a stronger support, and may exclaim, though in a different sense from that of Othello—

‘It is the cause—it is the cause, my soul.’

And hence the early history of the church is filled with martyrs, who, confident in the justice of their cause, and the certainty of their future reward, endured with patience the rigour of protracted and solitary captivity, as well as the bitterness of torture, and of death itself. This, however, is not the view which Lord Byron has taken of the character and captivity of Bonnivard, for which he has offered an apology in the following passage in the notes. ‘When the foregoing poem was composed, I was not sufficiently aware of the history of Bonnivard, or I would have endeavoured to dignify the subject by an attempt to celebrate his courage and his virtues.’ The theme of the poem is therefore the gradual effect of protracted captivity upon a man of powerful mind, tried at the same time by the successive deaths of his two brethren.

Bonnivard is represented as imprisoned with his brothers in a terrific dungeon in the Castle of Chillon. The second—

‘________________ pure of mind,
But formed to combat with his kind;’

[p.202] first drooped under the effects of protracted imprisonment, more bitter to one bred a warrior and a huntsman. The sickness and pining of the other, a youth of a milder and more affectionate character, is feelingly described.

VIII.

‘But he, the favourite and the flower
Most cherished since his natal hour,
His mother’s image in fair face,
The infant love of all his race,
His martyred Father’s dearest thought,
My latest care, for whom I sought
To hoard my life that his might be
Less wretched now – and one day free,
He too – who yet had held untired

105: “And as for the Bastile; the terror is in the word.—Make the most of it you can, said I to myself, the Bastile is but another word for a tower;—and a tower is but another word for a house you can’t get out of.—Mercy on the gouty! for they are in it twice a year.—But with nine livres a day, and pen and ink, and paper, and patience, albeit a man can’t get out, he may do very well within,—at least for a month or six weeks; at the end of which, if he is a harmless fellow, his innocence appears, and he comes out a better and wiser man than he went in” (Sterne, A Sentimental Journey). See DJ IV, 109, 4.
106: Baron Franz von Trenck (1711-49) imprisoned for peculation in the Spielberg.
107: PoC ll.92-3.
A Spirit natural or inspired—
He, too, was struck, and day by day
Was withered on the stalk away.'

The effects of the survivor’s sorrow succeed. At first, furious and frantic at feeling himself the only being ‘in this black spot,’ and every link burst which bound him to humanity, he gradually falls into the stupor of despair and of apathy, the loss of sensation of light, air, and even of darkness.

'I had no thought, no feeling – none;
Among the stones I stood – a Stone,
And was – scarce conscious what I wist –
As shrubless Crags within the mist,
For all was blank, and bleak, and grey;
It was not night – it was not day –
It was not even the dungeon-light
So hateful to my heavy sight,
But vacancy – absorbing space,
And fixedness – without a place;
There were no stars – no earth – no time –
No check – no change – no good – no crime –
But Silence – and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life, nor death;
A Sea of stagnant Idleness
Blind – boundless – mute – and motionless!'

The effects produced on the mind of the captive, by the casual visit of a bird, and by the view of the lake from the loop-hole of his prison, are next described. An extract from the latter shall form our last specimen of the poem.

'I heard the torrents leap and gush
O’er channelled rock and broken bush,
I saw the white-walled distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down,
And then there was a little isle
Which in my very face did smile,
   The only one in view;
A small green Isle – it seemed no more
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor;
But in it there were three tall trees, [p.203]
And o’er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were wild flowers growing,
   Of gentle breath and hue.'

Freedom at length comes when the captive of Chillon, reconciled to his prison, had learned to consider it as ‘a hermitage all his own,’ and had become friends with the very shackles which he wore.

It will readily be allowed that this singular poem is more powerful than pleasing. The dungeon of Bonnivard is, like that of Ugolino, a subject too dismal for even the power of the painter or poet to counteract its horrors. It is the more disagreeable as affording human hope no anchor to rest upon, and describing the sufferer, though a man of talents and virtues, as altogether inert and powerless under his accumulated sufferings. Yet as a picture, however gloomy the colouring, it may rival any which Lord Byron has drawn, nor is it possible to read it without a sinking of the heart, corresponding with that which he describes the victim to have suffered.

We have said that Lord Byron occasionally, though without concealing his own original features, assumes the manner and style of his contemporaries. Of these we have more than one instance in the present collection. It is impossible to read the Prisoner of Chillon without finding several passages—

108: PoC ll.164-75.
110: PoC ll.337-50.
111: See Dante, Inferno XXXII-III.
that last quoted, for example,—which strongly remind us of Wordsworth. There is another, called ‘Churchill’s Grave;’ for which Southey seems to afford the model, not in his epic strains, but in his English eclogues, in which moral truths are expressed, to use the poet’s own language in ‘an almost colloquial plainness of language,’ and an air of quaint and original expression, assumed to render the sentiment at once impressive and piquant. The grave of Churchill, however, might have called from Lord Byron a deeper commemoration; for though they generally differed in character and genius, there was a resemblance between their history and character. The satire of Churchill flowed with a more profuse, though not a more embittered stream; while, on the other hand, he cannot be compared to Lord Byron in point of tenderness or imagination. But both these poets held themselves above the opinion of the world, both were followed by the fame and popularity which they seemed to despise. The writings of both exhibit an inborn, though sometimes ill regulated generosity of mind, and a spirit of proud independence, frequently pushed to extremes. Both carried their hatred of hypocrisy beyond the verge of prudence, and indulged their vein of satire to the borders of licentiousness. In the flower of his age Churchill died in a foreign land,—[p.204] here we trust the parallel will cease, and that the subject of our criticism will long survive to honour his own.

Two other pieces in this miscellany recal to our mind the wild, unbridled, and fiery imagination of Coleridge. To this poet’s high poetical genius we have always paid deference; though not uniformly perhaps, he has, too frequently for his own popularity, wandered into the wild and mystic, and left the reader at a loss accurately to determine his meaning. Perhaps in that called the ‘Spell’ the resemblance may be fanciful, but we cannot allow it to be so in the singular poem called ‘Darkness,’ well entitled ‘A dream which is not all a dream.’

In this case our author has abandoned the art, so peculiarly his own, of shewing the reader where his purpose tends, and has contented himself with presenting a mass of powerful ideas unarranged, and the meaning of which we certainly confess ourselves always to attain. A succession of terrible images is placed before us flitting and mixing, and disengaging themselves as in the dream of a feverish man—Chimeras dire, to whose existence the mind refuses credit, which confound and weary the ordinary reader, and baffle the comprehension even of those more accustomed to the flights of a poetic muse. The subject is the progress of utter darkness, until it becomes, in Shakespeare’s phrase, the ‘burier of the dead,’ and the assemblage of terrific ideas which the poet has placed before us only fail in exciting our terror from the extravagance of the plan. These mystical prolusions do indeed produce upon us the effect described in Henry Muir’s lines quoted in Southey’s Omniana—

‘A lecture strange he read to me;
And though I did not rightly understand
His meaning, yet I deemed it to be
Some goodly thing.’

But the reverence of feeling which we entertain for that which is difficult of comprehension, gives way to weariness whenever we begin to suspect that it cannot be distinctly comprehended by any one.

To speak plainly, the framing of such phantasms is a dangerous employment for the exalted and teeming imagination of such a poet as Lord Byron, whose Pegasus has always required rather a bridle than a spur. The waste of boundless space into which they lead the poet, the neglect of precision which such themes may render habitual, make them, in respect to poetry, what mysticism is to religion. The meaning of the poet as he ascends upon cloudy wing becomes the shadow only of a thought, and having eluded the comprehension of others, necessarily ends by [p.205] escaping from that of the author himself. The strength of poetical conception, and beauty of diction, bestowed upon such prolusions, is as much thrown away as the colours of a painter, could he take a cloud of mist, or a wreath of smoke for his canvas.

Omitting one or two compositions of less interest we cannot but notice the ‘Dream,’ which, if we do not misconstrue it, has a covert and mysterious relation to the tale of Childe Harold. It is written with the same power of poetry, nor have we here to complain of obscurity in the mode of narrating the vision, though we pretend not to the skill or information necessary to its interpretation. It is difficult, however, to mistake who or what is meant in the conclusion, and more especially as the tone too well agrees with similar passages in the continuation of Childe Harold.

113: I find neither the quotation, nor the name “Henry Muir,” anywhere in Southey’s *Omniana* (1812).
'The Wanderer was alone as heretofore,  
The beings which surrounded him were gone,  
Or were at war with him; he was a mark  
For blight and desolation, compassed round  
With Hatred and Contention.  
— — — — — he lived  
Through that which had been death to many men,  
And made him friends of mountains: with the stars  
And the quick Spirit of the Universe  
He held his dialogues; and they did teach  
To him the magic of their mysteries;  
To him the book of Night was opened wide,  
And voices from the deep abyss revealed  
A marvel and a secret – Be it so.’—pp. 44, 45.114

The reader is requested to contrast these lines with the storm and solemn passage in which Childe Harold seems to bid a long and lasting farewell to social intercourse, and, with exceptions so cautiously restricted and guarded as to be almost none, brands the mass of humanity whom he leaves behind as false and treacherous.

CXIII.
‘I have not loved the world, nor the world me;  
I have not flattered its rank breath, nor bowed  
To its idolatries a patient knee,—  
Nor coined my cheek to smiles,—nor cried aloud  
In worship of an echo; in the crowd  
They could not deem me one of such; I stood  
Among them, but not of them; in a shroud  
Of thoughts which were not their thoughts, and still could,  
Had I not filed my mind, which thus itself subdued.  

CXIV.
I have not loved the world, nor the world me,—  
But let us part fair foes; I do believe, [p.206]  
Though I have found them not, that there may be  
Words which are things,—hopes which will not deceive,  
And virtues which are merciful, nor weave  
Snares for the failing: I would also deem  
O’er others’ griefs that some sincerely grieve;  
That two, or one, are almost what they seem—  
That goodness is no name, and happiness no dream.’—pp.61, 62.

Though the last of these stanzas has something in it mystical and enigmatical, yet with the passage already quoted from the ‘Dream,’ and some other poems which are already before the public, they remove the scrupulous delicacy with which otherwise we would have avoided allusion to the mental sufferings of the noble poet. But to uncover a wound is to demand a surgeon’s hand to tent it. With kinder feelings to Lord Byron in person and reputation no one could approach him than ourselves: we owe it to the pleasure which he has bestowed upon us, and to the honour he has done to our literature. We have paid our warmest tribute to his talents—it is their due. We will touch on the uses for which he was invested with them—it is their duty; and happy, most happy, should we be, if, in discharging it, we could render this distinguished author a real service. We do not assume the office of harsh censors;—we are entitled at no time to do so towards genius, least of all in its hour of adversity; and we are prepared to make full allowance for the natural effect of misfortune upon a bold and haughty spirit.

‘——— When the splitting wind  
Makes flexible the knee of knotted oaks,  
And flies fled under shade, the Thing of Courage  
As roused with rage, with rage doth sympathise,  
And, with an accent tuned in self-same key.
But this mode of defiance may last too long, and hurry him who indulges it into further evils; and to this point our observations tend. The advice ought not to be condemned on account of the obscurity of those by whom it is given:—the roughest fisherman is an useful pilot when a gallant vessel is near the breakers; the meanest shepherd may be a sure guide over a pathless heath, and the admonition which is given in well meant kindness should not be despised, even were it tendered with a frankness which may resemble a want of courtesy.

