“The demon of mistrust & pride lurks between two persons in our situation,” writes Shelley to Mary on August 10th 1821, “poisoning the freedom of their intercourse. – This is a tax and a heavy one which we must pay for being human – I think the fault is not on my side; nor is it likely, I being the weaker. I hope that in the next world these things will be better managed. – What is passing in the heart of another rarely escapes the observation of one who is a strict anatomist of his own. ===== =========== —-

Byron and Shelley can never be completely frank with one another, either in conversation or correspondence. When writing to Hoppner, Byron is scathing about Shelley; when writing to Peacock, Shelley laments Byron’s failings in life and art. Shelley’s understanding of Byron’s belief in the Hoppner / Elise Foggi rumour, that Claire had had a child by Shelley, poisons their friendship.

The major imbalance in the correspondence lies in the contrast between Shelley’s continual praise of Byron’s poetry, and his exhortations to write more, and the absence of any such positive thoughts in Byron’s few references to Shelley’s poetry. This, along with Shelley’s awareness that, while everyone reads Byron, no-one reads him, and the knowledge that Byron believes him to have been unfaithful to Mary with Claire, makes Shelley more and more desperate.

In writing to England, Byron hovers between implicit denigration of Shelley’s poetry, and defence of his moral character – a defence which we know to be incompatible with his actual skepticism on that subject.

Shelley’s letters are also of great value in their depiction of Byron’s Italian household; and on August 13th 1821 he gives the most extended description of Allegra.

Mary’s letter describing the Pisan Afray is the most detailed we have of that event. Otherwise, our knowledge, derived from her journal entry of October 19th 1822, of how much Byron means to her, give a sad subtext to her letters to him after Shelley’s death.

I count eight letters from Byron which have disappeared, and one from Shelley.


February 1816: *Alastor* published.

April 21st 1816: Byron first meets Mary Shelley, in the company of Claire Clairmont.

Claire Clairmont to Byron, from 26 Marchmont Street, London, April 21st 1816:
(Source: text from NLS Ms.43419; Stocking I 40-1)

26. Marchmont Street
Brunswick Square

I steal a moment to write to you to know whether you go to to morrow. It is not through selfishness that I pray some thing may prevent your departure. But tomorrow Shelley’s chancery suit[1] will be decided & so much of my fate depends on the decision; besides tomorrow will inform me whether I should be able to offer you that which it has long been the passionate wish of my heart to offer you. Mary is delighted with you as I knew she would be; she entreats me in private {to obtain} your address abroad that we may if possible have again the pleasure of seeing you. She perpetually exclaims. “How mild he is! how gentle!” So different from what I expected.” (letter continues)

April 25th 1816: Byron leaves England for good.

May 3rd 1816: Percy, Mary and Claire leave England for Switzerland.

May 27th 1816: Byron and Percy Shelley meet at Geneva.

June 22nd to July 1st 1816: Byron and Shelley tour Lake Geneva.

Shelley to Byron, from Chamounix, July 22nd 1816:
(Source: this text from 1922 II 14-15; Jones I 494-5)

Chamouni, Hotel de Ville de Londres
July 22, 1816

My dear Lord Byron

We have this moment arrived at Chamouni – the evening of the day after our departure. An opportunity chances to offer itself of sending a letter. I shall not attempt to describe to you the scenes through which we have passed. I hope soon to see in poetry the feelings with which they will inspire you.[3] The Valley of the Arve (strictly speaking it extends to that of Chamouni) gradually increases in magnificence and beauty, until, at a place called Servoz, where Mont Blanc and its connected mountains limit one side of the valley, it exceeds and renders insignificant all that I had before seen, or imagined. It is not alone that these mountains are immense in size, that their forests are of so immeasurable an extent; there is grandeur in the very shapes and colours which could not fail to impress, even on a smaller scale. I write in the hope – may I say so? – that we possibly shall see you here before our return.[4] No sooner had we entered this magnificent valley than we decided to remain

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1: Sir Timothy Shelley had a suit in Chancery upon which depended his right to sell timber from his estate, and thus his ownership of the estate. He lost it in a judgement handed down on April 23rd.
2: The sentence shows that they are not yet lovers.
3: B., unlike Sh., wrote nothing about Chamounix, though *Manfred* Act I is full of Alpine scenery.
4: B. did not see Chamounix until August 30th, when he visited with Scrope Davies and H. It was in an inn here that he erased Sh.’s self-description in the guest-book as *dimokritos, philanthropotos kai atheos* – which Sh. Must have written about now.
several days. An avalanche fell as we entered it. We heard the thunder of its fall, and in a few minutes more the smoke of its path was visible, and a torrent which it had forced from its bed overflowed the ravine which enclosed it. I wish the wonders and graces of these “palaces of Nature” would induce you to visit them whilst we, who so much value your society, remain yet near them. How is our little William? Is he well?

Clare sends her love to you, and Mary desires to be kindly remembered.

Yours faithfully,

P. B. Shelley.

P.S. The roads are excellent, and every facility is accumulated for the traveller. You can go as far as Sallanches in a carriage, after which, although it is possible to accomplish the rest of the journey in a char du pays, I would advise you, as we have done, to hire mules. A guide is not absolutely necessary, although we took one; for the road, with one insignificant exception, is perfectly plain and good. There is apparently a very trifling ascent from Geneva to Chamouni.

August 27th 1816: Hobhouse and Davies arrive at Diodati.

August 29th 1816: the Shelleys and Claire Clairmont leave.

Shelley to Byron, from Portsmouth, September 8th 1816:
(Source: this text from 1922 II 15-16; Jones I 504-5)

Portsmouth, September 8, 1816

Nine days of tedious voyaging over land and sea have brought us hither. We had some pleasant moments in our journey through France, visitings of sunshine in stormy weather. We passed, not through Paris, but by a shorter route through Versailles, and Fontainebleau, and stayed to visit those famous Palaces, which, as I will hereafter tell you, are well worth visiting as monuments of human power; grand, yet somewhat faded; the latter is the scene of some of the most interesting events of what may be called the master theme of the epoch in we live – the French Revolution. Our passage from Havre hither was wretched – 26 hours. We have just dined after our arrival, and I learn that the post departs in a few minutes – but I am anxious to give you the earliest intelligence of the safe arrival of the Childe. His only adventure since he quitted the paternal roof has been inglorious. He was taken for a smuggler, and turned over and over by a Custom-house officer, to see if lace, &c., were hidden within. He is now quite safe, and locked in my portmanteau.

You shall hear from me again in three days. Adieu – take care of your health – tranquillise yourself – and be persuaded with Coleridge – that “Hope is a most awful duty, the nurse of all other virtues.” I assure you that it will not depart, if it be not rudely banished, from such a one as you.

Mary unites with me in sincerest wishes for your happiness; Clare is about to enjoin me some messages which are better conceived than expressed.

Your sincere friend,

P. B. Shelley

[P.S.] Make my remembrances to Hobhouse – as also to Mr. Davies. I hope that the former has destroyed whatever scruples you have felt, in dismissing Polidori. The anecdote which he recounted to me the evening before I left Geneva made my blood run cold.

Shelley to Byron, from London, September 11th 1816:
(Source: this text from 1922 II 16-17; Jones I 505-6)

London, September 11, 1816

26 Marchmont Street

I have just seen Murray and delivered the poem to him. He was exceedingly polite to me; and expressed the greatest eagerness to see the Poem. He had already heard that it was considered to

5: Sh. quotes the as yet unpublished ChP III 62. 2.
6: Sh. has been entrusted by B. with Clare Claremont’s Ms. of ChP III, which he expects to see through the press. Murray doesn’t allow him to.
7: Coleridge quotation unidentified.
8: C.C. is now pregnant. She will never see B. again.
10: Mu. to B., January 22nd 1817: “I am sure that the person who was to have been your supervisor is a perfect wretch – without any homogenous [sic] qualities to compensate” (LJM 188).
surpass all your other productions, and that this was Madame de Staël’s opinion.\(^{11}\) I shall call on Mr. Kinnaird tomorrow. Murray tells me that Lady Byron is in London, and that her health has materially improved. Her very change of residence confirms this statement.

Mary and Clare left me at Portsmouth, for Bath. I arrive here – at my antient lodgings; dreadfully vacant and lonely. No companions but the ghosts of old remembrances, all of whom contrive to make some reproach to which there is no reply. My lawyer is, I find, at Lancaster. I have written to him to return hither; but his delay will add to the time that I must inevitably waste in this peopled desert. Fanny Godwin came last night and talked to me of her father’s affairs, to which there is fortunately now assistance near. She told me that he had made great progress in his novel. She told me, too, that Northcote the painter,\(^ {12}\) who is an ardent admirer of all your compositions, had recommended Godwin to read “Glenarvon,” affirming that many parts of it exhibited extraordinary talent.

The harvest is not yet cut. There are, however, as yet no very glaring symptoms of disaffection, though the distress is said to be severe. But winter is the season when the burthen will be felt. Most earnestly do I hope that despair will not drive the people to premature and useless struggles.

I shall write to you again soon – at this moment I am suffering under a spasmodic headache that does not allow me to connect two ideas. Let me hear from you, and let me hear good news of you. The interest that I feel in everything that concerns you leads me to expect with eagerness the most minute details.

My dear Lord Byron

Your sincere friend,

P.B. Shelley.

from Claire Clairmont to Byron, September 29th 1816:
(Source: NLS 43419; Stocking I 76-8)

Mary has been musing how to send her message. She says “my love is too familiar & so it is changed to ‘remembrances & she shall always be happy to see you & if you will come you shall have “petits poix” for dinner’. You see she don’t promise the other “Chose” you are so fond of. I am sure I should be very sorry if she did. She says too that if she were ever so much determind not to like you she could not help so doing & so I like her.

Shelley to Byron, from Bath, September 29th 1816:
(Source: this text from 1922 II 17-20; Jones I 506-8)

My dear Lord Byron

You have heard from Kinnaird the arrangement which has been made about “Childe Harold.” You are to receive 2,000 guineas. There was no objection made on Murray’s, though there was a trifling mistake arising from his believing that he could get it for 1,200, which was no sooner made than obviated. I hope soon to inform you that I received the first proof. I saw Kinnaird, and had a long conversation with him. He informed me that Lady Byron was now in perfect health – that she was living with your sister. I felt great pleasure from this intelligence. I consider the latter part of it as affording a decisive contradiction to the only important calumny\(^{13}\) that ever was advanced against you. On this ground at least it will become the world hereafter to be silent. Kinnaird spoke of some reports which he says Caroline Lamb industriously propagates against you.\(^ {14}\) I cannot look on these calumnies in the serious light which others do. They appear to be innocent from their very extravagance, if they were not still more so from their silliness. They are the sparks of a straw fire, that vanish when their fuel fails. You are destined, believe me, to assume a rank in the estimation of mankind where such puerile hostilities cannot reach. There wants nothing but that you should clearly feel, and not disdain to pursue this destination, to deliver you at once from all these inquietudes which the opinion of the fickle multitude delights to inflict upon too sensitive minds. You are now in Italy\(^ {15}\) – you have, perhaps, forgotten all that my unwelcome anxiety reminds you of. You contemplate objects that elevate, inspire, tranquillise. You communicate the feelings, which arise out

\(^{11}\): Either Murray is being unctuous, or de Staël has written to him.