If the conclusion of Lord Byron’s literary career were to be such as these mournful verses have anticipated—if this darkness of the spirit, this scepticism concerning the existence of worth, of friendship, of sincerity, were really and permanently to sink like a gulf between this distinguished poet and society, another name [p.207] will be added to the illustrious list to whom Preston’s caution refers.

Still wouldst thou write?—to tame thy youthful fire
Recall to life the masters of the lyre;
Lo every brow the shade of sorrow wears,
And every wreath is stained with dropping tears!¹¹⁶

But this is an unfair picture. It is not the temper and talents of the poet, but the use to which he puts them, on which his happiness or misery is grounded. A powerful and unbridled imagination is, we have already said, the author and architect of its own disappointments. Its fascinations, its exaggerated pictures of good and evil, and the mental distress to which they give rise, are the natural and necessary evils attending on that quick susceptibility of feeling and fancy incident to the poetical temperament. But the Giver of all talents, while he has qualified them each with its separate and peculiar alloy, has endowed the owner with the power of purifying and refining them. But, as if to moderate the arrogance of genius, it is justly and wisely made requisite, that he must regulate and tame the fire of his fancy, and descend from the heights to which she exalts him, in order to obtain ease of mind and tranquillity. The materials of happiness, that is of such degree of happiness as is consistent with our present state, lie around us in profusion. But the man of talents must stoop to gather them, otherwise they would be beyond the reach of the mass of society, for whose benefit, as well as for his, Providence has created them. There is no royal and no poetical path to contentment and heart’s-ease: that by which they are attained is open to all classes of mankind, and lies within the most limited range of intellect. To narrow our wishes and desires within the scope of our powers of attainment; to consider our misfortunes, however peculiar in their character, as our inevitable share in the patrimony of Adam; to bridle those irritable feelings, which unmanaged are sure to become governors; to shun that intensity of galling and self-wounding reflection which our poet has so forcibly described in his own burning language:

‘—— ——— ———————  I have thought
Too long and darkly, till my brain became,
In its own eddy, boiling and o’erwrrought,
A whirling gulf of phantasy and flame’—¹¹⁷

—to stoop, in short, to the realities of life; repent if we have offended, and pardon if we have been trespassed against; to look on the world less as our foe than as a doubtful and capricious friend, whose applause we ought as far as possible to deserve, but neither to court nor contemn—such seem the most obvious and certain means of keeping or regaining mental tranquillity. [p.208]

‘—— ——— ————’Semia certe
Tranquille per virtutem patet unica vitæ.’¹¹⁸

We are compelled to dwell upon this subject: for future ages, while our language is remembered, will demand of this why Lord Byron was unhappy? We retort this query on the noble poet himself while it is called ‘to-day’. He does injustice to the world, if he imagines he has left it exclusively filled with those who rejoice in his sufferings. If the voice of consolation be in cases like his less loudly heard than that of reproach or upbraiding, it is because those who long to conciliate, to advise, to moderate, to console, are timid in thrusting forward their sentiments, and fear to exasperate where they

¹¹⁵: Shakespeare, Troilus and Cressida, I iii 50.
¹¹⁶: “Preston” unidentified. A forgery may be suspected.
¹¹⁷: CHP III 7, 1-4.
¹¹⁸: JUV. SAT. X 363-4; “It is assuredly through virtue that the path to a life of peace lies.”
most seek to soothe; while the busy and officious intrude, without shame or sympathy, and embitter the privacy of affliction by their rude gaze and importunate clamour. But the pain which such insects can give only lasts while the wound is raw. Let the patient submit to the discipline of the soul enjoined by religion, and recommended by philosophy, and the war will become speedily insensible to their stings. Lord Byron may not have loved the world, but the world has loved him, not perhaps with a wise or discriminating affection, but as well as it is capable of loving any one. And many who do not belong to the world, as the word is generally understood, have their thoughts fixed on Lord Byron, with the anxious wish and eager hope that he will bring his powerful understanding to combat with his irritated feelings, and that his next efforts will shew that he has acquired the peace of mind necessary for the free and useful exercise of his splendid talents.

I decus, i nostrum, melioribus utere fatis.\textsuperscript{119}

Scott to John Wilson Croker, undated [1817]:
(Source: text from The Croker Papers, ed. Louis J. Jennings, John Murray 1885, Vol. I p.95)

I send Murray a review of Lord Byron. I have treated him with the respect his abilities claim, and the sort of attachment which I really feel for his person. But d—— his morals and his politics! What a goodly vessel have they combined to wreck.

from \textit{Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage}, IV:

\textbf{39.}

Peace to Torquato’s injured shade! ’twas his
In life and death to be the mark where Wrong
Aimed with her poisoned arrows, but to miss. 345
Oh! Victor unsurpassed in modern Song!
Each year brings forth its millions; but how long
The tide of Generations shall roll on,
And not the whole combined and countless throng
Compose a Mind like thine? though All in one 350
Condensed their scattered rays, they would not form a Sun.

\textbf{40.}

Great as thou art, yet paralleled by those,
Thy countrymen, before thee born to shine,
The Tuscan father’s Comedy Divine; 355
Then, not unequal to the Florentine,
The Southern Scott, the Minstrel who called forth
A new Creation with his magic line,
And, like the Ariosto of the North, 359
Sang Ladye-love and War, Romance and Knightly Worth.\textsuperscript{121}

Scott’s review of \textit{Childe Harold IV}
(Source: text from Quarterly Review XIX, April 1818, published September 1818, pp.215-32)

Anonymous.


‘Farewell! a word that must be, and hath been—
A sound which makes us linger;—yet—farewell!
Ye! who have traced the Pilgrim to the scene
Which is his last, if in your memories dwell
A thought which once was his, if on ye swell

\textsuperscript{119}: VIRG. AEN. VI 546; “Go, thou our glory: enjoy a happier fate”.
\textsuperscript{120}: Dante (165-1321) and Ariosto (1474-1533): Lamartine called B. “chantre d’enfer” in his poem \textit{L’Homme – à Lord Byron}, from \textit{Méditations Poétiques} (1820); see BLJ VII 127. Dante wrote of Purgatory and Heaven, too — but B. prefers to stress Hell – it’s more gloomy.
\textsuperscript{121}: Refers to Scott’s poetry, not his novels, which are not at all like Ariosto. Francis Hodgson likened the verbal juggling of this stanza to “mistaking horse chestnuts for chestnut horses.”
A single recollection, not in vain
He wore his sandal-shoon, and scallop-shell;
Farewell! with him alone may rest the pain
If such there were—with you, the moral of his strain!' 

This solemn valediction, the concluding stanza of Lord Byron’s poem, forms at once a natural and an impressive motto to our essay. ‘There are few things,’ says the moralist, ’not purely evil, of which we can say, without some degree of uneasiness, this is the last. Those who could never agree together shed tears when mutual consent has determined them to final separation, and of a place that has been frequently visited, though with pleasure, the last look is taken with heaviness of heart’. When we resume, therefore, our task of criticism, and are aware that we are exerting it for the last time upon this extraordinary work, we feel no small share of reluctance to part with the Pilgrim, whose wanderings have so often beguiled our labours, and diversified our pages. We part from ‘Childe Harold’ as from the pleasant and gifted companion of an interesting tour, whose occasional waywardness, obstinacy and caprice are forgotten in the depth of thought with which he commented upon subjects of interest as they passed before us, and in the brilliancy with which he coloured such scenery as addressed itself to the imagination. His faults, if we at all remember them, are recollected only with pity, as affecting himself indeed, but no longer a concern of ours.—his merits acquire double value in our eyes when we call to mind that we may perhaps never more profit by them. The scallop-shell and staff are now laid aside, the pilgrimage is accomplished, and Lord Byron, in his assumed character, is no longer to delight us with the display of his wondrous talents, or provoke us by the use he sometimes condescends to make of them,—an use which at times has reminded us of his own powerful simile,

'It was as is a new-dug grave,
Closing o’er one we sought to save.' 

Before we part, however, we feel ourselves impelled to resume a consideration of his ‘Pilgrimage,’ not as consisting of detached accounts of foreign scenery and of the emotions suggested by them, but as a whole poem, written in the same general spirit, and pervaded by the same cast of poetry. In doing this, we are conscious we must repeat much which has perhaps been better said by others, and even be guilty of the yet unpardonable crime of repeating ourselves. But if we are not new we will at least be brief, and the occasion seems to us peculiarly favourable for placing before our readers the circumstances which secured to the Pilgrimage of Childe Harold a reception so generally popular. The extrinsic circumstances, which refer rather to the state of the public taste than to the genius and talent of the author, claim precedence in order because, though they are not those on which the fame of the poet must ultimately rest, they are unquestionably the scaffolding by means of which the edifice was first raised which now stands independent of them.

Originality, as it is the highest and rarest property of genius, is also that which has most charms for the public. Not that originality is always necessary, for the world will be contented, in the poverty of its mental resources, with mere novelty or singularity, and must therefore he enchanted with a work that exhibits both qualities. The vulgar author is usually distinguished by his treading, or attempting to tread, in the steps of the reigning favourite of the day. He is didactic, sentimental, romantic, epic, pastoral, according to the taste of the moment, And his ‘fancies and delights’, like those of Master Justice Shallow, are sure to be adapted to the tunes which the carmen whistle. The consequence is, not that the herd of imitators gain their object, but that the melody which they have profaned becomes degraded in the sated ears of the public—it’s original richness, wildness and novelty are forgotten when it is made manifest how easily the leading notes can be caught and parodied, and whatever its intrinsic merit may have been, it becomes, for the time, stale and fulsome. If the composition which has been thus hunted down possesses intrinsic merit, it may—indeed it will—eventually revive and claim its proper place amid the poetical galaxy; deprived, indeed, of the adventitious value which it may at first have acquired from its novelty, but at the same time no longer over-shaded and incumbered by the crowd of satellites now consigned to chaos and primæval night. When the success of Burns, writing in his native dialect with unequalled vigour and sweetness, had called from their flails an hundred peasants to cudgel their brains for rhymes, we can well remember that even the bard of Coila was somewhat injured in the common estimation—as a masterpiece of painting is degraded by being placed amid the flaring colours and ill-drawn figures of imitative daubers. The true poet attempts the very

122: Johnson, The Idler, final number (April 5th 1760).
123: Scott treats CHP IV as if it were just a travelogue, and does not mention its autobiographical details.
124: The Prisoner of Chillon, II.362-3.
125: Shakespeare, Henry IV II III ii, final speech (“fancies and good-nights”).
reverse of the imitator. He plunges into the stream of public opinion even when its tide is running strongest, crosses its direction, and bears his crown of laurel as Caesar did his imperial mantle, triumphant above the waves. Such a phenomenon [p.217] seldom fails at first to divide and at length to alter the reigning taste of the period, and if the bold adventurer has successfully buffeted the ebbing tide which bore up his competitor, he soon has the benefit of the flood in his own favour.

In applying these general remarks to Lord Byron’s gravest and most serious performance, we must recall to the reader’s recollection that since the time of Cowper he has been the first poet who, either in his own person, or covered by no very thick disguise, has directly appeared before the public, an actual living man expressing his own sentiments, thoughts, hopes and fears. Almost all the poets of our day, who have possessed a considerable portion of public attention, are personally little known to the reader, and can only be judged from the passions and feelings assigned by them to persons totally fictitious. Childe Harold appeared—we must not say in the character of the author—but certainly in that of a real existing person, with whose feelings as such the public were disposed to associate those of Lord Byron. Whether the reader acted right or otherwise in persisting to neglect the shades of distinction which the author endeavoured to point out betwixt his pilgrim and himself, it is certain that no little power over the public attention was gained from their being identified. Childe Harold may not be, nor do we believe he is, Lord Byron’s very self, but he is Lord Byron’s picture, sketched by Lord Byron himself, arrayed in a fancy dress, and disguised perhaps by some extrinsic attributes, but still bearing a sufficient resemblance to the original to warrant the conclusion that we have drawn. This identity is so far acknowledged in the preface to the Canto now before us, where Lord Byron thus expresses himself.

‘The poem also, or the pilgrim, or both, have accompanied me from first to last; and perhaps it may be pardonable vanity which induces me to reflect with complacency on a composition which in some degree connects me with the spot where it was produced, and the objects it would fain describe; and however unworthy it may be deemed of those magical and memorable abodes, however short it may fall of our distant conceptions and immediate impressions, yet as a mark of respect for what is venerable, and of feeling for what is glorious, it has been to me a source of pleasure in the production, and I part with it with a kind of regret, which I hardly suspected that events could have left me for imaginary objects.’—pp.vi, vii.

But besides the pleasing novelty of a traveller and a poet, throwing before the reader his reflections and opinions, his loves and his hates, his raptures and his sorrows; besides the novelty and pride which the public felt, upon being called as it were into familiarity with a mind so powerful, and invited to witness and partake of its deep [p.218] emotions; the feelings themselves were of a character which struck with awe those to whom the noble pilgrim thus exposed the sanctuary of his bosom. They were witnesses and partake of its deep emotions; the feelings themselves were of a character which the public felt, upon being called as it were into familiarity with a mind so powerful, and invited to.

From Dan to Beersheba, crimes and follies of mankind; and from all he drew subjects of sorrow, of indignation, of contempt. Countries he traversed with a heart for entertaining the beauties of nature, and an eye for observing the.

Whether the reader acted right or otherwise in persisting to neglect the shades of distinction which the author endeavoured to point out betwixt his pilgrim and himself, it is certain that no little power over the public attention was gained from their being identified. Childe Harold may not be, nor do we believe he is, Lord Byron’s very self, but he is Lord Byron’s picture, sketched by Lord Byron himself, arrayed in a fancy dress, and disguised perhaps by some extrinsic attributes, but still bearing a sufficient resemblance to the original to warrant the conclusion that we have drawn. This identity is so far acknowledged in the preface to the Canto now before us, where Lord Byron thus expresses himself.

‘The poem also, or the pilgrim, or both, have accompanied me from first to last; and perhaps it may be pardonable vanity which induces me to reflect with complacency on a composition which in some degree connects me with the spot where it was produced, and the objects it would fain describe; and however unworthy it may be deemed of those magical and memorable abodes, however short it may fall of our distant conceptions and immediate impressions, yet as a mark of respect for what is venerable, and of feeling for what is glorious, it has been to me a source of pleasure in the production, and I part with it with a kind of regret, which I hardly suspected that events could have left me for imaginary objects.’—pp.vi, vii.

But besides the pleasing novelty of a traveller and a poet, throwing before the reader his reflections and opinions, his loves and his hates, his raptures and his sorrows; besides the novelty and pride which the public felt, upon being called as it were into familiarity with a mind so powerful, and invited to witness and partake of its deep [p.218] emotions; the feelings themselves were of a character which struck with awe those to whom the noble pilgrim thus exposed the sanctuary of his bosom. They were introduced into no Teian 126 paradise of lutes and maidens, were placed in no hall resounding with music and dazzling with many-coloured lights, and called upon to gaze on those gay forms that flutter in the muse’s beam. The banquet had ceased, and it was the pleasure of its melancholy lord that his guests should witness that gloominess, which seems most dismal when it succeeds to exuberant and unrestrained gaiety. The emptied wine-cup lay on the ground, the withered garland was flung aside and trodden under foot, the instruments of music were silent, or waked but those few and emphatic chords which express sorrow; while, amid the ruins of what had once been the palace of pleasure, the stern pilgrim stalked from desolation to desolation, spurning from him the implements of former luxury, and repelling with equal scorn the more valuable substitutes which wisdom and philosophy offered to supply their place. The reader felt as it were in the presence of a superior being, when, instead of his judgment being consulted, his imagination excited or soothed, his taste flattered or conciliated in order to bespeak his applause, he was told, in strains of the most sublime poetry, that neither he, the courteous reader, nor ought the earth had to shew, was worthy the attention of the noble traveller.—All countries he traversed with a heart for entertaining the beauties of nature, and an eye for observing the crimes and follies of mankind; and from all he drew subjects of sorrow, of indignation, of contempt. From Dan to Beersheba 127 all was barrenness.

To despise the ordinary sources of happiness, to turn with scorn from the pleasures which captivate others, and to endure, as it were voluntarily, evils which others are most anxious to shun, is a path to ambition; for the monarch is scarcely more respected for possessing, than the anchoret for contemning the means of power and of pleasure. A mind like that of Harold, apparently indifferent to the usual enjoyments of life, and which entertains, or at least exhibits, such contempt for its usual pursuits, has the same ready road to the respect of the mass of mankind, who judge that to be superior to humanity which can look down upon its common habits, tastes, and pleasures.

126: “Teian” is used by Byron at DJ III, The Isles of Greece, 2, 1.
This fashion of thinking and writing of course had its imitators, and those right many. But the humorous sadness which sat so gracefully on the original made but a poor and awkward appearance on those who

——— wrapp’d themselves in Harold’s inky cloak,
To show the world how ‘Byron’ did not ‘write.’

Their affected melancholy shewed like the cynicism of Ape-[p.219]-mantus contrasted with the real misanthropy of Timon. And, to say the truth, we are not sorry that the fashion has latterly lost ground. This species of general contempt of intellectual pleasures, and worldly employment, is more closely connected with the Epicurean philosophy than may be at first supposed. If philosophy be but a pursuit of words, and the revolutions of empires inevitable returns of the same cycle of fearful transitions; if our earliest and best affections ‘run to waste, and water but the desert’; the want of worthier motives to action gives a tremendous and destructive impulse to the dangerous Carpe diem of the Garden—that most seductive argument of sensual pleasure. This doctrine of the nothingness of human pursuits, not as contrasted with those of religion and virtue, (to which they are indeed as nothing,) but absolutely and in themselves, is too apt to send its pupils in despair to those pleasures which promise a real gratification, however short and gross. Thus do thoughts and opinions, in themselves the most melancholy, become incitements to the pursuit of the most degrading pleasures; as the Egyptians placed skulls upon their banqueting tables, and as the fools of Holy Writ made the daring and fearful association of imminent fate and present reveling—Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die....

If we treat the humour less gravely, and consider it as a posture of the mind assumed for the nonce, still this enumeration of the vain pursuits, the indulged yet unsatiated passions of humanity, is apt to weary our spirits if not our patience, and the discourse terminates in a manner as edifying as the dialogue in Prior’s Alma:

“Tired with these thoughts”—“Less tired than I,
Quoth Dick, “with your philosophy—
That people live and die I knew,
An hour ago as well as you;
What need of books these truths to tell,
Which folks perceive who cannot spell;
And must we spectacles apply,
To view what hurts our naked eye?
If to be sad is to be wise,
I do most heartily despise
Whatever Socrates has said,
Or Tully wrote, or Wanley read.”

Dear Drift! to set our matters right,
Remove these papers from my sight,
Burn Mat’s Des-carte and Aristotle—
Here, Jonathan, your master’s bottle.”

But it was not merely to the novelty of an author speaking in his own person, and in a tone which arrogated a contempt of all the ordinary pursuits of life, that Childe Harold owed its extensive popularity: these formed but the point or sharp edge of the wedge by which the work was enabled to insinuate its way into that venerable block, the British public. The high claims inferred at once in the direct appeal to general attention, and scorn of general feeling, were supported by powers equal to such pretensions. He who despised the world intimated that he had the talents and genius necessary to win it if he had thought it worth while. There was a strain of poetry in which the sense predominated over the sound; there was the eye keen to behold nature, and the pen powerful to trace her varied graces of beauty or terror; there was the heart ardent at the call of freedom or of generous feeling, and belying every moment the frozen shrine in which false philosophy had incased it, glowing like the intense and concentrated alcohol, which remains one single but burning drop in the centre of the ice which its more watery particles have formed. In despite of the character which he had

128: Quotation unidentified; perhaps a Scott forgery.
129: Quotation unidentified; perhaps another forgery.
130: See DJ II 207, 7.
132: See DJ XIII, st.37.
assumed, it was impossible not to see in the Pilgrim what nature designed him to be, and what, in spite of bad metaphysics and worse politics, he may yet be, a person whose high talents the wise and virtuous may enjoy without a qualifying sigh or frown. Should that day arrive, and if time be granted, it will arrive, we have ventured upon the precarious task of prophecy—we who been censured for not mingling the faults of genius with its talents—we shall claim our hour of heartfelt exultation. He himself, while deprecating censure on the ashes of another great but self-neglected genius, 133 has well pleaded the common cause of those who, placed high above the crowd, have their errors and their follies rendered more conspicuous by their elevation.

‘Hard is his fate on whom the public gaze
Is fix’d for ever to detract or praise;
Repose denies her requiem to his name,
And Folly loves the martyrdom of Fame:
The secret enemy, whose sleepless eye
Stands sentinel, accuser, judge, and spy;
Her for the fool, the jealous and the vain,
The envious, who but breathe in others’ pain:
Behold the host delighting to deprave,
Who tracks the steps of Glory to the grave.’ 134

For ourselves, amid the various attendants on the triumph of genius, we would far rather be the soldier who, pacing by the side of his general, mixes, with military frankness, censure amid his songs of praise, than the slave in the chariot to flatter his vanity by low adulation, or exasperate his feelings by virulent invective. In entering our protest therefore against the justice and the moral tendency of that strain of dissatisfaction and despondency, that cold and sceptical philosophy which clouds our prospects on earth, and closes those beyond it, we willingly render to this extraordinary poem [p.221] the full praise that genius in its happiest efforts can demand from us.

The plan, if it can be termed so, hovers between that of a descriptive and a philosophical poem. The Pilgrim passes from land to land, alternately describing, musing, meditating, exclaiming, and moralizing; and the reader, partaking of his enthusiasm, becomes almost the partner of his journey. The first and second Cantos were occupied by Spain and Greece—the former, the stage upon which those incidents were then passing which were to decide, in their consequence, the fate of existing Europe; the latter, the country whose sun, so long set, has yet left on the horizon of the world such a blaze of splendour. It is scarcely necessary to say, that in both countries, especially the last, the pilgrim found room for meditation even to madness. 135 The third Canto saw Childe Harold once more upon the main, and traced him from Belgium to Switzerland, through scenes distinguished by natural graces, and rendered memorable by late events. Through this ample field we accompanied the Pilgrim, and the strains which describe the beauties of the Rhine and the magnificence of the Leman lake, are still glowing in our ears. The fourth Canto now appears, and recalls us to the immediate object of the present article.