\(^{12}\): James Northcote (1746-1831).

\(^{13}\): That B. and Augusta had committed incest.

\(^{14}\): About the incest, and about B.’s homosexuality.

\(^{15}\): B. and H. are still in Switzerland. On this date they return to Geneva from their Alpine tour.
of that contemplation, to mankind; perhaps to the men of distant ages. Is there nothing in the hope of being the parent of greatness, and of goodness, which is destined, perhaps, to expand indefinitely? Is there nothing in making yourself a fountain from which the thoughts of other men shall draw strength and beauty, to excite the ambition of a mind that can despise all other ambition? You have already given evidence of very uncommon powers. Having produced thus much, with effort, as you are aware, very disproportionate to the result; what are you not further capable of effecting? What would the human race have been if Homer, or Shakespeare, had never written? or if any false modesty, or mistake of their own powers, had withheld them from consummating those unequalled achievements of mind by which we are so deeply benefited? I do not compare you with these. I do not know how great an intellectual compass you are destined to fill. I only know that your powers are astonishingly great, and that they ought to be exerted to their full extent.

It is not that I should counsel you to aspire to fame. The motive to your labours ought to be more pure, and simple. You ought to desire no more than to express your own thoughts; to address yourself to the sympathy of those who might think with you. Fame will follow those whom it is unworthy to lead. I would not that you should immediately apply yourself to the composition of an Epic Poem; or to whatever other work you should collect all your being to consummate. I would not that the natural train of your progress should be interrupted; or any step of it anticipated. I delight in much of what you have already done. I hope for much more, in the same careless spirit of ardent sentiment. I hope for no more than that you should, from some moment when the clearness of your own mind makes evident to you the “truth of things,” feel that you are chosen out from all other men to some greater enterprise of thought; and that all your studies should, from that moment, tend towards that enterprise alone: that your affections, that all worldly hopes this world may have left you, should link themselves to this design. What it should be, I am not qualified to say. In a more presumptuous mood, I recommended the Revolution of France as a theme involving pictures of all that is qualified to interest and to instruct mankind. But it is inconsistent with the spirit in which you ought to devote yourself to so great a destiny that you should make use of any understanding but your own – much less mine.

Shall we see you in the spring? How do your affairs go on? May I hear from you respecting these? Though anxious to know how your estates go on, I have not called on Hanson, overcome by my fear of the awkwardness of such a visit. We are now all at Bath, well and content. Clare is writing to you at this instant. Mary is reading over the fire; our cat and kitten are sleeping under the sofa; and little Willy just gone to sleep. We are looking out for a house in some lone place; and one chief pleasure which we shall expect then, will be a visit from you. You will destroy all our rural arrangements if you fail in this promise. You will do more. You will strike a link out of the chain of life which, esteeming you, and cherishing your society as we do, we cannot easily spare. Adieu.

Your sincere friend,

P.B.Shelley.
Some mistake must have arisen, in what manner I cannot well conceive. You must have forgotten or misunderstood my explanations; by some accident you cannot have received my letter. – Do me the favor of writing by return of Post; & informing me what intelligence I am to give Lord Byron respecting the commission with which I was entrusted. –

I have the honor to be,

Sir, Your Obedient Servant

Percy Bysshe Shelley

P S. I remark that it is advertised as ‘The Prisoners of Chillon. Lord Byron wrote it ‘Prisoner’.

November 9th 1816: Harriet Westbrook kills herself.

Shelley to Byron, from Bath, November 20th 1816:
(Source: this text from 1922 II 20-2; Jones I 512-14)

The letter from Byron which Shelley says he has shown to Claire, and which describes Milan, has not appeared.

5 Abbey Church yard, Bath, November 20, 1816.

My dear Lord Byron

It gives us pleasure to learn that you have arrived in safety at Milan, and that you have not relinquished your intention of revisiting England in the spring. The newspapers say that you have embarked for Albania. But I will hope that your own information is the most correct. Poor Clare’s time approaches, and though she continues as well as women in that situation usually are, I think her spirits begin to fail. She has lost much of the animation, and lightness which perhaps you do not ever remember in her. I shewed her your letter, which I should have withheld had I been aware of the wretched state into which it would have thrown her. I need not say that I do not doubt that you were as little aware of such an effect. But the smallest omission, or the most unpromoted word often affects a person in a delicate state of health, or spirits. Any assurances which I could make to her of your correct intentions would be superfluous; she expresses the most unwounded confidence in you; and, as is natural, considers every imagined defect of kindness in me, as a breach of faith to you. I need not entreat you to believe that neither Mary nor myself will be deficient in every requisite attention and kindness. If you do not like to write to Clare, send me some kind message to her, which I will, to give suspicion his due, throw into the fire as a sacrifice.

Of course you have received intimations of the tumultuous state of England. The whole fabric of society presents a most threatening aspect. What is most ominous of an approaching change is the strength which the popular party have suddenly acquired, and the importance which the violence of demagogues has assumed. But the people appear calm, and steady even under situations of great excitement; and reform may come without revolution. Parliament will meet on the 28th of January; until which – for the populace have committed no violence – they only meet, resolve and petition – all classes will probably remain in a sullen and moody expectation of what the session will produce. The taxes, it is said, cannot be collected – if so, the national debt cannot be paid – and are not the landed proprietors virtually pledged to the payment? I earnestly hope that, without such an utter overthrow as should leave us the prey of anarchy, and give us illiterate demagogues for masters, a most radical reform of the institutions of England may result from the approaching contest.

Murray, and another bookseller are skirmishing in the advertisement columns of the Morning Chronicle. The latter, a most impudent dog! affirming publicly that you sold him the copyright of some Poems for 500 guineas. By-the-bye, Murray refused to send me the sheets of your poems to superintend, under the plea of your having written to him committing them exclusively to Mr. Gifford’s care. I saw them advertised for publication before I was aware of this; and in answer to my application to Murray, I received the above excuse. My situation with respect to Murray, claiming a duty to which I was not entitled, had some degree of awkwardness in it. Of course I cannot do, what otherwise I should most scrupulously have done, pay the attention to its correctness, which I doubt not to all practical purposes Mr. G. will do. I am not quite certain that Murray does not bear me some illwill, as the cause of the unexpected difference in his disbursements of £800. ‘Christabel’ has been reviewed, and a most unfavourable judgment pronounced on it, by the Edinburgh Review. It suggests also that you were much to blame for praising it. In my opinion the Edinburgh Review is as

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20: B. and H. arrived in Milan on October 12th 1816. The letter telling Sh. so is lost.
21: There are no letters surviving from B. to C.C.
well qualified to judge of the merits of a poet, as Homer would have been to write a commentary on
the Newtonian System.

Accept our thanks for the curious account you give us of the Improvisators and the curiosities
of Milan. 22 We have no new things to tell. Believe me, my dear Lord Byron,

Your very sincere friend,
P. B. Shelley.

December 30th 1816: Shelley and Percy are married.

January 12th 1817: Allegra is born in Bath.

Mary Shelley to Byron, from Bath, January 13th 1817:

(Sources: text from NLS Ms.43506; 1922 II 31-2; Bennett I, 26)

Mary announces the birth of Allegra, and her own marriage to Shelley.

[To the Right Honourable / Lord Byron / M. Hentsch-Banquier / Genève / Switzerland.]

Bath –

Jan 13th 1817.

Dear Lord Byron

Shelley being in London upon business I take upon myself the task & pleasure to inform you that
Clare was safely delivered of a little girl yesterday morning (Sunday January 12) at four. She sends her
affectionate love to you and begs me to say that she is in excellent <health> spirits and as good health
as can be expected. That is to say that she has had a very favourable time and has now no other illness
than the weakness incidental to her case.

A letter ought not be sent so far with out a little more news. The people at present are very quiet
waiting anxiously for the meeting of parliament – when in the Month of March, as Cobbett boldly
prophesies a reform will certainly take place.

1:2

For private news if you feel interest in it, Shelley has become intimate with Leigh Hunt and his
family. I have seen them & like Hunt extremely. We have also taken a house in Marlow to which we
intend to remove in about two months – and where we dare hope to have the pleasure of your society
on your return to England. <It> The town of Marlow is about thirty miles from London.

My little boy is very well and is a very lively child. <For> <ou>

It is a long time since Shelley has heard from you  and I am sure nothing would give him greater
pleasure than to hear news of your motions & enjoyments.

Another incident has also occurred which will surprise you, perhaps; it is a little piece of egoism in
me to mention it – but it allows me to sign myself – in assuring you of my esteem & sincere friendship
Mary W. Shelley

[1:3 blank.]

Shelley to Byron, from London, January 17th 1817:

(Sources: this text from 1922 II 29-31; Jones I 529-30)

[To the Right Honourable / Lord Byron / M. Hentsch – Banquier / Geneve / Switzerland]


I write to you, my dear Lord Byron, after a series of the most unexpected and overwhelming
sorrows, and from the midst of a situation of peril and persecution. But I have good news to tell
you. Clare is safely delivered of a most beautiful girl. Both the mother and the child are well, and
Mary describes23 the latter to be a creature of the most exquisite symmetry, and as betraying, even
at its birth, a vigour and a sensibility very unusual. But you will doubtless learn all, and more than
can relate to this subject from Clare’s letters.