The poem opens in Venice, once the mart of the universe—

I.

‘I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs;
A palace and a prison on each hand:
I saw from out the wave her structures rise
As from the stroke of the enchanter’s wand:
A thousand years their cloudy wings expand
Around me, and a dying Glory smiles
O’er the far times, when many a subject land
Looked to the winged lion’s marble piles,
Where Venice sate in state, thron’d on her hundred isles!’

The former greatness of this queen of commerce is described and mingled with the recollections associated with her name, from the immortal works of fiction of which she has formed the scene.

133: Sheridan.
134: Byron, Monody on Sheridan, ll.65-74.
135: Quotation (if it is) unidentified.
IV.

‘But unto us she hath a spell beyond
Her name in story, and her long array
Of mighty shadows, whose dim forms despond
Above the Dogeless city’s vanished sway;
Ours is a trophy which will not decay
With the Rialto; Shylock and the Moor,
And Pierre, cannot be swept or worn away—
The keystones of the arch! though all were o’er,
For us repeopled were the solitary shore. [p.222]

V.

‘The beings of the mind are not of clay;
Essentially immortal, they create
And multiply in us a brighter ray
And more beloved existence: that which Fate
Prohibits to dull life, in this our state
Of mortal bondage, by these spirits supplied,
First exiles, then replaces what we hate;
Watering the heart whose early flowers have died,
And with a fresher growth replenishing the void.’

That this is true in philosophy as well as beautiful in poetry; that fiction as well as reality can impress local associations of the most fascinating kind, that not alone the birth-place or tomb of the man of genius, but the scenes which he has chosen for the action of his story remain dear ‘to our memories,’ and have to our ears and eyes a fascinating charm, was repeatedly experienced during the Peninsular war. Spain, separated by the ocean and the Pyrenees from the rest of Europe, and seldom in collision with Britain, save when we have encountered her fleets upon the seas, lying also beyond the ordinary course of travellers and tourists, has little familiar to us as readers or as members of British society. But the authors of fiction had given associations to this country of the most interesting kind, to supply the deficiencies of the slender list afforded by history or conversation. The British officers rushed with the eagerness of enthusiasm to find in the tower of Segovia the apartments from which Gil Blas, in his captivity, looked over the wanderings of the Ebro;—even the French dealt mildly with the city of Toboso, because it had given name to the celebrated Dulcinea; and amid the romantic deserts of the Sierra Morena the weary step was rendered lighter to the readers of Cervantes, who at every turn of their march among the landscapes which he has described with such exquisite and felicity, expected to see the doughty knight-errant and his trusty squire, or the beautiful vision of Dorothea, when she was surprized in boy’s attire washing her feet in the rivulet. Such is the prerogative of genius! and well may it be celebrated by one who has himself impressed associations upon so much scenery, which will never, while Britons speak their present language, be seen without recollecting the pilgrim and his musings.

The contrast of the former and present state of Venice calls forth naturally a train of moral reflections suitable to the occasion; but the noble pilgrim, standing on the Bridge of Sighs, and having beneath his feet the dungeons of the most jealous aristocracy that ever existed; in the vicinity also of the palace of the Council of Ten, and of those ‘lion mouths’ by means of which the most treacherous and base of anonymous informers possessed full power over the life [p.223] and fortune of the noblest citizens, might have spared his regret for the loss of that freedom which Venice never possessed. The distinction, in this and many other cases, betwixt a free and an independent nation, is not sufficiently observed. The Venetians were never a free people, though the state of Venice was not only independent, but wealthy and powerful, during the middle ages, by the extent of her commerce and the policy of her wise rulers. But commerce found a more convenient channel round the Cape of Good Hope for that trade which Venice had hitherto carried on. Her rulers over-rated her strength and engaged in a war against the confederated force of Italy, from the consequences of which, though gloriously sustained, the state never recovered. The proud republic, whose bride was the Adriatic, shared the fate of Tyre and Sidon—of all nations whose wealth and grandeur were founded exclusively on ships, colonies, and commerce. The ‘crowning city, whose merchants were princes, and whose

136: Le Sage, *Gil Blas*, Book IX, Chapter IV; the river is in fact the Erêma.
137: Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, Part I, Chapter XXVIII.
traffickers were the honourable of the earth,\textsuperscript{138} had long passed into a state of the third class, existing merely because not demolished, and ready to give way to the first impulse of outward force. The art of the Venetian rulers in stooping to their circumstances, and bending where they must otherwise have broken, could only protract this semblance of independence until the storm of the French Revolution destroyed Venice, among many other governments which had been respected by other conquerors from a reverence to antiquity, or from a regard for existing institutions, the very reverse of the principle which acutated the republican generals. It is surely vain to mourn for a nation which, if restored to independence, could not defend or support itself; and it would be worse than vain, were it possible, to restore the Signoria with all its oligarchical terrors of denunciation, and secret imprisonment, and judicial murder. What is to be wished for Italy, is the amalgamation of its various petty states into one independent and well-governed kingdom, capable of asserting and maintaining her place among the nations of Europe. To this desirable order of things nothing can be a stronger obstacle than the reinstatement of the various petty divisions of that fair country, each incapable of defending itself, but ready to lend its aid to destroy its neighbours.

Of Italy, in its present state, it is impossible to think or speak without recognizing the truth as well as the beauty of the following lines.

\begin{center}

XXVI.

‘The commonwealth of kings, the men of Rome!
And even since, and now, fair Italy!
Thou art the garden of the world, and home
Of all Art yields, and Nature can decree;
Even in thy desart, what is like to thee? [p.224]
Thy very weeds are beautiful, thy waste
More rich than other climes’ fertility;
Thy wreck a glory, and thy ruin graced
With an immaculate charm which cannot be defaced.’—p.1.

\end{center}

Through these delightful regions the Pilgrim wanders, awakened by the flashes of his imagination that of the reader, as the face of the country suggests topics of moral interest, and reminds us alternately of the achievements of the great of former days, in arms and in literature, and as local description mingles itself with the most interesting topics of local history. Arqua, ‘the mountain where he died,’\textsuperscript{139} suggests the name of Petrarch; the deserted Ferrara the fame and the fate of Tasso fitly classed with Dante and Ariosto, the bards of Hell and Chivalry. Florence and its statues, Thrasimene and Clitumnus start up before us with their scenery and their recollections. Perhaps there are no verses in our language of happier descriptive power than the two stanzas which characterize the latter river. In general, poets find it so difficult to leave an interesting subject, that they injure the distinctness of the description by loading it so as to embarrass rather than excite the fancy of the reader; or else, to avoid that fault, they confine themselves to cold and abstract generalities. The author has in the following stanzas admirably steered his course between these extremes; while they present the outlines of a picture as pure and brilliant as those of Claude Lorraine, the task of filling up the more minute particulars is judiciously left to the imagination of the reader; and it must be dull indeed if it does not supply what the poet has left unsaid, or but generally and briefly intimated. While the eye glances over the lines, we seem to feel the refreshing coolness of the scene—we hear the bubbling tale of the more rapid streams, and see the slender proportions of the rural temple reflected in the crystal depth of the calm pool.

\begin{center}

LXVI.

‘But thou, Clitumnus! in thy sweetest wave
Of the most living crystal that was e’er
The haunt of river-nymph, to gaze and lave
Her limbs where nothing hid them, thou dost rear
Thy grassy banks whereon the milk-white steer
Grazes – the purest god of gentle waters!
And most serene of aspect, and most clear;
Surely that stream was unprofaned by slaughters,
A mirror and a bath for Beauty’s youngest daughters!

\end{center}

\begin{center}

LXVII.

\end{center}

\textsuperscript{138} Isaiah 23:8.
\textsuperscript{139} Chp IV 34, 1-2; in fact “Arqua, where he died; / The mountain Village …”
‘And on thy happy shore a temple still,
Of small and delicate proportion, keeps,
Upon a mild declivity of hill,
Its memory of thee; beneath it sweeps [p.225]
Thy current’s calmness; oft from out it leaps
The finny darter with the glittering scales,
Who dwells and revels in thy glassy deeps;
While, chance, some scattered water-lily sails
Down were the shallower wave still tells its bubbling tales.’—

By mountain and cataract, through the land of existing beauty and heroic memory, the pilgrim at length reaches Rome:—Rome, first empress of the bodies, then of the souls, of all the civilized world, now owing its political and, perhaps, even its religious existence to the half contemptuous pity of those nations whom she formerly held in thrall;—Rome is the very ground on which we should have loved to cope with Childe Harold

‘——— in those sullen fits,
For then he’s full of matter.’

Nor have we been disappointed in our wishes and expectations; for the voice of Marius could not sound more deep and solemn among the ruined arches of Carthage than the strains of the Pilgrim among the broken shrines and fallen statues of her subduer. We can but touch partially upon these awful themes. The Palatine is thus described:—

CVII.
‘Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower grown,
Matted and massed together, hillocks heap’d
On what were chambers, arch crushed, column strown
In fragments – chok’d up vaults, and frescos steep’d
In subterranean damps, where the owl peep’d,
Deeming it midnight:—Temples, baths, or halls?
Pronounce who can; for all that Learning reap’d
From her research hath been, that these are walls—
Behold the Imperial Mount! ’tis thus the mighty falls.’—p.56.

And thus the Egerian grottos, with a classical allusion to the complaint of Juvenal, that art in adorning them had destroyed their simplicity, are described in the state of decay by which that simplicity has been restored.

CXVI.
‘The mosses of thy fountain still are sprinkled
With thine Elysian water-drops; the face
Of thy cave-guarded spring with years unwrinkled,
Reflects the meek-eyed genius of the place,
Whose green, wild margin now no more erase
Art’s works; nor must the delicate waters sleep,
Prisoned in marble, bubbling from the base
Of the cleft statue, with a gentle leap
The rill runs o’er, and round, fern, flowers, and ivy creep.’—p.61. [p.226]

The Coliseum is described in the midnight gloom of a cloudless Italian sky; its vast area recalls the bloody games of the Romans and the poet has vied with the memorable sculptor who produced the dying Gladiator,—superior in this, that equalling the artist in his faculty of impressing on the fancy the agonies, he can extend his power into incorporeal realms, and body forth not only the convulsed features and stiffened limbs, but the mental feelings and throes of the expiring swordsman.

CXL.
‘I see before me the Gladiator lie:
He leans upon his hand—his manly brow

140: Shakespeare, As You Like It, II i 67-8; “he” is Jacques.
Consents to death, but conquers agony,
And his drooped head sinks gradually low—
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now
The arena swims around him—he is gone,
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hailed the wretch who won.

CXLI.

‘He heard it, but he heeded not—his eyes
Were with his heart, and that was far away;
He reck’d not of the life he lost, nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
There where his young barbarians all at play,
There was their Dacian mother—he, their sire,
Butchered to make a Roman holiday—
All this rushed with his blood—shall he expire
And unavenged?—Arise! ye Goths, and glut your ire!’—p.73.