My late wife is dead. 24 The circumstances which attended this event are of a nature of such awful
and appalling horror, that I dare hardly avert to them in thought. The sister of whom you have heard

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22: The letter in which B. describes these things to Sh. and co. is not found.
23: “describes” (Jones).
24: Harriet Westbrook killed herself on November 9th 1816.
me speak may be truly said (though not in law, yet in fact) to have murdered her for the sake of her father’s money. Thus did an event which I believed quite indifferent to me, following in the train of a far severer anguish, communicate a shock to me which I know not how I have survived. The sister 25 has now instituted a Chancery process against me, the intended effect of which is to deprive me of my unfortunate children, now more than ever dear to me; of my inheritance, and to throw me into prison, and expose me in the pillory, on the ground of my being a REVOLUTIONIST, and an Atheist. It seems whilst she lived in my house she possessed herself of such papers as go to establish these allegations. The opinion of Counsel is, that she will certainly succeed to a considerable extent, but that I may probably escape entire ruin, in the worldly sense of it. So I am here, dragged before the tribunals of tyranny and superstition, to answer with my children, my property, my liberty, and my fame, for having exposed their frauds, and scorned the insolence of their power. Yet I will not fail; though I have been given to understand that I could purchase victory by recantation. Indeed, I have too much pride in the selection of their victim. 26

So here is an imperfect account of my misfortunes (yet one thing happened in the autumn that affected me far more deeply), which you must suppose to mean, not that I wish to trouble you with them or interest you in them; but that I wish to say, “I should have written to you before, if I had been beaten down by any common griefs.” 27

I had, last month, an unexpected letter from your friend, Leigh Hunt, whom I have since visited. He is indeed a most friendly, and excellent man. I have found few such as he appears to be in the world. He was so kind as to listen to the story of persecution which I am now enduring from a licentious and vindictive woman, and to stand by me as yet by his counsel, and by his personal attentions to me.

I have no other news to tell you, my dear Lord Byron, unless you think this is news: that I often talk, and oftener think, of you; and that, though I have not seen you for six months, I still feel the burden of my own insignificance and impotence; as they must ever forbid my interest in your welfare from being put to the proof. Adieu.

Faithfully yours,

P. B. Shelley.

[P.S.] Hunt requests me to send you his remembrances.

Shelley to Byron, from Marlow, April 23rd 1817:
(Source: this text from 1922 II 52-4; Jones I 539-40)

My dear Lord Byron

This letter goes out on an adventure to meet you, though nothing is more improbable than that it should succeed. Rumour says that you are at Venice, 28 and determines that you should make an expedition into Greece and Asia. I wrote to you last under the impression of some horrible circumstances which had occurred to me; and in the midst of a legal persecution, the most material blow of which I need not inform you has taken effect, though another, viz. that of criminal information against “Queen Mab”, yet remains suspended. But all human evils either extinguish or are extinguished by the sufferer, and I am now living with my accustomed tranquillity and happiness in a house which I have taken near this town.

But I was incited to write to you, not that I might relate anything concerning myself, but that I might say something of Clare, and of a little being whom we – in the absence of all right to bestow a Christian designation – call Alba, or the Dawn. She is very beautiful, and though her frame is of somewhat a delicate texture, enjoys excellent health. Her eyes are the most intelligent I ever saw in so young an infant. Her hair is black, her eyes deeply blue, and her mouth exquisitely shaped. She passes here for the child of a friend in London, sent into the country for her health, while Clare has reassumed her maiden character. Indeed all these precautions have now become more necessary than before, on account of our renewed intimacy with Godwin, which has taken place in consequence of my marriage with Mary, a change (if it be a change) which had principally her feelings in respect to Godwin for its object. I need not inform you that this is simply with us a measure of convenience, and that our

25: Eliza Westbrook.
26: Shelley was not deprived of his children, but he made B. afraid of the same fate.
27: Quotation untraced.
28: B. has been at Venice since November 10th 1816.
opinions as to the importance of this pretended sanction, and all the prejudices connected with it, remain the same.

And now, what are your plans with respect to the little girl? I need not assure you of the pleasure which both Mary and myself would feel in contributing all our care to it during your absence, or indeed during any period convenient to you. But we find it indispensable that Clare should reside with us; and a perpetual danger of discovery that it is hers impends. Nothing would be easier than to own that it was hers, and that it is the offspring of a private marriage in France. But the wise heads suppose that such a tale would make people consider it as mine, and that the inhabitants of this most Christian country would not suffer me to dwell among them under such an imputation. The answer to these difficulties, which would be most satisfactory to us, would be your own speedy return. We hear that the plague rages in Albania, and hope that you will thus be delayed from proceeding into a country from which it is always questionable whether an European will ever return.

As to this country, you will have heard that the ministers have gained a victory, which has not been disturbed by a single murmur; if I except those of famine, which they have troops of hireling soldiers to repress. Other news of course I cannot know. We spend our time here in that tranquil uniformity which presents much to enjoy and leaves nothing to record. I have my books, and a garden with a lawn, enclosed by high hedges, and overshadowed with firs and cypresses intermixed with apple trees now in blossom. We have a boat on the river, in which, when the days are sunny and serene, such as we have had of late, we sail. May we hope that you will ever visit us? Clare would be the most rejoiced of all of us at the sight of a letter written by you. I do not tell her that I write to you now. Mary desires to be affectionately remembered to you; and I remain,

Always yours very faithfully,
P. B. Shelley.

June 16th 1817: *Manfred* published.

Shelley to Byron, from Marlow, July 9th 1817:
(Source: this text from 1922 II 57-8; Jones I 546-7; PS at Bennett 39)

Marlow, July 9, 1817.

My dear Lord Byron

I called on Rogers the other day, on some affairs relating to Hunt, and heard some news of you, viz. that you had been to Rome, and that you had returned to Venice. I had already acquired the preceding piece of information from the Coliseum scene in “Manfred.” How is it that I have not heard from you? At first I drew from your silence a favourable augury of your early return. This is in a degree confirmed by the circumstance of Newstead being advertised for sale. I shall be among the first to greet you on your return.

At present I write only to enquire what are your plans with regard to little Alba. She continues to reside with us under a feigned name. But we are somewhat embarrassed about her. We are exposed to what remarks her existence is calculated to excite. At least a period approaches when it will be impossible to temporize with our servants or our visitors. There are two very respectable young ladies in this town, who would undertake the charge of her, if you consent to this arrangement. Clare would then be able to superintend her; and I cannot but recommend this measure to you as a provisional one, if any other is at present inconvenient to you. If you return to England in the autumn, or even in the winter, we should experience no inconvenience from deferring the question until that period.

I ought to tell you that your little girl is in excellent health and spirits. She improves very much, and although small for her age, has an extraordinary degree of animation and intelligence. Our Genevese nurse29 walks about with her and William all the day in the garden; and she is bathed, like him, in cold water.

I suppose you know that the tyranny, civil and religious, under which this country groans, has visited me somewhat severely. I neither like it the worse nor the better for this. It was always the object of my unbounded abhorrence. But it may become necessary that I should quit the country. It is possible that the interference exercised by Chancery in the instance of my two other children might be attempted to be extended to William. Should this be the case, I shall depart. And in this case, what shall I do with Alba?

I have read “Manfred” with the greatest admiration. The same freedom from common rules that marked the 3rd Canto and “Chillon” is visible here; and it was that which all your earlier productions, except “Lara”,30 wanted. But it made me dreadfully melancholy, and I fear other friends in England,

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29: Elise Foggi.
30: To single out *Lara* as the only one of B.’s previous productions to be “free from common rules” is odd.
too. Why do you indulge this despondency? “Manfred”, as far as I learn, is immensely popular; it is characterized as a very daring production.

Hunt has been with me here, and we have often spoken of you. Hunt is an excellent man, and has a great regard for you.

How is your health – and – the resolutions on which it depends? I am anxious to know whether you are free from the disorder by which you were threatened. I have lately had a kind of relapse of my constitutional disease, and if the Chancellor should threaten to invade my domestic circle, I shall seek Italy; as a refuge at once from the stupid tyranny of these laws and my disorder.

I suppose Clare will write to you herself. Mary desires her kind remembrances to you, and I am,

Ever sincerely yours,

P. B. Shelley.

[P.S. by Mary Shelley] Alba has blue eyes, and had dark hair, which has fallen off, and there is now a dispute about the colour. Clare says that it is auburn; William and she are very good friends.

July 17th 1817: The Lament of Tasso published.

September 2nd 1817: Clara Everina Shelley born.

Shelley to Byron, from Lisson Grove, London, September 24th 1817:

(Selected text from 1922 II 58-60; Jones I 556-8)

Evidence of another lost letter from Byron to Shelley.

My dear Lord Byron

Since I received your letter, my own destination has been so uncertain, that I have taken no steps about the little girl. I shall, if possible, spend this winter at Pisa, and in that case I shall be myself the lion to the little Una. If I am compelled to remain in England, I shall commit her to the charge of some person on whom I can entirely depend. My health is in a miserable state, so that some care will be required to prevent it speedily terminating in death. Such an event it is my interest and duty to prevent; nor am I indifferent to the pleasures of this scene of things. They recommend Italy as a certain remedy for my disease.

I told you what I thought of “Manfred”. The impression of the public seems, as far as I can judge, to be the same. “The Lament of Tasso” I do not think so perfect and sustained a composition. There are passages, indeed, most wonderfully impressive; and those lines in which you describe the youthful feelings of Tasso; that indistinct consciousness of its own greatness, which a heart of genius cherishes in solitude, amid neglect and contempt, have a profound and thrilling pathos which I will confess to you, whenever I turn to them, make my head wild with tears. The Edinburgh Review praises “Manfred” excessively, yet far less than it deserves; because their praise, though unbounded, is studied and cold. You know I live out of the world, and hear nothing. Hunt, who has a very great esteem and interest for you, thinks with me that the 3rd Canto is the finest specimen of your powers yet exhibited. His taste considerably differs from mine in some other respects. He does not like “Manfred”, not because it is defective in power and imagination, but because, as he alleges, it administers to a diseased view of things. I should say that some of your earlier writings had that tendency, but that “Manfred” was free from it. We are all most anxious for the 4th Canto, and hope to hear some news of the fair Venetian.

Since I wrote to you last, Mary has presented me with a little girl. We call it Clara. Little Alba and William, who are fast friends, and amuse themselves with talking a most unintelligible language together, are dreadfully puzzled by the stranger, whom they consider very stupid for not coming to play with them on the floor.

I have been engaged this summer, heart and soul, in one pursuit. I have completed a poem which, when it is finished, though I do not tax your patience to read it, I will send you. It is in the style and for the same object as “Queen Mab”, but interwoven with a story of human passion, and composed with

31: See The Faerie Queene, I, III, v-i. B. did not read Spenser and it’s doubtful whether he would have picked up the reference.
32: An astonishing judgement, that Manfred is less pessimistic than the Turkish tales.
33: Marianna Segati: the letter in which B. refers to her has not been found.
34: Clara was born on September 2nd 1817, and died On September 24th 1818.
35: Laon and Cythna, later The Revolt of Islam.
more attention to the refinement and accuracy of language, and the connexion of its parts. Some friends speak favourably of it, and particularly Hunt, whose opinion is very flattering. It is to be published – for I am not of your opinion as to religion, &c., and for this simple reason, that I am careless of the consequences as they regard myself. I only feel persecution bitterly, because I bitterly lament the depravity and mistake of those who persecute. As to me, I can but die; I can but be torn to pieces, or devoted to infamy most undeserved; and whether this is inflicted by the necessity of nature, and circumstances, or through a principle, pregnant, as I believe, with important benefit to mankind, is an alternative to which I cannot be indifferent.

I see Newsted has been advertised for sale, and not found a purchaser. So the papers say. Can nothing save Newstead? I wish it had so happened that I had the redemption of it.

Clare is well, but anxious. I have said nothing to her which you do not authorize. Mary is recovering from her accouchement; she is one of those many persons who, together with myself, remember you with interest and regard.

Most sincerely yours,

P.B. Shelley.

Shelley to Byron, from Marlow, December 17th 1817:
(Source: this text from 1922 II 61-3; Jones I 583-4)

Marlow, December 17, 1817

My dear Lord Byron

Since I last wrote to you, I have remained in weekly expectation of leaving England, in which case I should have brought you your little girl in person. But my affairs have been so uncertain that after this constant and gradual delay, it is decided that I must abide in England. So soon as this became evident, I looked about for some respectable person to whom I could confide the little Alba. But here is a difficulty which I cannot overcome. You may conceive how scrupulous I should be in the selection; and you know my secluded mode of life. These circumstances have prevented me from finding any person fit for this purpose. I write therefore to ask, – can you suggest any plan? Have you any friend, or person of trust, who is leaving England for Italy? You have a number of powerful friends all devoted to your interests, and anyone of these would be able to procure her conveyance in security to you, if you desired it. I have only to solicit one caution – that under this arrangement Clare’s name ought not to be mentioned.

Little Alba, or Clara, as she is now to be called, is grown exquisitely beautiful, and her temper has lost much of its vivacité, and has become affectionate, and mild. She is William’s playmate, who is so fond of her, that he will be among the many sincere mourners at her departure. They sit on the floor together and amuse themselves for hours in the most sociable way; little William putting more than half the raisins, &c., that are given to him into her mouth. Clare thinks of christening her after herself, but she delays this important ceremony until I hear whether you have a predilection for any other name.

From such a recluse and valetudinarian as me you cannot expect news. I intend, however, in a short time to send you a parcel of books (in about a week), which will speak for themselves; and if I find that they will escape the embargo, I will inclose some newspapers. My long Poem under the title of “The Revolt of Islam” is almost printed. You will receive in addition to this Godwin’s “Mandeville”, a Satanic likeness of Childe Harold the first, and two of three other new books.

We should (I need not say) be extremely happy to hear how you are getting on, and what you are doing – whether you are yet in love, or have been out, and in again. But sincerely, if you knew the interest felt by some of your English friends, I doubt whether you would adhere so severely to the maxim of old perituaré parcere chartæ, whilst you are so little disposed to spare those which your genius may make eternal.

We hear of the 4th and last Canto, but have not yet seen it.

Adieu, my dear Lord Byron.

Most sincerely yours,

P. B. Shelley.

January 1st 1818: Frankenstein published.

March 11th 1818: the Shelleys and Clare leave England for Italy.

36: It seems B. has not written to Sh. lately.
37: Juvenal, Satire I, 18: [it is foolish] … to spare paper that will be wasted anyway.
38: CHP IV is written, but not published until April 28th 1818.
There is a letter missing here, from Shelley to Byron, written from Lyons.

Shelley to Byron, from Milan, April 13th 1818:
(Source: this text from 1922 II 71-2; Jones II, 5)

Milan, April 13, 1818

My dear Lord Byron

I write to inquire whether you have had a letter from me dated Lyons; and to inform you that your little girl has arrived here in excellent health and spirits, with eyes as blue as the sky over our heads.

Mary and I have just returned from the Lake of Como, where we have been seeking a house for the summer. If you have not visited this sublime and lovely scene, I think it would repay your toil. Will you spend a few weeks with us this summer? Our mode of life is uniform, and such as you remember it at Geneva, and the situation which I imagine we have chosen (the Villa Pliniana) is solitary, and surrounded by scenery of astonishing grandeur, with the lake at our feet. If you would visit us – and I don’t know where you could find a heartier welcome – little Allegra might return with you.

Mary unites with me in best regards, and Clare bids me ask if you have received a lock of Allegra’s hair which she sent in the winter.

Most sincerely yours,

P. B. Shelley.

P.S. I have got some books for you, packed up at the bottom of a large box of my own. Shall I send them to Venice?

April 28th 1818: Childe Harold IV published.

Shelley to Byron, from Milan, April 22nd 1818:
(Source: this text from 1922 II 72-5; Jones II 9-12)

Shelley puts in a word for Claire’s maternal feelings, with evidence of yet another missing letter from Byron.

Milan, April 22, 1818.

My dear Lord Byron,

Clare will write to you herself a detail of her motives and feelings relating to Allegra’s being sent as you desire.39 Her interference as the mother of course supersedes mine, which was never undertaken but from the deep interest I have ever felt for all the parties concerned. Here my letter might well close, but that I would not the affair should finish so.

You write as if from the instant of its departure all future intercourse were to cease between Clare and her child. This I cannot think you ought to have expected, or even to have desired. Let us estimate our own sensations, and consider, if those of a father be acute, what must be those of a mother? What should we think of a woman who should resign her infant child with no prospect of ever seeing it again, even to a father in whose tenderness she entirely confided? If she forces herself to such a sacrifice for the sake of her child’s welfare, there is something heroically great in thus trampling upon the strongest affections, and even the most unappeasable instincts of our nature. But the world will not judge so; she would be despised as an unnatural mother, even by those who might see little to condemn in her becoming a mother without the formalities of marriage. She would thus resign her only good, and take to herself, in its stead, contempt on every hand. Besides, she might say, “What assurance have I of the tenderness of the father for his child, if he treats the feelings of the mother with so little consideration?” Not to mention, that the child itself would, on this supposition, grow up either in ignorance, or in contempt of one of its parents; a state of things full of danger. I know the arguments present in your mind on this subject; but surely, rank and reputation, and prudence are as nothing in comparison to a mother’s claims. If it should be recorded that you had sought to violate these, the opinion of the world might indeed be fixed on you, with such blame as your friends could not justify; and wholly unlike those ridiculous and unfounded tales which are told of every person of eminent powers, and which make your friends so merry in England, at the expense of those who fabricated them. I assure you, my dear Lord Byron, I speak earnestly, and sincerely. It is not that I wish to make out a case for Clare; my interest, as you must be aware, is entirely on the opposite side.40 Nor have I in

39: See C.C. to B., April 26th 1818.
40: Sh. is afraid of his children being taken from him.
any manner influenced her. I have esteemed it a duty to leave her to the impulse of her own feelings in a case where, if she has no feeling, she has no claim. But in truth, if she is to be brought to part with her child, she requires reassurance and tenderness. A tie so near the heart should not be rudely snapt. It was in this persuasion that I hoped (I had a thousand other reasons for wishing to see you) that you would have accepted our invitation to the Pliniana. Clare’s pain would then have been mitigated by the prospect of seeing her child with you, and she would have been reassured of the fears which your letter has just confirmed, by the idea of a repetition of the visit. Your conduct must at present wear the aspect of great cruelty, however you justify it to yourself. Surely, it is better if we err, to err on the side of kindness, than of rigour. You can stop when you please; and you are not so infirm of purpose that soothing words, and gentle conduct need betray you in essential matters further than you mean to go.

I am a third person in this painful controversy, who, in the invidious office of mediator, can have no interest, but in the interests of those concerned. I am now deprived of the power to act; but I would willingly persuade.

You know my motives, and therefore I do not fear to ask you again to come to see me at Como; and, for the sake of your child’s welfare, to soothe Clare’s wounded feelings by some reassurances in the meanwhile. As I understand her, with these assurances she would send the child. You are afraid, perhaps, that she might be inclined to tease you; but her first impression on seeing your letter (which, by-the-bye, I did not mean her to see) was that if your coming to see her depended upon her absence, she would willingly place herself en pension in the city, during that period. But in fact, so far as gossip is concerned, if you have any motive for caring about it, they cannot say more at Como than they do at Venice. You have no idea of the absurd stories which the multitude believe of you; but which every person of sense, and indeed every enlightened circle of our own countrymen, laugh at. This is the common lot of all who have distinguished themselves among men. When Dante walked through the streets, the old women pointed at him, and said, “That is the man who went to Hell with Virgil; see how his beard is singed.” Stories unlike this, but to the full as improbable and monstrous, are propagated of you at Venice; but I know not wherefore you should regard them. With us you would find a sincere, and frank welcome; and as we should be all unknown, or might be, I can see no loophole for calumny.

If your messenger arrives before Clare and you have come to an understanding on this subject, I shall detain him until further orders, unless your instructions are explicit that he shall not stay. Allegra has an English nurse, a very clean and good-tempered young woman, whom, in case of a termination of these melancholy differences, I can safely recommend to you.

The expenses of which you speak have been in our family so extremely trifling, that I know not how to name any sum that will not leave me, what I cannot accept, a pecuniary profit. Perhaps you will be kind enough not to place me in so degrading a situation, as to estimate a matter of this kind.

I feel confident that you will attribute to its right motive the earnestness with which I have written on this painful subject; and believe me, my dear Lord B., most sincerely attached to your interest and honour,

P.B.Shelley.

[P.S.] Allegra is daily improving in beauty, but she is suffering just now from cutting her teeth.

I cannot conceive how my letter from Lyons should have failed.

Shelley to Byron, from Milan, April 28th 1818:
(Source: this text from 1922 II 75-7, dated April 30th; Jones II 12-13)

Another reference to a missing letter from Byron.

My dear Lord Byron

It certainly gave me much pleasure to be able to bring your little girl to Italy, as indeed I was puzzled to find a person to trust her with; but the purpose of my journey was, I lament to say, in no manner connected with it. My health, which has always been declining, had assumed such symptoms that the physicians advised me to proceed without delay to a warmer climate. Allow me also to repeat my assertion that Clare’s late conduct with respect to the child was wholly unconnected with, and uninfluenced by me. The correspondence from which these misinterpretations have arisen was undertaken on my part solely because you refused to

41: Macbeth, II ii 52.
42: “us” (Ms.)
43: The nurse was called Amelia Shields.
44: We do not have B.’s letter referring to Sh.’s expenses.
45: Sh. seems again to be answering a letter from B. which has not survived.
correspond with Clare. My conduct in the affair has been simple, and intelligible. I am sorry that I misunderstood your letter; and I hope that on both sides there is here an end of misunderstandings.

You will find your little Allegra quite well. I think she is the most lovely and engaging child I ever beheld. Tell us what you think of her, and whether, or no, she equals your expectations. Her attendant is not the servant whom I alluded to in my last letter; but a Swiss,\(^46\) who has attended my own children, in whom Mrs. S. entirely confides, and who even quits us somewhat unwillingly, and whom Mary parts with solely that Clare and yourself may be assured that Allegra will be attended almost with a mother’s care.