The Pantheon, the Mole of Hadrian, St. Peter’s, whose vastness expands and ‘renders colossal’ the mind of the gazer, the Vatican, with its treasures of ancient art, are all placed before us with the same picturesque, and rendered real by the same earnest and energetic force of Lord Byron’s poetry, in which the numbers seem so little the work of art or study, that they rather appear the natural and unconstrained language in which the thoughts present themselves. The deep-toned melancholy of the poet’s mind at length rests on a theme where it must long find a response in every British bosom—on the event which cut down the hope of our nation, sparing neither bush nor blossom, when we most expected to have seen it fulfilled. Liberal as we have been in quotation we cannot resist the opportunity of meeting Lord Byron on a public ground, in which his exquisite strains are an echo to our own thoughts, and where we can join without any of those mental protests which we are too often compelled to make against the correctness of his principles, even when admitting the power of his language and the beauty of his poetry. [p.227]

CLXVII.

‘Hark! forth from the abyss a voice proceeds,
A long low distant murmur of dread sound,
Such as arises when a nation bleeds
With some deep and immedicable wound;
Through storm and darkness yawns the rending ground,
The gulf is thick with phantoms, but the chief
Seems royal still, though with her head discrowned,
And pale, but lovely, with maternal grief
She clasps a babe, to whom her breast yields no relief.

CLXVIII.

‘Scion of chiefs and monarchs, where art thou?
Fond hope of many nations, art thou dead?
Could not the grave forget thee, and lay low
Some less majestic, less beloved head?
In the sad midnight, while thy heart still bled,
The mother of a moment, o’er thy boy,
Death hush’d that pang for ever: with thee fled
The present happiness and promised joy
Which filled the imperial isles so full it seem’d to cloy.

CLXIX.

‘Peasants bring forth in safety.—Can it be,
Oh thou that wert so happy, so adored!
Those who weep not for kings shall weep for thee,
And Freedom’s heart, grown heavy, cease to hoard
Her many griefs for ONE; for she had poured
Her orisons for thee, and o’er thy head
Beheld her Iris.—Thou, too, lonely lord,
And desolate consort—vainly wert thou wed!
The husband of a year! the father of the dead!

CLXX.
‘Of sackcloth was thy wedding garment made;
Thy bridal’s fruit is ashes: in the dust
The fair-haired daughter of the isles is laid,
The love of millions! How we did entrust
Futurity to her! and, though it must
Darken above our bones, yet fondly deem’d
Our children should obey her child, and bless’d
Her and her hoped-for seed, whose promise seem’d
Like stars to shepherds’ eyes—’twas but a meteor beamed.’—p.86–88.

From the copious specimens which we have given, the reader will be enabled to judge how well
the last part of this great poem has sustained Lord Byron’s high reputation. Yet we think it possible to
trace a marked difference, though none in the tone of thought and expression, betwixt this canto and the
first three. There is less of passion, more of deep thought and sentiment, at once collected and general.
The stream which in its earlier course bounds over [p.228] cataracts and rages through narrow and
rocky defiles, deepens, expands, and becomes less turbid as it rolls on, losing the aspect of terror and
gaining that of sublimity. Eight years have passed between the appearance of the first volume and the
present which concludes the work, a lapse of time which, joined with other circumstances, may have
contributed somewhat to moderate the tone of Childe Harold’s quarrel with the world, and, if not to
reconcile him to his lot, to give him, at least, the firmness which endures it without loud complaint.—
To return, however, to the proposition with which we opened our criticism, certain it is, that whether as
Harold or as Lord Byron no author has ever fixed upon himself personally so intense a share of the
public attention. His descriptions of present and existing scenes however striking and beautiful, his
recurrence to past actions however important and however powerfully described, become interesting
chiefly from the tincture which they receive from the mind of the author. The grot of Egeria, the ruins
of the Palatine, are but a theme for his musings, always deep and powerful though sometimes gloomy
even to sullenness. This cast of solemnity may not perhaps be justly attributed to the native disposition
of the author, which is reported to be as lively as , judging from this single poem at least, we might
pronounce it to be grave. But our ideas of happiness are chiefly caught by reflection from the minds of
others, and hence it may be observed that those enjoy the most uniform train of good spirits who are
thinking much of others and little of themselves. The contemplation of our minds, however salutary for
the purposes of self-examination and humiliation, must always be a solemn task, since the best will
find enough for remorse, the wisest for regret, the most fortunate for sorrow. And to this influence
more than to any natural disposition to melancholy, to the pain which necessarily follows this
anatomizing of his own thoughts and feelings which is so decidedly and peculiarly the characteristic of
the Pilgrimage, we are disposed in a great measure to ascribe that sombre tint which pervades the
poem. The poetry which treats of the actions and sentiments of others may be grave or gay according to
the light in which the author chuses to view his subject, but he who shall mine long and deeply for
materials in his own bosom will encounter abysses at the depth of which he must necessarily tremble.
This moral truth appears to us to afford, in a great measure, a key to the peculiar tone of Lord Byron.
How then, will the reader ask, is our proposition to be reconciled to that which preceded it? If the
necessary result of an inquiry into our own thoughts be the conviction that all is vanity and vexation of
spirit, why should we object to a style of writing, whatever its consequences may be, which involves in
it truths as certain as they are melancholy? If the study of our own enjoyments leads us to doubt the
[p.229] reality of all except the indisputable pleasures of sense, and inclines us therefore towards the
Epicurean system,—it is nature, it may be said, and not the poet which urges us upon the fatal
conclusion. But this is not so. Nature, when she created man a social being, gave him the capacity of
drawing that happiness from his relations with the rest of his race, which he is doomed to seek in vain
in his own bosom. These relations cannot be the source of happiness to us if we despise or hate the kind
with whom it is their office to unite us more closely. If the earth be a den of fools and knaves, from
whom the man of genius differs, the more mercurial and exalted character of his intellect, it is natural
that he should look down with pitiless scorn on creatures so inferior. But if, as we believe, each man, in
his own degree, possesses a portion of the ethereal flame, however smothered by unfavourable
circumstances, it is or should be enough to secure the most mean from the scorn of genius as well as
from the oppression of power, and such I being the case, the relations which we hold with society through all their gradations are channels through which the better affections of the loftiest may, without degradation, extend themselves to the lowest. Farther, it is not only our social connections which are assigned us in order to qualify that contempt of mankind, which too deeply indulged tends only to intense selfishness; we have other and higher motives for enduring the lot of humanity—sorrow, and pain, and trouble—with patience of our own griefs and commiseration for those of others. The wisest and the best of all ages have agreed that our present life is a state of trial, not of enjoyment, and that we now suffer sorrow that we may hereafter be partakers of happiness. If this be true, and it has seldom been long, or at least ultimately, doubted by those who have turned their attention to so serious an investigation, other and worthier motives of action and endurance must necessarily occur to the mind than philosophy can teach or human pride supply. It is not our intention to do more than merely indicate so ample a topic for consideration. But we cannot forbear to add, that the vanishing of Lord Byron’s Pilgrim strongly reminded us of the close of another work, the delight of our childhood. Childe Harold, a prominent character in the first volume of the Pilgrimage, fades gradually from the scene like the spectre associate who performed all the first stages of his journey with a knight-errant, bearing all the appearance of a living man, but who lessened to the sight by degrees, and became at length totally invisible when they approached the cavern where his immortal remains were deposited.

LXIV.

But where is he, the Pilgrim of my Song,
The being who upheld it through the past? [p.230]
Methinks he cometh late and tarries long.
He is no more—these breathings are his last;
His wanderings done, his visions ebbing fast,
And he himself as nothing:—if he was
Aught but a phantasy, and could be class’d
With forms which live and suffer—let that pass—
His shadow fades away into Destruction’s mass.’—p.85.

In the corresponding passage of the Tales of the Genii, Ridley, the amiable author or compiler of the collections, expresses himself to the following purport, for we have not the book at hand to do justice to his precise words,—’Reader, the Genii are no more, and Horam, but the phantom of my mind, fiction himself and fiction all that he seemed to write, speaks not again. But lament not their loss, since if desirous to see virtue guarded by miracles, Religion can display before you scenes tremendous, wonderful, and great, more worthy of your sight than aught that human fancy can conceive—the moral veil rent in twain and the Sun of Righteousness arising from the thick clouds of heathen darkness.’141 In the sincere spirit of admiration for Lord Byron’s talents, and regard for his character which has dictated the rest of our criticism, we here close our analysis of Childe Harold.

Our task respecting Lord Byron’s poetry is finished, when we have mentioned the subject, quoted passages of superior merit, or which their position renders most capable of being detached from the body of the poem. For the character of his style and versification once distinctly traced, (and we have had repeated occasion to consider it,) cannot again be dwelt on without repetition. The harmony of verse, and the power of numbers, nay, the selection and arrangement of expressions, are all so subordinate to the thought and sentiment, as to become comparatively light in the scale. His poetry is like the oratory which hurries the hearers along without permitting them to pause on its solecisms or singularities. Its general structure is bold, severe, and as it were Doric, admitting few ornaments but those immediately suggested by the glowing imagination of the author, rising and sinking with the tones of his enthusiasm, roughening into argument, or softening into the melody of feeling and sentiment, as if the language fit for either were alike at the command of the poet, and the numbers not only came uncalled, but arranged themselves with little care on his part into the varied modulation which the subject requires. Many of the stanzas, considered separately from the rest, might be objected to as involved, harsh, and overflowing into each other beyond the usual license of the Spenserian stanza. But considering the various matter of which the poet had to treat—considering the monotony of a long-continued smoothness of sound, and accurate division of the [p.231] sense according to the stanzas—considering also that the effect of the general harmony is, as in music, improved by the judicious introduction of discords wherewith it is contrasted, we cannot join with those who state this

141: James Ridley (“Sir Charles Morrell”), The Tales of the Genii, or, the Delightful Lessons of Horam, (1781) p.334. The passage runs, “Kind reader! The Genii are no more, and Horam, but the phantom of my mind, speaks not again; fiction himself, and fiction all he seemed to write; nor useless shall his life be deemed by those, who blush at worse than Pagan vices in enlightened climes”. Scott then paraphrases part of the next page.
occasional harshness as an objection to Lord Byron’s poetry. If the line sometimes ‘labours and the words move slow,’ it is in passages where the sense is correspondent to these laborious movements. A highly finished strain of versification resembles a dressed pleasure ground, elegant—even beautiful—but tame and insipid compared to the majesty and interest of a woodland chase, where scenes of natural loveliness are rendered sweeter and more interesting by the contrast of irregularity and wildness.

[I believe that the splenetic, unScottian, anti-Hobhouse conclusion to the review is by William Gifford and / or John Wilson Croker.]

We have done with the poem; we have, however, yet a few words to say before we finally close our strictures.