Clare, as you may imagine, is dreadfully unhappy. As you have not written to her, it has been a kind of custom that she should see your letters; and I daresay you know that you have sometimes said things which I do not think you would have addressed to her. It could not in any way compromise you to be cautious in this respect, as, unless you write to her, I cannot well refuse to let her see your letters. I have not seen any of those which she has written to you; nor even have I often known when they were sent.

You will receive your packets of books. Hunt sends you one he has lately published; and I am commissioned by an old friend of yours to convey “Frankenstein” to you, and to request that if you conjecture the name of the author, that you will regard it as a secret. In fact, it is Mrs. S.’s. It has met with considerable success in England; but she bids me say, “That she would regard your approbation as a more flattering testimony of its merit.”

Address your next letter “Poste Restante, Pisa,” as we leave Milan for that city tomorrow. We have been disappointed in our house at Como; and indeed, I shall attempt to divert Clare’s melancholy by availing myself of some introductions at Pisa. Clare is wretchedly disconsolate, and I know not how I shall calm her, until the return of post. I ought to say that we shall be at Pisa long before the return of post—when we expect (pray don’t disappoint us) a letter from you to assure us of the safe arrival of our little favourite. Mary begs to unite with me in best regards; and to express her affection, and anxiety, about little Allegra, whom she has been accustomed to regard almost as one of her own children.

I ought to say that by an unfortunate mistake I left behind me the 2nd part of the “Voyage to Corea,”\(^47\) and a poem called “Beppo”,\(^48\) which Murray had sent to me for you. Peacock has a parcel for me, which I expect at midsummer, in which these will be included. Elise’s wages with us were 20 louis.

My dear Lord Byron, yours always sincerely,

P. B. Shelley.

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Thomas Love Peacock to Percy Bysshe Shelley, from Marlow, May 30th 1818:

(Source: Ms. Abinger Bodleian Dep b. 211; this text from The Letters of Thomas Love Peacock, ed. Nicholas A. Joukovsky, Oxford 2001, I 123-4.)

**Peacock delivers a negative verdict on Childe Harold IV.**

My dear Shelley

Since I wrote last I have received a No of Constable’s Edinburgh Magazine containing a notice of Frankenstein very favorable though not so much as that in Blackwood’s and not so good in any respect. It is not worth postage but I will include it in the parcel. If you remain at Pisa or near it the proximity of Leghorn will facilitate the receipt of the quarterly packet. There were some things in your longer letter which I intended to speak of but to tell you the truth that letter gave me so much pleasure that I was unwilling to keep it to myself and sent it to Marianne [Hunt] who has it still. I remember however you mentioned your design of writing a tragedy on Tasso’s madness: I know little of the subject but I cannot think it possible that it can be at all theatrical though in the Greek sense it may be dramatic. The renewal of the Bank Restriction Act which it is now generally acknowledged must be an annual measure as long as “the system” lasts appears in some instances to have “touched monied worldlings with dismay.” Cobbett is indefatigable. He gives us a full close-printed sheet every week which is something surprising if we only consider the quantity, more especially if we take into account the number of his other avocations. America has not yet dimmed his powers and it is impossible that his clear exposures of all the forms of political fraud shall fail of producing a most powerful effect. The Courier calls fiercely for a Censorship of the weekly press. The Queen has been very ill but is better to the great joy of this loyal nation. I have no idea and no wish remaining to leave Marlow at all, and when you return to England you will find me still here, though perhaps not in the same house. I have

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\(^{46}\): This nurse is Elise Foggi.

\(^{47}\): H.I.Clifford, *Account of a Voyage of Discovery to the West Coast of Corea, and the Great Loo-Choo Island* (published by Murray in 1818).

\(^{48}\): *Beppo* was published anonymously. Sh. may be being coy.
almost finished Nightmare Abbey. 49 I think it necessary to “make a stand” against the encroachments of black bile. The fourth canto of Childe Harold is really too bad. I cannot consent to be auditor tantum of this systematical “poisoning” of the “mind” of the “Reading Public.” We have had since I wrote last a continued series of cloudless sunshine and delightful warm weather. I have sufficiently conquered my out-of-door propensities to convince myself systematically in my study all the forenoon, and I consider this something of an achievement in the beginning of summer. I have not heard from you since my last, and am very anxious to know where [you] are and what you are doing. [I] wish I could [write] you more interesting letters: but there is a great dearth of political news and my own mode of life admits of no varieties worth detailing. A solitary study – a sail – a walk in the woods – all delightful things and wanting only the participation of a congenial mind – are yet though infinitely various in their minutiae very little capable of diversity in narration. My very kindest remembrances to Mary and Clare.

Ever most sincerely yours,
T.L. PEACOCK.

I shall write invariably every second Sunday.

Shelley to Byron, from Este, September 13th 1818:
(Source: this text from 1922 II 86-7; Jones II 38-9)

Este – Sep. 13, 1818.

My dear Lord Byron

I have been four or five times on the point of setting out to Venice, and have been always disappointed by some unexpected circumstance. Mary and the children arrived last Sunday, and my little girl has since then been dangerously ill,30 so am detained an anxious prisoner here for four or five days longer. She is now better, and I hope to be able to see you at the end of the week. We have domesticated ourselves unceremoniously here, and find it, as I think you would find it, a most delightful residence.

Mary desires her kind remembrances, Clara her love. Allegra is quite well, and whenever she is drest calls for papa. William and she are grown fast friends.

Most sincerely yours,
P.B. Shelley.

September 24th 1818: Clara Everina dies.

Mary Shelley to Byron, from Este, October 3rd 1818:
(Source: text from NLS Ms.43506; 1922 II 88; Bennett I 80)
A two-sided sheet.

I take <an> advantage of an opportunity of a person going to Venise to send you Mazeppa and your ode51 with I hope not many errors and those partly from my not being able to decypher <you> your M.S.

It will give me great pleasure (if the Fornaretta will permit)52 if you will send me your Don Juan by the beare53 – you may trust him as we often employ him – At any rate write a line to say that you have received this safe as I do not like to send your M.S. until I know that my copy is in your hands – You<r> will see by my copying Mazeppa so quickly that there is more of pleasure than labour in my task. MWS

Allegra is perfectly well Este – Oct. 3 – 1818

[1:2 blank.]

Shelley to Thomas Love Peacock, from Este, October 8th 1818:
(Source: Ms. Bodleian MS. Shelley c.1, ff.247-8; this text from Jones II 41-4)
Shelley shows signs of having studied both Beppo and Childe Harold IV.

No. 8.
Este, October 8. 1818

49: Peacock’s Nightmare Abbey contains, in Mr. Cypress, a satirical portrait of B., full of quotations from CHP IV.
50: Clara died on September 24th 1818.
51: B. had employed M.S. as copyist on Mazeppa and Venice an Ode.
52: The Fornaretta is B.’s wild mistress Margherita Cogni, who kept strict control of his household – hence M.S.’s diffidence here.
53: M.S. did not copy Don Juan I – to which this must be a reference; but she did copy Cantos VI-XV.
My dear Peacock

I have not written to you for six weeks. – But I have been on the point of writing many times & have often felt that I had many things to say. But I have not been without events to disturb & distract me, amongst which is the death of my little girl. She died of a disorder peculiar to the climate. We have all had bad spirits enough, & I in addition bad health. – I intend to be better soon – there is no malady bodily or mental which does not either kill or is killed –

We left the baths of Lucca, I think the day after I wrote to you, on a visit to Venice partly for the sake of seeing the city & partly that little Alba might spend a month or two with Clare before we proceeded to Rome & Naples. We made a very delightful acquaintance there with a Mr. & Mrs. Hoppner, the gentleman an Englishman & the Lady a Swisseuse, mild beautiful, & though not very wise unprejudiced in the best sense of the word. The kind attentions of these people made our short stay at Venice very pleasant. We – I mean Mary & myself – saw Lord Byron and really we hardly knew him again – he is changed into the liveliest, & happiest looking man I ever met. He read me the first Canto of his ‘Don Juan’ a thing in the style of Beppo, but infinitely better, & dedicated to Southey in ten or a dozen stanzas more like a mixture of wormwood & verdigrease than satire. The poor wretch will writhe under the lash. – Venice is a wonderfully fine city. The approach to it over the laguna with its domes & turrets glittering in a long line over the blue waves is one of the finest architectural delusions in the world. It seems to have – and literally it has – its foundations in the sea. The silent streets are paved with water, & you hear nothing but the dashing of the oars & the occasional curses of the gondoliers. (I heard nothing of Tasso.) The gondolas themselves are things of a most romantic & picturesque appearance; I can only compare them to moths of which a coffin might have been the chrysalis.\[54\]

They are hung with black, & painted black, & carpeted with grey; they curl at the prow & stern, and at the former there is a nondescript beak of shining steel which glitters at the end of its long black mass. [A small drawing illustrates this.] The Doges palace with its library is a fine monument of aristocratical power. I saw the dungeons where these scoundrels used to torment their victims. They are of 3 kinds one, adjoining the place of trial where the prisoners destined to immediate execution were kept. I could not descend into them because the day on which I visited it was festa. Another under the leads of the palace where the sufferers were roasted to death or madness by the arduors of an Italian sun, and others called the Pozzi, or wells, deep underneath, and communicating with those on the roof by secret passages where the prisoners were confined sometimes half up to their middles in stinking water. When the French came here, they found only one old man in these dungeons, & he could not speak. – But Venice which was once a tyrant, is now the next worse thing, a slave. For in fact it ceased to be free, or worth our regret as a nation from the moment that the oligarchy usurped the rights of the people. Yet I do not imagine that it ever was quite so degraded as it has been since the French, and especially the Austrian yoke. The Austrians take sixty percent in taxes, & impose free quarters on the inhabitants. A horde of German soldiers as vicious & more disgusting than the Venetians themselves insult these miserable people. I had no conception of the excess to which avarice, cowardice, superstition, ignorance, passionless lust, & all the inexpressible brutalities which degrade human nature could be carried, until I had lived a few days among the Venetians. – We have been living this last month near the little town from which I date this letter, in a very pleasant villa which has been lent to us, & we are now on the point of proceeding to Florence Rome & Naples at which last city we shall spend the winter, & return northwards in the spring. Behind us here are the Euganean hills, not so beautiful as those of Bagini di Lucca, With Arqua where Petrarch’s house & tomb are religiously preserved & visited. At the end of our garden is an extensive Gothic castle, now the habitation of owls & bats, where the Medici family resided before they came to Florence. We see before [us] the wide flat plains of Lombardy, in which we see the sun & moon rise & set, & the evening star, & all the golden magnificence of autumnal clouds. But I reserve wonder for Naples. –

I have been writing – and indeed have just finished the first act of a lyric & classical drama to be called ‘Prometheus Unbound’. Will you tell me what there is in Cicero about a drama supposed to have been written by Æschylus under this title – I ought to say that I have just read Malthus in a french translation. Malthus is a very clever man, & and the world would be a great gainer if it would seriously take his lessons into consideration – if it were capable of attending seriously to any thing but mischief – but what on earth does he mean by some of his inferences!