To this canto, as to the former, notes are added, illustrative of the contents; and these, we are informed, are written by Mr. Hobhouse, the author of that facetious account of Buonaparte’s reign of an hundred days, which it was our office last year to review. They are distinct and classical illustrations of the text, but contain of course many political sentiments of a class which have ceased to excite anger, or any feeling stronger than pity, and a sense of the weakness of humanity which, in all ages, has inclined even men of talents and cultivation to disgrace themselves, by the adoption of sentiments of which it is impossible they can have examined either the grounds or the consequences—whence the doctrines come, or whither they are tending. The mob of a corrupt metropolis, who vindicate the freedom of election by knocking out the brains of the candidate of whom they disapprove, act upon obvious and tangible principles; so do the Spenceans, Spar-fieldians and Nottingham conspirators. That ‘seven halfpenny loaves should be sold for a penny’, that ‘the three-hooped pot should have ten hoops’, and that ‘the realm should be all in common’,—have been the watch-words of insurrection among the vulgar, from Jack Straw’s time to the present, and, if neither honest nor praiseworthy, are at least sufficiently plain and intelligible. But the frenzy which makes individuals of birth and education hold a language as if they could be willing to risk the destruction of their native country, and all the horrors of a civil war, is not so easily accounted for. To believe that these persons would accelerate a desolation in which they themselves directly, or through their nearest and dearest connections, must widely share, merely to remove an obnoxious minister, would be to form a hasty and perhaps a false judgement of them. The truth seems to be, that the English, even those from whom better things might be expected, are born to be the dupes of jugglers and mountebanks in all professions. It is not only in physic that [p.232] the names of our nobility and gentry decorate occasionally the list of cures to which the empiric appeals as attesting the force of his remedy. Religion, in the last age, and politics in the present, have had their quacks, who substituted words for sense, and theoretical dogmata for the practice of every duty.—But whether in religion, or politics, or physic, one general mark distinguishes the empiric; the patient is to be tired without interruption of business, or pleasure—the proselyte to be saved without reformation of the future, or repentance of the past—the country to be made happy by an alteration in its political system; and all the vice and misery which luxury and poor’s rates, a crowded population, and decayed morality can introduce into the community, to be removed by extending farther political rights to those who daily show that they require to be taught the purpose for which they already enjoy were entrusted to them. That any one above the rank of an interested demagogue should teach this is wonderful—that any should believe it except the lowest of the vulgar is more so—but vanity makes as many dupes as folly.

If, however, these gentlemen will needs identify their own cause with that of their country’s enemies, we can forgive them as losers, who have proverbial leave to pout. And when, in bitterness of spirit, they term the great, the glorious victory of Waterloo the ‘carnage of Saint Jean’, we can forgive that too, since, trained in the school of revolutionary France, they must necessarily abhor those

——— whose art was of such power
It could controul their dam’s God Setebos,
And make a vassal of him.145

From the dismal denunciations which Lord Byron, acting more upon his feeling than his judgment, has made against our country, although

142: Pope, An Essay on Criticism, I.371; Scott uses this line in his CHP III review.
143: Hobhouse’s Letters from Paris was reviewed by Croker and Gifford: this coda may not be by Scott.
144: CHP IV, Dedication (to Hobhouse).
We entertain no fears—none whatever.—

At home, the noble author may hear of better things than 'a permanent army and a suspended Habeas Corpus.'—he may hear of an improving revenue and increasing public prosperity. And while he continues abroad he may haply call to mind that the Pilgrim, whom, eight years since, the universal domination of France compelled to wander into distant and barbarous countries, is now at liberty to travel where he pleases, certain that there is not a corner of the civilized world where his title of Englishman will not ensure him a favourable and respectful reception.

from *The Heart of Midlothian* (published July 25th 1818):

George Staunton is the seducer of Effie Deans.

... George Staunton had not been long in England till he learned his independence, and how to abuse it ... although he showed some capacity for learning, his riotous conduct soon became intolerable to his teachers. He found means (too easily afforded to all youths who have certain expectations) of procuring such a command of money as enabled him to anticipate in boyhood the frolics and follies of a more mature age ... (p.342, Claire Lamont’s *World’s Classics* edition.)

The fiery eye, the abrupt demeanour, the occasionally harsh, yet studiously subdued tone of voice, – the features, handsome, but now clouded with pride, now disturbed by suspicion, now inflamed by passion – those dark hazel eyes, which he sometimes shaded with his cap, as if he were averse to having them seen while they were occupied with keenly observing the emotions and bearing of others – those eyes that were now turbid with melancholy, now gleaming with scorn, and now sparkling with fury – was it the passions of a mere mortal they expressed, or the emotions of a fiend, who seeks, and seeks in vain, to conceal his fiendish designs under the borrowed mask of manly beauty? The whole partook of the mien, language, and port of the ruined archangel ... (p.113)

from John Murray to Byron, from 50, Albemarle Street, London, September 22nd 1818:

(Murray does not tell Byron that Scott reviewed *Childe Harold IV*.

My Lord

I was much pleased to find, on my arrival from Edinburgh on Saturday night your Lordships Letter of the 26th August – the former one of the 21st. I received whilst in Scotland – the Saturday & Sunday previous I passed most delightfully with Walter Scott who was incessant in his enquiries after your welfare – he entertains the noblest sentiments of regard towards your Lordship & speaks of you with the best feelings – I walked ten Miles with him I believe round a very beautiful estate which he has by degrees purchased within two Miles of <Abbots> his favourite Melrose – & he has compleated nearly the Centre & One Wing of a Castle on the banks of the Tweed where he is the happiness as well as the pride of the whole neighbourhood & he is one of the most hospitable merry & entertaining of Mortals – he would I am confident do any thing to serve your Lordship and as the paper which I now inclose is a second substantial <int> proof of the interest he takes in your Literary Character perhaps it may naturally enough afford occasion for a Letter from your Lordship to him – I sent you by M’ Hanson 4 Vols of a Second Series of Tales of my Landlord and four others are actually in the press – he does not yet avow them – but no one doubts his being their author – I should have much liked to see how you look in a full suit of Prose (*letter continues*)

from Byron to John Murray, from Ravenna, March 1st 1820:

Pray send me {W.} Scott’s new novels – what are their names and characters? I read some of his former ones at least once a day for an hour or so. – The last are too hurried – he forgets Ravenswood’s name – and calls him Edgar – and then Norman & Girder – the Cooper – is – {styled} now

---

147: CHP IV, Dedication.
148: In *The Bride of Lammermoor*; but Norman, and Edgar the Master of Ravenswood, are separate characters.
Gilbert and now John — and he don’t make enough of Montrose — but Dalgetty is excellent — and so is Lucy Ashton — and the bitch her mother.151 — — — — — —

What is Ivanhoe? — and what do you call his other — are there two? — Pray make him write at least two a year. — I like no reading so well. — — — — — — — —

**July 16th 1821:** Byron starts *Cain*; he finishes it on September 9th. He dedicates it to Scott.

**From Byron’s Ravenna Journal.**

January 5th, 1821.

Rose late — dull and drooping — the weather dripping and dense. Snow on the ground, and sirocco above in the sky, like yesterday. Roads up to the horse’s belly, so that riding (at least for pleasure) is not very feasible. Added a postscript to my letter to Murray. Read the conclusion, for the fiftieth time (I have read all W[alter]. Scott’s novels at least fifty times) of the third series of “Tales of my Landlord”, — grand work — Scotch Fielding, as well as great English poet — wonderful man! I long to get drunk with him.

**Scott to John Murray, from Edinburgh, December 4th 1821:**

(Edward: text from LJ VI 3n)

Edinburgh, 4th December, 1821.

My Dear Sir, — I accept, with feelings of great obligation, the flattering proposal of Lord Byron to prefix my name to the very grand and tremendous drama of *Cain*. I may be partial to it, and you will allow I have cause; but I do not know that his Muse has ever taken so lofty a flight amid her former soarings. He has certainly matched Milton on his own ground. Some part of the language is bold, and may shock one class of readers, whose line will be adopted by others out of affectation or envy. But then they must condemn the *Paradise Lost*, if they have a mind to be consistent. The fiend-like reasoning and bold blasphemy of the fiend and of his pupil lead exactly to the point which was to be expected, — the commission of the first murder, and the ruin and despair of the perpetrator.

I do not see how any one can accuse the author himself of Manicheism. The Devil talks the language of that sect, doubtless; because, not being able to deny the existence of the Good Principle, he endeavours to exalt himself — the Evil Principle — to a seeming equality with the Good; but such arguments, in the mouth of such a being, can only be used to deceive and to betray. Lord Byron might have made this more evident, by placing in the mouth of Adam, or some good and protecting spirit, the reasons which render the existence of moral evil consistent with the general benevolence of the Deity. The great key to the mystery is, perhaps, the imperfections of our own faculties, which see and feel strongly the partial evils which press upon us, but know too little of the general system of the universe to be aware how the existence of these is to be reconciled with the benevolence of the great Creator.

Yours, my dear Sir, very truly,

WALTER SCOTT.

**December 19th 1821: *Cain* published with *Sardanapalus* and *The Two Foscari*.**

**Byron to Scott, from Pisa, January 12th 1822:**

(Edward: text from NLS 3894; LJ VI 1-6; QII 685-7; BLJ IX 85-7)

Five years late, Byron thanks Scott for his review of *Childe Harold III*.


My dear Sir Walter /

I need not say how grateful I am for yr. letter — but I must own my ingratitude in not having written to you again long ago. — Since I left England (and it is not far off the usual term of transportation) I have scribbled to five hundred blockheads — on business &c. without difficulty though with no great pleasure; and yet, with the notion of addressing you a hundred times in my head — and always in my heart — I have not done what I ought to have done. —

I can only account for it on the {same} principle of tremulous anxiety with which one sometimes makes love to a beautiful woman of our own degree with whom one is in love {enamoured} in good earnest; — whereas we attack a fresh=coloured housemaid without (I speak of course of earlier times)

---

149: In *The Bride of Lammermoor*; in fact, “John” and “Gibbie” as well as “Gilbert”.

150: In *A Legend of Montrose*.

151: Both in *The Bride of Lammermoor*. 
any sentimental remorse or mitigation of our virtuous purpose. – I owe to you far more than
the usual obligation for the courtesies of literature and common friendship – for you
1:2
went out of your way in 1817 – to do me a service – when it required not merely kindness – but
courage to do so; – to have been seconded by you in such a manner would have been a proud memorial
at any time – but at such a time – when “all the World and his Wife” (or rather mine) as the
proverb goes – were trying to trample upon me was something still higher to my Self-esteem. – I allude
to the Quarterly rev. of the 3rd. C. of C. H4, which Murray told me was written by you 152 – and indeed
I should have known it without his information – as there could not be two who could and
would have done this at the time. – Had it been a common criticism – however eloquent or
panegyrical – I should have felt pleased undoubtedly and grateful – but not to the extent which the
extraordinary Good-heartedness of the whole proceeding – must induce in any mind capable of such
sensations. – The tuardiness of
1:3
of this acknowledgement will at least show that I have not forgotten the obligation – & I can assure
you that my sense of it has been out at compound interest during the delay. – I shall only add one
word upon the subject – which is – that I think – that you and Jeffrey – and Leigh Hunt were the only
literary men of numbers whom I know (& some of whom I had served) who dared venture even an
anonymous word in my favour just then – and that of those three – I had never seen one {at
all} 155 – of the second much less than I desired – and {that} the third was under no kind of obligation to
me, whatever; while the other two had been actually attacked {by} me on a former occasion – one
indeed with some provocation – but the other wantonly enough. – So you see you have been heaping
“coals of fire &.” 154 in the true Gospel manner – – and I can assure you that they have burnt {down}
to my very heart. –
1:4
I am glad that you accepted the Inscription. I meant to have inscribed “The Foscaris” to you instead –
but firstly – I heard that “Cain” was thought the least bad of the two as a composition – and 2dly. – I
have abused Southey like a pickpocket in a note to the “Foscaris” – and I recollected that he is a friend
of yours (though not of mine) – and that it would not be the handsome thing to dedicate to one friend
any thing containing such matters about another. – – However – I’ll work the Laureate before I have
done with him – as soon as I can muster Billingsgate therefor. – I like a row – & always did from a boy
– in the course of which propensity I must needs say that I have found it the most easy {of all} to be
gratified – personally and poetically. – – You disclaim “Jealousies” but I would ask as Boswell did of
Johnson “Of whom could you be jealous” – of none of the living certainly – and (taking all and all into
consideration) – of which of the dead? –
2:1
2.) I don’t like to bore you about the Scotch novels (as they call them though two of them are wholly
English 155 – and the rest half so), but nothing can or could ever persuade me since I was {the first} ten
minutes in your company that you are not the Man. – – – To me those novels have so much of “Auld
lang syne” (I was bred a canny Scot till ten years old), that I never move without them – and when I
removed from Ravenna to Pisa the other day – and sent on my library before – they were the only
books that I kept by me – although I already knew them by heart.

January 27th, 1822. –
I delayed till now concluding in the hope that I should have got “the Pirate” who is
under way for me 156 – but has not yet hove in sight. – –
I hear that your daughter is married

———
152: Mu. tells B. this on February 18th 1817; LJ M 196.
153: B. and Jeffrey never met.
155: The Abbot and The Monastery.
156: The Pirate was published in the last week of December 1821.
I suppose by this time you are half a Grandfather – a young one by the way. --
I have heard great things of Mrs. Lockhart’s personal & mental charms – and much good of her Lord; --
that you may live to see as many novel Scotts as there are Scot’s novels is the very bad pun
{but} sincere wish
of y'rs, ever
most affectionately,
Byron. --

P.S.
Why don’t you take a turn in Italy? you would find yourself as well known and as welcome as in
the Highlands among the natives. -- As for the English you would be with them as in London -- and I
need not add, that I would be delighted to see you again – which is far more than I shall ever feel or say
for England or

(with a few exceptions “of kith, kin, and allies”) any thing that it contains. -- -- But my “heart warms
to the Tartan” or to any thing of Scotland which reminds me of Aberdeen and {other} parts not so far from the Highlands {as that town} about Invercauld & Braemar where I was sent to
drink goat’s Fever in 1795-6 [Ms. tear: “arlet fever”?] -- but I
am gossiping [Ms. tear: ‘nd so”] Good night – and the gods be with your dreams!
Pray present my respects to Lady Scott, who may, perhaps, recollect having seen me in town in 1815.

Scott to Byron, from Abbotsford, March 28th 1822:
(Source: text from Grierson 1821-3, pp.116-22)

MY DEAR LORD BYRON, – I should have been tempted long ago to have answered your kind letter had
I not feared that continuing the parable which you had taken up you might have considered me as an
antiquated beauty who receives an unexpected homage to the charms which she may still lay claim to
with such clamorous gratitude as may sometimes be rather troublesome to a gallant whose fantasy is
over. Seriously when you can spare me a few lines they will be gratefully received though I am the las t
of human beings who have the slightest title to remembrance on the part of distant friends being one o f
the slowest and most unwilling of correspondents. I pay it off with thinking of my absent comp eers,
like poor Poll who was purchased for the happy phrase in contrast to the garrulity of his companions “I
think not the less.”

In the painful circumstances you allude to my own course was an easy and obvious one. I would
have done a great deal – had anything been in my power – to prevent the unhappy family
misunderstanding which preceded your departure from this country, and if I had been a father cousin or
uncle I have no doubt I should have sung out the old time doctrine of Bear and Forbear. But when such
a breach had taken place I own I felt indignant at the clamour which under every sort of fine and fair
pretence was raised not against the man but against the man of genius. Any booby whether of the
highest or the lowest rank might have had a domestic disagreement without its attracting notice except
in the circles which the parties frequented whether in squares or in allies and having excited its usual
degree of pretended pity or regret and perhaps more real internal delection to those whose tea or gin it
chanced to aid as a digestive then the matter would have rested.

But it seemed to me in your case that all the pretenders to genius in London were seized with the
rage of making family disagreements God knows too frequent in all lines of life the pretext for
attacking and in as far as they lay blackening and defaming a man whose genius was an honour to

157: Shakespeare, Henry IV Part 1, I i 16 (“… acquaintance, kindred, and allies”).
158: Scott, The Heart of Midlothian, Chap.35.
159: Scott, The Heart of Midlothian, Chap.49.
160: Scott, Rob Roy, Chap.10.
his country. I have been too long an advocate for fair play to like to see twenty dogs upon one were that
one their equal – much less to see all the curs of the village set upon one noble staghound who is worth
the whole troop. If you will add to this the sincere pleasure I have received from the hours we have
occasionally spent together and a warm wish that we may one day meet together again you will find
any trifling share I took in the last unhappy matters was at once natural and withal a little selfish.

As for rows I have had my share of them in my time but they are now the work of younger men. A
grandfather like myself may plead the privilege of an Emeritus in love or war and indeed will probably
find that without going out of his own domestic society “he has as much floor as he has flail for.”
Cupid is out of the question with me now and if Mars comes my way – for I will not go into his – why I
will fight when I cannot help it. Our violent party disputes here have just occasioned a melancholy
catastrophe in the fate of Sir Alex. Boswell (the son of Johnson’s Bozzy) a high tory who is as I learn
by this day’s post mortally wounded by a Mr. Stewart a high Whig in consequence of some newspaper
lampoons. Boswell was, I fear I must use the past tense, a fine bold dashing fellow with a considerable
turn both for music and poetry – he wrote some excellent songs and sang them with much humour.
This fatal duel will probably be followed by others, for the rump of either faction endeavour to
distinguish themselves by personal inveteracy and violence whilst Lord Liverpool and Lord Holland
are quietly drinking their coffee together and going to the opera in the same carriage.

We have of literature here Lord Orford’s political memoirs or Memoires as he had gallicized the
word. I expected them with great impatience and am I must needs say considerably disappointed. The
fuss in locking them up for so many years, they containing only the history of the little factions of his
time told with his own natural vivacity, is exactly as if he should have ordered a hogshhead of brisk
cyder, a very sufficient single ale as Christopher Sly has it, to be bricked up in his cellar with an
injunction on his representatives to drink it out at the end of half a century when it was sure to have lost
all the vivacity which might have rendered it even tolerable. The Baron of Otranto is pompous
beside and has doffed the gaiety of his letters, which I think capital, to become grave and gentleman-
like like to Mr. Stephen, and yet is every now and then craving pardon for being jocular like the
steward in the Drummer of Addison.

I think you would like my son-in-law Lockhart who is bold very clever and a little inconsiderate but
with the kindest and warmest feelings so that I could scold him and laugh at him and am delighted with
him ten times a day. He and Sophia have a delightful little cottage on this property within two miles of
my house which is very delightful. I have another blackeyed lass – at present the only one of my family
who resides with me. My eldest son is a soldier Lieut. in the 15 Hussars but now on half pay. I have
sent him to Berlin for a year or 18 months to clear him from the pedantry acquired by 2 years of a
regimental mess and make him a little acquainted with the world besides seeing society on a large
scale. He is said to be a very active officer of his time “large of limb and bane” a fine horseman and
great master of his weapons. I saw him shoot a black cock with a single ball at upwards of eighty yards.

He is besides a true hearted honest fellow that never gives me any vexation – the younger brother
whose character is literary is to go to Oxford soon and I think will do well – at least he has ambition
and quickness of talents. I ought to go on to tell you of the precocious talents of my grandchild but I
magnanimously resist the temptation – enough that he brays for the ass – barks for the dog – smokes
for grandpapa – and thrusts out his tongue for the large wolf hound which licks his face, and all this –
hear it ye Gods – though only twelve months old. As for our Mermaids – I know not how the Harden
people my stock of gentry came by theirs – the crescents are more appropriate to the habits of the
borderers.

At whose glare the Cumbrian oft
(leaving his perilous tenure) blew his horn
Giving loud sign of rapine waste and inroad.

As for your Mermaid my dear Lord it quite explains a passage in your ancestor’s Narrative which used
to make my blood curdle when a boy. I have an idea Campbell has noticed it in his Pleasures of Hope –
the circumstance which you cannot but remember mentions the shipwrecked crew having been
awakened one evening by an extraordinary and wild cry unlike that of any animal they had ever heard
and when they ran to the doors of their tents and huts they saw a figure something like a human being
half out of the water uttering the same sort of cries which they had heard. Now this must certainly have
been your own mermaid playing the Banshee a prophetess of woe.

161: The phrase is not in The Taming of the Shrew.
162: Horace Walpole (Lord Orford).
163: Unidentified.
164: The Drummer, or The Haunted House, by Joseph Addison (1759).
For my Syren she never boded me either good or evil; by the man her companion had he been worth anything I should have preserved a beautiful little family property to which I was heir. I am my dear Lord Byron affectionately yours while
WALTER SCOTT

Pray do you see anything of Sir Humphrey or his Lady my gentle coz. She left Britain as I thought but poorly but has too much spirit to consent to be ill like other folks.

Byron to Scott, from Pisa, May 4th 1822:
(Source: Ms. not found; text from Moore’s Life II 592-4; LJ VI 55-9; QII 692-4; BLJ X 153-5)
Byron answers the last item but one, and describes the Pisan Affray, with enclosed notes. This is his last known letter to Scott.

Pisa, May 4. 1822.

My dear Sir Walter,

Your account of your family is very pleasing: would that I “could answer this comfort with the like!” but I have just lost my natural daughter, Allegra, by a fever. The only consolation, save time, is the reflection, that she is either at rest or happy; for her few years (only five) prevented her from having incurred any sin, except what we inherit from Adam.

“Whom the gods love, die young.”

I need not say that your letters are particularly welcome, when they do not tax your time and patience; and now that our correspondence is resumed, I trust it will continue.

I have lately had some anxiety, rather than trouble, about an awkward affair here, which you may perhaps have heard of; but our minister has behaved very handsomely, and the Tuscan Government as well as it is possible for such a government to behave, which is not saying much for the latter. Some other English, and Scots, and myself, had a brawl with a dragoon, who insulted one of the party, and whom we mistook for an officer, as he was medalled and well mounted, &c. but he turned out to be a sergeant-major. He called out the guard at the gates to arrest us (we being unarmed); upon which I and another (an Italian) rode through the said guard; but they succeeded in detaining others of the party. I rode to my house and sent my secretary to give an account of the attempted and illegal arrest to the authorities, and then, without dismounting, rode back towards the gates, which are near my present mansion. Half-way I met my man vapouring away and threatening to draw upon me (who had a cane in my hand, and no other arms). I, still believing him an officer, demanded his name and address, and gave him my hand and glove thereupon. A servant of mine thrust in between us (totally without orders), but let him go on my command. He then rode off at full speed; but about forty paces further was stabbed, and very dangerously (so as to be in peril), by some Callum Beg or other of my people (for I have some rough-handed folks about me), I need hardly say without my direction or approval. The said dragoon had been sabring our unarmed countrymen, however, at the gate, after they were in arrest, and held by the guards, and wounded one, Captain Hay, very severely. However, he got his paiks—having acted like an assassin, and being treated like one. Who wounded him, though it was done before thousands of people, they have never been able to ascertain, or prove, nor even the weapon; some said a pistol, an air-gun, a stiletto, a sword, a pitchfork, and what not. They have arrested and examined servants and people of all descriptions, but can make out nothing. Mr. Dawkins, our minister, assures me, that no suspicion is entertained of the man who wounded him having been instigated by me, or any of the party. I enclose you copies of the depositions of those with us, and Dr. Craufurd, a canny Scot (not an acquaintance), who saw the latter part of the affair. They are in Italian.