Pray tell me in your next the name, & all particulars relating to the Ship in which you sent my books – they have not yet arrived. – it is certain that we shall never get them without this information.

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54: Compare Beppo, 19, 6-8: It glides along the water looking blackly, / Just like a Coffin clapt in a Canoe, / Where none can make out what you say or do.
Mary & Clare send their best regards.

[Signature cut out.]

[P.S.] I will write again from Rome or Florence – in better spirits & to more agreeable purpose I hope – You saw those beautiful stanzas in the 4th Canto about the Nymph Egeria. Well, I did not whisper a word about nympholepsy, I hope you acquit me. – And I hope you will not carry delicacy so far as to let this suppress any thing nympholeptic.

Do you know if the Hunts have got our things from Russel St. If not when you go to Town, ask for me. Tis no use writing. Hunt never answers letters. – There are two volumes of Lord Byrons poetry left at Hookham’s to be bound. Have you received them? – If not pray write for them.

Shelley to Byron, from Venice, October 17th 1818:
(Source: Ms. not found; not in 1922 II; text from Jones II 44)
[Right Hon – / Lord Byron / Casa Nova Mocenigo]

Between sleep & awake

Oct. 17 1818.

My dear Lord B.

I am so dreadfully sleepy that I cannot come tonight. – Will you have the goodness to send us – the “Fudge Family”55 and the “Quarterly” and my Plato,

Faithfully yours

P B Shelley

from Byron to John Murray, from Venice, November 24th 1818:
(Source: Ms. not found; text from LJ IV 271-5; BLJ VI 82-4)

Byron’s opinion of The Revolt of Islam.

Venice, November 24th, 1818

… Lord Lauderdale set off from hence twelve days ago, accompanied by a cargo of poesy directed to Mr. Hobhouse – all spick and span, and in MS. You will see what it is like. I have given it to Master Southey, and he shall have more before I have done with him. I understand the scoundrel said, on his return from Switzerland two years ago, that “Shelley and I were in a league of Incest, etc., etc.” He is a burning liar! for the women to whom he alludes are not sisters – one being Godwin’s daughter, by Mary Wollstonecraft, and the other daughter of the present (second) Mrs. G, by a former husband; and in the next place, if they had even been so, there was no promiscuous intercourse whatever.

You may make what I say here as public as you please – more particularly to Southey, whom I look upon, and will say as publicly, to be a dirty, lying rascal; and will prove it in ink – or in his blood, if I did not believe him to be too much of a poet to risk it. If he had forty reviews at his back – as he has the Quarterly – I would have at him in his scribbling capacity, now that he has begun with me; but I will do nothing underhand. Tell him what I say from me, and everyone else you please.

You will see what I have said if the parcel arrives safe. I understand Coleridge went about repeating Southey’s lie with pleasure. I can believe it, for I had done him what is called a favour. I can understand Coleridge’s abusing me, but how or why Southey – whom I had never obliged in any sort of way, or done him the remotest service – should go about fibbing and calumniating is more than I readily comprehend.

Does he think to put me down with his canting – not being able to do so with his poetry? We will try the question. I have read his review of Hunt, where he attacked Shelley in an oblique and shabby manner. Does he know what that review has done? I will tell you. It has sold an edition of the Revolt of Islam, which, otherwise, nobody would have thought of reading, and few who read can understand – I for one.

from Shelley to Thomas Love Peacock, from Naples, December 17th or 18th 1818:
(Source: Bodleian MS. Shelley c.1, ff.257-8, 279-80; this text from Jones II, 57-8)
[T. Peacock Esq / Great Marlow / Bucks / Inghilterra / Angleterre]

Shelley agrees with Peacock’s criticism of Childe Harold IV.

My dear Peacock,

55: CHP IV st.115-20.
56: Shakespeare, King Lear, I i 15.
57: The satire by Thomas Moore.
We have received a letter from you here, dated November 1, 58 you see that the reciprocation of letters from the [?] time of our travels is more slow. I entirely agree with what you say about Childe Harold. 59 The spirit in which it is written is, if insane, the most wicked & mischievous insanity that ever was given forth. It is a kind of obstinate & selfwilled folly in which he hardens himself. I remonstrated with him in vain on the tone of mind from which such a view of things alone arises. For its real root is very different from its apparent one, & nothing can be less sublime than the true source of these expressions of contempt & desperation. The fact is, that first, the Italian women are perhaps the most contemptible of all who exist under the moon; the most ignorant the most disgusting, the most bigotted, the most filthy. Countesses smell so of garlick that an ordinary Englishman cannot approach them. Well, L[ord] B[yr]on is familiar with the lowest sort of these women, the people his gondolieri pick up in the streets. He allows fathers & mothers to bargain with him for their daughters, & though this is common enough in Italy, yet for an Englishman to encourage such sickening vice is a melancholy thing. He associates with wretches who seem almost to have lost the gait & physiognomy of man, & do not scruple to avow practices which are not only not named but I believe seldom even conceived in England. He says he dissaproves, but he endures. He is not yet an Italian & is heartily & deeply discontented with himself, & contemplating in the distorted mirror of his own thoughts, the nature & the destiny of man, what can he behold but objects of contempt & despair? But that he is a great poet, I think the address to Ocean proves. And he has a certain degree of candour while you talk to him but unfortunately it does not outlast your departure. You may think how unwillingly I have left my little favourite <Allegra> Alba in a situation where she might fall again under his authority. But I have employed arguments entreaties every thing in vain, & when these fail you know I have no longer any right. No, I do not doubt, & for his sake I ought to hope that his present career must end up soon by some violent circumstance which must reduce our situation with respect to Alba into its antient tie. – [letter continues]

**Early in 1819: Shelley writes *Julian and Maddalo*; it is not published in his lifetime.**

*from Byron to John Murray, from Venice, May 15th 1819:*
(Source: text from B.L.Ashley 4740; QII 448-51; BLJ VI 125-6)

**Byron’s only reference to *Frankenstein*.** 60

… The story of the agreement to write the Ghost=books is true – but the ladies are not Sisters – one is Godwin’s daughter by Mary Wolstonecraft – and the other the present Mrs. Godwin’s daughter by a former husband. So much for Scoundrel Southey’s Story of “incest” – neither was there any promiscuous intercourse whatever – both are an invention of the execrable villain Southey – whom I will term so as publicly as he deserves. – Mary Godwin (now Mrs. Shelley) wrote “Frankenstein” – which you have reviewed thinking it Shelley’s – methinks it is a wonderful work for a Girl of nineteen – not nineteen indeed – at that time. – –

**June 7th 1819: William Shelley dies.**

**July 15th 1819: *Don Juan I and II* published.**

**September 21st 1819: *The Cenci* published.**

**November 12th 1819: Percy Florence Shelley born.**

**January 26th 1820: the Shelleys move to Pisa.**

*Shelley to Byron, from Pisa, May 26th 1820:*
(Source: this text from 1922 II 149-51; Jones II, 197-9)

**Yet another missing letter from Byron to Shelley.**

Pisa, May 26th 1820

My dear Lord Byron

On a return from an excursion among the mountains, I find your letter. 61 Clare tells me that she has already answered what relates to the differences of opinion between you and her about Allegra; so I am

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58: This letter has not been found.
59: Peacock may have written about CHP IV in his letter of November 1st; what Sh. says is also applicable to what he writes to Sh. on May 30th.
spared the pain of being an interlocutor in a matter over which, I believe, I have no influence either as it regards her, or you. I wish you had not expressed yourself so harshly in your letter about Clare because of necessity she was obliged to read it; and I am persuaded that you are mistaken in thinking she has any desire of thwarting your plans about Allegra – even the requests that annoy you spring from an amiable and affectionate disposition. She has consented to give up this journey to Ravenna – which would indeed have been a material inconvenience, and annoyance to me, as well as you – but which, for such a purpose, I hardly felt that I could refuse. When we meet, I can explain to you some circumstances of misrepresentation respecting Allegra which, I think, will lead you to find an excuse for Clare’s anxiety. What letters she writes to you I know not; perhaps they are very provoking; but at all events it is better to forgive the weak. I do not say – I do not think – that your resolutions are unwise; only express them mildly – and pray don’t quote me.

I have read your “Don Juan” in print, and I observe that the murrain has killed some of the finest of the flock, i.e., that your bookseller has omitted certain passages. The personal ones, however, though I thought them wonderfully strong, I do not regret. What a strange and terrible storm is that at sea, and the two fathers, how true, yet how strong a contrast! Dante hardly exceeds it. With what flashes of divine beauty have you not illuminated the familiarity of your subject towards the end! The love letter, and the account of its being written, is altogether a masterpiece of portraiture; of human nature laid with the eternal colours of the feelings of humanity. Where did you learn all these secrets? I should like to go to school there. I cannot say I equally approve of the service to which this letter was appropriated; or that I altogether think the bitter mockery of our common nature, of which this is one of the expressions, quite worthy of your genius. The power and the beauty and the wit, indeed, redeem all this – chiefly because they belie and refute it. Perhaps it is foolish to wish that there had been nothing to redeem. My tragedy you will find less horrible than you had reason to expect. At all events it is matter-of-fact. If I had known you would have liked to have seen it, I could have sent you a copy, for I printed it in Italy, and sent it to England for publication. Did you see a little poem called “Rosalind and Helen” of mine? It was a mere extempore thing, and worth little, I believe. If you wish to see it, I can send it you.

I hope you know what my feelings, and those of Mary have ever been, about Allegra. Indeed, we are not yet cured of our affection for her; and whatever plans you and Clare agree upon, about her future life, remember that we, as friends to all parties, would be most happy to be instrumental to her welfare. I smiled at your protest about what you consider my creed. On the contrary, I think a regard to chastity is quite necessary, as things are, to a young female – that is, to her happiness – and at any time a good habit. As to Christianity – there I am vulnerable; though I should be as little inclined to teach a child disbelief, as belief, as a formal creed. You are misinformed, too, as to our system of physical education; but I can guess the source of this mistake. I say all this, not to induce you to depart from your plan (nor would Clare consent to Allegra’s residing with us for any length of time), but only to acquaint you with our feelings on the subject which are, and must ever be, friendly to you, and yours. It would give me the greatest pleasure to come into your part of the world and see you in any other character than as the mediator, or rather the interpreter, of a dispute. At all events we shall meet some day in London, I hope auspicio meliore. Mary desires not to be forgotten, and I remain,

Dear Lord Byron

Yours very sincerely,

P. B. Shelley.

August 1820: Prometheus Unbound published.

Byron to Shelley, August 25th 1820:
(Source: text from Bodleian Ms. Shelley c.1 f.387; BLJ VII 162)

Amazingly, this is the first surviving letter from Byron to Shelley.

August 25th, 1820.

Dear Shelley –
I should prefer hearing from you – as I must decline all correspondence with Claire who merely tries to be as irrational and provoking as she can be – all which shall not alter my regards to the Child – however (much) it contributes to confirm my opinion of the mother: – –
My respects to M^s^ S. believe me
y^s^ v^s^ truly
[scrawl]

[1:2 blank.]

from Byron to Hoppner, from Ravenna, September 10th 1820:
(Source: text from NLS Ms.43448; LJ V 73-5; QII 526-7; BLJ VII 174-5)
[To, / R.B.Hoppner Esqre. / Consul General / to H. B. M. / Venezia / Venezia.]

… I regret that you have such a bad opinion of Shiloh – you used to have a good one. – Surely he has talent – honour – but is crazy <upon> [against] religion and morality. – His tragedy is sad work – but the subject renders it so. – His Islam had much poetry. – You seem lately to have got some notion against him. …

from Hoppner to Byron, from Venice, September 16th 1820:
(Source: text from NLS Acc.12607 / 4188)
Byron hears for the first time the rumour about Shelley, Claire, and the child in the Naples Foundling Hospital.

… You are surprised and with reason at the change of my opinion respecting Shiloe: it certainly is not that which I once entertained of him: but if I disclose to you my fearful secret I trust, for his unfortunate wife’s sake, if not out of regard to Mrs Hoppner & me, that you will not let the Shelleys know that we are acquainted with it. This request you will find so reasonable that I am sure you will comply with it, & I therefore proceed to divulge to you, what indeed on Allegra’s account it is necessary that you should know, as it will fortify you in the good resolution you have already taken never to trust her again to her mothers care. You must know then that at the time the Shelleys were here Clara was with child by Shelley: you may remem ber to have heard that she was constantly unwell, & under the care of a Physician, and I am uncharitable enough to believe that the quantity of medicine she then took was not for the mere purpose of restoring her health. I perceive too why she preferred remaining alone at Este notwithstanding her fear of ghosts & robbers, to being here with the Shelleys. Be this as it may, they proceeded from here to Naples; where one night Shelley was called up to see Clara who was very ill. His wife naturally thought it very strange that he should be sent for; but although she was not aware

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of the nature of the connexion between them she had had sufficient proof of Shelles indifference & of Claras hatred for her: besides as Shelley desired her to remain quiet she did not dare to interfere. A Mid wife was sent for, <Clara> & {this worthy pair} who had made no preparation for the reception of the unfortunate being she was bringing into the world bribed the woman to carry it to the Pietà, {where the child was taken ½ an hour after its birth} being obliged likewise to purchase the physicians silence with a considerable sum. During all the time of her confinement M^s^ Shelley who expressed great anxiety on her account was not allowed to approach her, & these beasts instead of requiting her uneasiness on Clara’s account by at least a few expressions of kindness have since increased in their hatred of her, behaving to her in the most brutal manner, & Clara doing everything she can to engage her husband to abandon her. Poor M^s^ Shelley whatever suspicions she may entertain of the nature of their connexion knows nothing of their adventure at Naples, & as the knowledge of it could only add to her misery tis as well that she should not. This account we had from Elise, who passed here this summer with an English lady who spoke very highly of her & she likewise told us that Clara does not scruple to tell M^s^ Shelley she wishes her dead & to say to Shelley in her presence that she wonders how he can live with such a creature. Thus you see that your expression

67: The Cenci.
68: Sh. (so nicknamed after Joanna Southcott’s supposed child by the Holy Trinity).
69: Hoppner is afraid of B. telling third parties what Hoppner tells him of them in confidence. His fear was justified in both cases: B. let Teresa know of Hoppner’s distrust of her, and told the Shelleys almost at once of what Hoppner now tells him about them.
with regard to her is even too delicate; & I think with you not only that she is a damned bitch, but any thing worse even than you can say of her – I hope this account will encourage you to persevere in your kind attentions to poor little Allegra, who has no one else to look up to. I cannot conceive what Clara can mean by her impertinence to you; she ought to be too happy to reflect that the child is so well taken care of. Mrs Hoppner was so angry when she heard the above account that it was

1:4

with difficulty she was prevailed upon not to write to the Shelleys and upbraid them with their infamous conduct: however as this could have been productive of no good, it was better to leave them to themselves the more particularly as she had already written to decline interfering in the affair of her Child, & there was every probability of our not being troubled any more with them: besides that in pity for the unfortunate Mrs Shelley whose situation would only have been rendered worse by the exposure, silence on these matters was still more incumbent on her. I think after this account you will no longer regret [wonder] that I have a bad opinion of Shelley – his talents I acknowledge: but I cannot concur that a man can be as you say “crazy against morality,” & have honour. I have heard of honor among thieves, but here it means only interest & though it may be to Shelleys interest to cut as respectable a figure as he can with the opinions he publickly professes, it is clear to me that honor does not direct any one of his actions.

I fear my letter is written in a very incoherent style, but as I really cannot bring myself to go over this disgusting subject a second time I hope you will endeavour to comprehend it as it stands. –

(letter continues)

Shelley to Byron, September 17th 1820:
(Source: Ms. Morgan; this text from LJ V 497-8; Jones II 235-6)
[To the Right Hon. / Lord Byron / Ravenna. –]

Pisa, Sepr. 17. 1820

My dear Lord Byron

I have no conception of what Clare’s letters to you contain, & but an imperfect one of the subject of her correspondence with you at all –. One or two of her letters, but not lately, I have indeed seen; but as I thought them extremely childish & absurd & requested her not to send them, & she afterwards told me that she had written & sent others in place of them, I cannot tell if those which I saw on that occasion were sent to you or not. – I wonder however at your being provoked at what Clare writes; though that she should write what is provoking is very probable. – You are conscious of performing your duty to Allegra, & your refusal to allow her to visit Clare at this distance you conceive to be part of that duty. That Clare should have wished to see her is natural. That her dissappointment should vex her, & her vexation make her write absurdly is all in the usual order of things. But poor thing, she is very unhappy & in bad health, & she ought to be treated with as much indulgence as possible. – The weak & the foolish are in this respect like Kings: they can do no wrong.

I think I have said enough to excuse myself for declining to be the instrument of the communication of her wishes or sentiments to you; of course I should be always happy to convey your’s to her. – But at present I do not see that you need trouble yourself further, than to take care that she should receive regular intelligence of Allegra’s health &c. You can write to me, or make your secretary write to her (as you do not like writing yourself) or arrange it in any manner most convenient to you. Of course I should be happy to hear from you on any subject.

Galignani tells us that on the 17th of August you arrived in London, & immediately drove to the Queen’s house, with dispatches from Italy. – If your wrath indited the note which I received, he also will receive this answer. Do you take no part in the important nothings which the most powerful assembly in the world is now engaged in weighing with such ridiculous deliberation? At least, if Ministers fail in their object, shall you or not return as a candidate for any part of the power they will lose? Their successors I hope, & you if you will be one of them, will exert that power to other purposes than their’s. – As to me, I remain in Italy for the present. – If you really go to England, & leave Allegra in Italy, I think you had better arrange so that Clare might see Allegra in your absence if she pleases. – The objections now existing against a visit, either to or from her, would be then suspended; & such a concession would prevent all future contention on the subject. People only desire with great eagerness that which is forbidden or withheld. – Besides that you would shew yourself above taking offence at any thing she has written, which of course you are.

70: Sh. refers to the trial of Queen Caroline.
It would give me great pleasure to hear from you, & to receive news of more cantos of Don Juan, or something else. You have starved us lately. – Mrs. S[helley]. unites with me in best regards, & I remain, My dear Lord Byron

Your very sincere & c
Percy B. Shelley.

P.S. If I were to go to <the> Levant & Greece, could you be of any service to me? If so, I should be very much obliged to you.

from Byron to Hoppner, from Ravenna, October 1st 1820:
(Source: text from NLS Ms.43448; LJ V 86-8; QII 528; BLJ VII 191)
Byron has no difficulty believing Hoppner’s story.

Ravenna, 8bre. 1. 1820.

My dear Hoppner

Your letters and papers came very safely – though slowly – missing one post. – The Shiloh story is true no doubt – though Elise is but a sort of Queen’s证据 – you remember how eager she was to return to them – and then she goes away and abuses them. – Of the facts however there can be little doubt – it is just like them. – You may be sure that I keep your counsel. – – – – – – [letter continues]

February 23rd 1821: Keats dies in Rome.

Shelley to Byron, from Pisa, April 17th 1821:
(Source: this text from 1922 II 168-9, dated April 16th; Jones II 283-4)
Another missing Byron letter.

Pisa, April 16 [for 17], 1821.

My dear Lord Byron

On my return from a tour in this neighbourhood, I find your letter, 71 which has therefore remained unanswered.

I think I mentioned to you before that I never see any of Clare’s letters to you. I can easily believe, however, that they are sufficiently provoking, and that her views respecting Allegra are unreasonable. Mary, no less than myself, is perfectly convinced of your conduct towards Allegra having been most irreproachable, and we entirely agree in the necessity, under existing circumstances, of the placing her in a convent near to yourself. I think you ought to consider Clare’s opposition to this, if she makes any, as the result of a misguided maternal affection, which is to be pitied, while we condemn. 72 I have not shown her your letter. Surely it is better to avoid causes of irritation, though the only ill-effect should be to torment the person who feels it. I need not say what pleasure it would give me to hear from you on this, or any other subject. Mary unites with me also in expressions of the greatest interest for Allegra; and if circumstances should ever occur, to induce you to change your present plans respecting her, she intreats you to believe that she is most anxious to shew it.

I see by the papers that you have published a tragedy on the subject of which you spoke when I saw you at Venice. 73 I have not yet seen it, though I am most anxious to observe this new phasis of your power. The last work of yours I have seen is “Don Juan”, in the poetical parts of which you seem to have equalled the finest passages in your former poems; except the curse in “Manfred”, the stanzas in Chillon in the 3rd, and the address to Ocean, in the 4th Canto of “Childe Harold”. You have now arrived about at the age at which those eternal poets, of whom we have authentic accounts, have ever begun their supreme poems; – considering all their others, however transcendent, as the steps, scaffolding, the exercise which may sustain and conduct them to their great work. If you are inferior to these, it is not in genius, but industry and resolution. Oh, that you would subdue yourself to the great task of building up a poem containing within itself the germs of a permanent relation to the present, and to all succeeding ages! 74

Young Keats, whose “Hyperion” showed so great a promise, died lately at Rome 75 from the consequences of breaking a blood-vessel, in paroxysms of despair at the contemptuous attack on his book in the Quarterly Review. 76 Adieu. Mary unites with me in best regards.