These are the only literary matters in which I have been engaged since the publication and row about “Cain;”—but Mr. Murray has several things of mine in his obstetrical hands. Another Mystery—a Vision—a Drama—and the like. But you won’t tell me what you are doing—however, I shall find you out, write what you will. You say that I should like your son-in-law—it would be very difficult for me to dislike any one connected with you; but I have no doubt that his own qualities are all that you describe.

I am sorry you don’t like Lord Orford’s new work. My aristocracy, which is very fierce, makes him a favourite of mine. Recollect that those “little factions” comprised Lord Chatham and Fox, the father, and that we live in gigantic and exaggerated times, which make all under Gog and Magog

165: Sir Humphrey Davy.
166: Shakespeare, Macbeth, IV iii 192-3.
167: Callum Beg is a villain in Scott’s Waverley.
168: Scott, Rob Roy, Chap.29.
appear pigmean. After having seen Napoleon begin like Tamerlane and end like Bajazet in our own time, we have not the same interest in what would otherwise have appeared important history. But I must conclude.

Believe me ever and most truly yours,

Noel Byron.

This note is enclosed with the previous item.

(Source: Ms. Rosenbach Foundation Philadelphia; this text from BLJ IX 131)

[March 28th. 1822]

[Note following copy of Taaffe’s deposition to the Governor of Pisa]

Nota bene—This deposition of Mr. John Taaffe—who began the quarrel—and then tried to back out of it for fear of the Pisans—hath acquired for the said John Taaffe the name & designation of Falstaaffe. He hath since recanted a part of his said statement to the English Minister—and now admits that he did think himself affronted &c.

Scott to Byron, from Edinburgh, June 26th 1822:

(Source: text from NLS Acc. 12604 / 4036; Grierson 1821-3, pp.196-9)

Scott’s last known letter to Byron; he encloses Halidon Hill.

My dear Lord

The best answer I can send to your enquiries respecting what I have been doing (and in one sense it is an indifferent one) is the inclosed dramatic Sketch. M’rs. Joanna Baillie wished me to contribute something to a Pic-nic publication which she means to publish for the benefit of a friend who has been unfortunate in trade. I have no sort of love for these sort of olla podridas but I have a great respect for our sister in the Muses and was most willing to gratify her. I tried therefore a scene or two but soon ran out of bounds and instead of a petty and partial skirmish as I intended I ran scampering and kicking my heels through a whole field of battle and rid my Pegasus hard untill as John Kemble said of his mundane houyhnhnm I yerkl un off and there was an end of the matter. I should have liked much to have put it under your patronage for which there might have been found some cause in the fractional interest which we have respectively in the heroes whom I have inflicted this celebration upon, your Lordship being in lineal descent half a Gordon as I am a fourth part of a Swinton. But I felt that besides its not being worthy of being your god child I ought to offer to M’rs. Baillie the sponsorship considering it was undertaken at her request though it overran her limits. And so enough of Halidon Hill, and sending it to you instead of the Dramas is much like the old story of the Brass and Golden armour in the celebrated transaction in which the old Greek diddled the Phrygian.

I was favoured with the proces verbal respecting the Sergeant Major and I do not wonder con=
much to be a caricaturist – it was after a celebrated hoax – not the Cochrane hoax but another of earlier date – had just been detected at the Stock Exchange and the fury of outwitted and disappointed

avarice assumed from its violence all the features of more lofty passion & would have been even magnificent had it not been for buz-wigs & gold headed canes which the old creatures shook at each other in the acme of their wrath. But much to my disappointment they did not come to actual blows which makes me think your stock holder and your landholder will endure a good deal ere they go actually by the ears. Paddy poor soul in his frolics of last year was so busy murthering the tithe proctors and yeomen that he quite forgot potatoes will not grow without being planted and that if he chases away his gentry they must needs go off with the rents in their pocket. He is now I suspect in a piteous condition and crying abbooboo for famine in the very midst of plenty, for what signifies how cheap things are to those who have no money. Matters will all settle by and bye, but as in a crowd and scramble there will be a good deal of individual damage done first.

Perhaps I may see you next year that is if you continue an inhabitant of the North of Italy. My son is at Berlin studying the great homicidal art of Mars and shooting wild boars. I intend to go over in spring and having him for my companion shall be tempted to take a ramble on the continent. I shall scarce be within a hundred miles or two of your Lordship without wishing to see you, being with great sincerity

Yours affectionately
Walter Scott
Edinburgh
26 June 1822

Byron to Henri Beyle (Stendhal), May 29th 1823:
(Source: Medwin, Paris edition 1824; this text from BLJ X 189)

There is one part of your observations in the pamphlet *Rome, Naples and Florence* which I shall venture to remark upon; – it regards Walter Scott. You say that “his character is little worthy of enthusiasm”, at the same time that you mention his productions in the manner they deserve. I have known Walter Scott long and well, and in occasional situations which call forth the real character – and I can assure you that his character is worthy of admiration – that of all men he is the most open, the most honourable, the most amiable. With his politics I have nothing to do: they differ from mine, which renders it difficult for me to speak of them. But he is perfectly sincere in them: and Sincerity may be humble, but she cannot be servile. I pray you, therefore, to correct or soften that passage. You may, perhaps, attribute this officiousness of mine to a false affectation of candour, as I happen to be a writer also. Attribute it to what motive you please, but believe the truth. I say that Walter Scott is as nearly a thorough good man as man can be, because I know it by experience to be the case.

from *Don Juan* XV:

59.

Having wound up with this sublime comparison,
Methinks we may proceed upon our narrative –
And, as my friend Scott says, “I sound my Warison”\(^{169}\) –
Scott, the Superlative of my Comparative –
Scott – who can paint your Christian knight or Saracen,
Serf, Lord, Man,\(^{170}\) with such skill as none would share it, if

\(^{169}\) as my friend Scott says, “I sound my Warison”: he says it – or rather, he causes the Herald of Lords Howard and Dacre to say it – at *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1810) IV 24, 17-22:

"Either receive within these towers
Two hundred of my master’s powers,
Or straight they sound their warrison,
And storm and spoil thy garrison;
And this fair boy, to London led,
Shall good King Edward’s page be bred.”

Scott and B. both misuse the word, Scott with no excuse other than the need for a rhyme for *garrison*, B. with the excuse that if Scott used it to mean “War cry – signal for attack”, it must mean just that. In fact it means “a reward given by a superior”.

29th 1823.
April 19th 1824: death of Byron at Missolonghi.

from Scott’s obituary of Byron, in the 1824 Edinburgh Weekly Journal:
(Source: The Prose of Sir Walter Scott, 1834-6, vol.IV pp.343-4)

The voice of just blame and that of malignant censure are at once silenced; and we feel almost as if the great luminary of Heaven had suddenly disappeared from the sky, at the moment when every telescope was levelled for the examination of the spots which dimmed his brightness. It is not now the question, what were Byron’s faults, what his mistakes; but how is the blank which he has left in British literature to be filled up? Not, we fear, in one generation, which, among many highly gifted persons, has produced none who approached Byron in ORIGINALITY, the first attribute of genius. Only thirty-seven years old—so much already done for immortality—so much time remaining, as it seemed to us shortsighted mortals, to maintain and extend his fame, and to atone for errors in conduct and levities in composition,—who will not grieve that such a race has been shortened, though not always keeping the straight path, such a light extinguished, sometimes flaming to dazzle and to bewilder?

from Scott’s Journal, November 23rd 1825:
(Source: text from 1927 Edinburgh edition, pp.11-13)

November 23.—On comparing notes with Moore, I was confirmed in one or two points which I had always laid down in considering poor Byron. One was, that like Rousseau, he was apt to be very suspicious, and a plain downright steadiness of manner was the true mode to maintain his good opinion. Will Rose told me that once, while sitting with Byron, he fixed insensibly his eyes on his feet, one of which, it must be remembered, was deformed. Looking up suddenly, he saw Byron regarding him with a look of concentrated and deep displeasure, which wore off when he observed no consciousness or embarrassment in the countenance of Rose. Murray afterwards explained this, telling Rose that Lord Byron was very jealous of having this personal imperfection noticed or attended to. In another point, Moore confirmed my previous opinion, namely, that Byron loved mischief-making. Moore had written to him cautioning him against the project of establishing the paper called the Liberal, in communion with such men as P.B.Shelley and Hunt, on whom he said the world had set its mark. Byron showed this to the parties. Shelley wrote a modest and rather affecting expostulation to Moore. These two peculiarities of extreme suspicion and love of mischief are both shades of the malady which certainly tinctured some part of the character of this mighty genius; and, without some tendency towards which, genius—I mean that kind which depends on the imaginative power—perhaps cannot exist to great extent. The wheels of a machine, to play rapidly, must not fit with the utmost exactness, else the attrition diminished the impetus.

Another of Byron’s peculiarities was the love of mystifying; which indeed may be referred to that of mischief. There was no knowing how much or how little to believe of his narratives. Instance:—Mr. Bankes expostulating with him upon a dedication which he had written in extravagant terms of praise to Cam Hobhouse, Byron told him that Cam had teased him into the dedication till he had said, “Well; it shall be so,—providing you will write the dedication yourself”; and affirmed that Cam Hobhouse did write the high-coloured dedication accordingly. I mentioned this to Murray, having the report from Will Rose, to whom Bankes had mentioned it. Murray, in reply, assured me that the dedication was written by Lord Byron himself, and showed it me in his own hand. I wrote to Rose to mention the thing to Bankes, as it might have made mischief had the story got into the circle. Byron was disposed to think all men of imagination were addicted to mix fiction (or poetry) with their prose. He used to say he dared believe the celebrated countezan of Venice, about whom Rousseau makes so piquante a story, was, if one could see her, a draggled-tailed wench enough. I believe that he embellished his own amours considerably, and that he was, in many respects, le fanfaron des vices qu’il n’avait pas. He loved to be thought awful, mysterious, and gloomy, and sometimes hinted at strange causes. I believe the whole to have been the creation and sport of a wild and powerful fancy. In

170: Scott – who can paint your Christian knight or Saracen, / Serf, Lord, Man; B. seems principally to be thinking of Ivanhoe (1819) about which all he able to say elsewhere is that it is good (BLJ VII 113).
171: Shakespeare and Voltaire – / Of one or both of whom he seems the heir: the Tory Scott would have been pleased at the comparison with Shakespeare; less so at that with Voltaire.
172: That to CHP IV.
the same manner he *crammed* people as it is termed about duels, etc., which never existed, or were much exaggerated.

What I liked about Byron, besides his boundless genius, was his generosity of spirit as well as purse, and his utter contempt of all the affectations of literature, from the school-magisterial stile to the lackadaisical.