71: The letter has not survived.
72: Sh. is being politic. He and M.S. felt deeply for Clare’s maternal instinct, and would not have approved Allegra’s being sent to the convent.
73: Sh. hears incorrectly. Marino Faliero was not published until April 21st 1821.
74: B. would answer that he has started such a work, in Don Juan.
75: Keats died on February 23rd 1821.
Yours most faithfully,
P. B. Shelley.

Byron to Shelley, from Ravenna, April 26th 1821:
(Source: Ms. not found; text from Moore’s Life II 458-9; LJ V 266-9; QII 601-2; BLJ VIII 103-4)

Prompted by Shelley, Byron re-thinks Keats again.

Ravenna, April 26. 1821.

The child continues doing well, and the accounts are regular and favourable. It is gratifying to me that you and Mrs. Shelley do not disapprove of the step which I have taken, which is merely temporary. I am very sorry to hear what you say of Keats—is it actually true? I did not think criticism had been so killing. Though I differ from you essentially in your estimate of his performances, I so much abhor all unnecessary pain, that I would rather he had been seated on the highest peak of Parnassus than have perished in such a manner. Poor fellow! though with such inordinate self-love he would probably have not been very happy. I read the review of “Endymion” in the Quarterly. It was severe,—but surely not so severe as many reviews in that and other journals upon others.

I recollect the effect on me of the Edinburgh on my first poem; it was rage, and resistance, and redress—but not despondency nor despair. I grant that those are not amiable feelings; but, in this world of bustle and broil, and especially in the career of writing, a man should calculate upon his powers of resistance before he goes into the arena.

‘Expect not life from pain nor danger free,
Nor deem the doom of man reversed for thee.’

You know my opinion of that second-hand school of poetry. You also know my high opinion of your own poetry,—because it is of no school. I read Cenci—but, besides that I think the subject essentially undramatic, I am not an admirer of our old dramatists, as models. I deny that the English have hitherto had a drama at all. Your Cenci, however, was a work of power, and poetry. As to my drama, pray revenge yourself upon it, by being as free as I have been with yours.

I have not yet got your Prometheus, which I long to see.† I have heard nothing of mine, and do not know that it is yet published. I have published a pamphlet on the Pope controversy, which you will not like. Had I known that Keats was dead—or that he was alive and so sensitive—I should have omitted some remarks upon his poetry, to which I was provoked by his attack upon Pope, and my disapprobation of his own style of writing.

You want me to undertake a great poem—I have not the inclination nor the power. As I grow older, the indifference—not to life, for we love it by instinct—but to the stimuli of life, increases. Besides, this late failure of the Italians has latterly disappointed me for many reasons,—some public, some personal. My respects to Mrs. S.

Yours ever.
B

P.S. Could not you and I contrive to meet this summer? Could not you take a run here alone?

Shelley to Byron, from Pisa, May 4th 1821:
(Source: this text from 1922 II 171-3; Jones II 289-91)

Shelley answers the previous item. He reinforces the myth about Keats having been killed by the Quarterly Review.

Pisa, May 4, 1821.

My dear Lord Byron

Your idea of our meeting this summer gives me the highest gratification; the more so, because the circumstance of Clare’s not being with us makes me hope that it is not impracticable. Will you come and spend this summer with us in our retirement under the mountains of Pisa? I live in my accustomed seclusion from society, which indeed I could not bear, even if it could bear me. You can easily imagine what pleasure a favourable reply will give both to Mary and to myself. If you come, bring whom you please, and make what arrangements are convenient to you, for we shall have “ample verge, and room enough”.†† Clare is now with some people who have been very kind to her,

76: This is the fantasy upon which Adonais is based. See also Don Juan X, stanza 60.
77: Johnson, The Vanity of Human Wishes, II.155-6.
78: B. never refers to Prometheus Unbound again.
79: Jones identifies Gray, The Bard, A Pindaric Ode, line 51.
and who have introduced her into Italian society; and with whom she will certainly remain all this summer, and perhaps, indeed, for a much longer time. She is not at Pisa.

The account of Keats is, I fear, too true. Hunt tells me that in the first paroxysms of his disappointment he burst a blood-vessel; and thus laid the foundation of a rapid consumption. There can be no doubt but that the irritability which exposed him to this catastrophe was a pledge of future sufferings, had he lived. And yet this argument does not reconcile me to the employment of contemptuous and wounding expressions against a man merely because he has written bad verses; or, as Keats did, some good verses in a bad taste. Some plants, which require delicacy in rearing, might bring forth beautiful flowers if ever they should arrive at maturity. Your instance hardly applies. You felt the strength to soar beyond the arrows; the eagle was soon lost in the light in which it was nourished, and the eyes of the aimers were blinded. As to me, I am, perhaps, morbidly indifferent to this sort of praise or blame; and this, perhaps, deprives me of an incitement to do what now I never shall do, i.e., write anything worth calling a poem. Thanks to that happy indifference, I can yet delight in the productions of those who can; nor has ill-success yet turned me into an unfeeling, and malignant critic; that second degree in the descending scale of the Academy of Disappointed Authors. As to Keats’ merits as a poet, I principally repose them upon the fragment of writings. I have not seen your pamphlet, B.’s high opinion of Pope contrasts with Sh.’s coolness towards him.  

The energy and beauty of his power, seem to disperse the narrow and wretched taste in which (most unfortunately for the real beauty which they hide) he has clothed his writings. I have not seen your pamphlet, but have sent to Paris for it, where I see it has been republished. The tragedy I have not yet seen either; my anxiety to see it is very great. We look to you for substituting something worthy of the English stage, for the miserable trash which, from Milman to Barry Cornwall, has been intruded on it since the demand for tragical representation. I did not know that Keats had attacked Pope; I had heard that Bowles had done so, and that you had most severely chastised him therefor. Pope, it seems, has been selected as the pivot of a dispute in taste, on which, until I understand it, I must profess myself neuter. I certainly do not think Pope, or any writer, a fit model for any succeeding writer; if he, or they should be determined to be so, it would all come to a question as to under which forms mediocrity should perpetually reproduce itself; for true genius vindicates to itself an exemption from all regard to whatever has gone before – and in this question I feel no interest. My “Cenci” had, I believe, a complete failure – at least the silence of the bookseller would say so. I am aware of the unfitness of the subject, now it is written, but I had a different opinion in composition. I wish I could believe that it merited – or that anything of mine merited – the friendly commendations that you give them. The “Prometheus” is also a very imperfect poem. I begin to learn, “quid valeant humeri quid ferre recusent.”

This attempt in Italy has certainly been a most unfortunate business. With no strong personal reasons to interest me, my disappointment on public grounds has been excessive. But I cling to moral and political hope, like a drowner to a plank. Our own country is, perhaps, on the brink of demanding our sympathies.

I shall regularly forward to Clare the monthly dispatches of Signor Zambelli. I think you would save her some pain by directing him to be regular, and full in his communications. I can perceive, from what you say, that Clare has written you very absurd letters. I hope that she will be cured of the exaggerated ideas from which such conduct arises in the society with which she has now [become?] conversant. Our solitary mode of life, and my abstracted manner of thinking, were very unfit for her; and have probably been the sources of all her errors. It is well, therefore, that I should intercede for their forgiveness.

I expect with great anxiety your answer, as to whether I am to have the great delight of seeing you with me this summer. In the event of a disappointment, I shall certainly try to pay you a visit; but many circumstances will conspire to make it short, and inconvenient to me.

My dear Lord Byron,

Ever yours most faithfully,
Shelley to Byron, from Pisa, July 16th 1821:
(Source: text from 1922 II 177-9; Jones II 308-10)

Shelley sends Byron a copy of *Adonais*; and again encourages him to write a great poem for the age.

Pisa, July 16, 1821.

My dear Lord Byron

I had some hopes that it was possible you would have paid me a visit in my seclusion among these chestnut forests this summer; but your silence tells me not to expect you. This disappointment almost tempts me to think of invading you for a week or so in the autumn at Ravenna, and to overcome my nervous vis inertiae. Are you sure a visit would not annoy you?

I have not been able to procure any of your late publications – neither the Tragedy, nor the Letter, nor the “Prophecy of Dante”; and my anxiety to see them is very great. If you should have any copies of them, you would do me a great favour by sending them me by the post – a favour I would not ask if I could obtain them in any other manner. I send you – as Diomed gave Glaucus his brazen arms for those of gold – some verses I wrote on the death of Keats – written, indeed, immediately after the arrival of the news. Although I feel the truth of what I have alleged about his “Hyperion,” and I doubt, if you saw that particular poem, whether you would not agree with me; yet I need not be told that I have been carried too far by the enthusiasm of the moment; by my piety, and my indignation, in panegyric. But if I have erred, I console myself by reflecting that it is in defence of the weak – not in conjunction – with the powerful. And perhaps I have erred from the narrow view of considering Keats rather as he surpassed me in particular, than as he was inferior to others: so subtle is the principle of self! I have been unwillingly, and in spite of myself, induced to notice the attack of the *Quarterly* upon me; it would have been affection to have omitted the few words in which I allude to it. I have sought not to qualify the contempt from which my silence has hitherto sprung – and at the same time to prevent any paper war, as it regards my case; which, averse as I am from all wars, is the only one which I should unconditionally avoid. I have had some correspondence with Southey on the subject, who denies that he is the author of the article upon the “Revolt of Islam”; and I learn that it lies between the Rev. Mr. Milman and Mr. Gifford. There for the present it rests. As to the Poem I send you, I fear it is worth little. Heaven knows what makes me persevere (after the severe reproof of public neglect) in writing verses; and Heaven alone, whose – will I execute so awkwardly, is responsible for my presumption.

I have this moment received, and shall have dispatched by this post the bulletin for Clare. I am delighted to see my little friend’s handwriting. I feel more and more strongly the wisdom of your firmness on this subject; and I applaud it the more because I know how weak I should have been in your case, and I see most clearly all the evils that would have sprung from weakness. Allegra’s happiness depends upon your perseverance.

I still feel impressed with the persuasion that you ought – and if there is prophecy in hope, that you will write a great and connected poem, which shall bear the same relation to this age as the “Iliad”, the “Divina Commedia”, and “Paradise Lost” did to theirs; not that you will imitate the structure, or borrow from the subjects, of any of these, or in any degree assume them as your models. You know the enthusiasm of my admiration for what you have already done; but these are “disjecti membra poetae” to what you may do, and will never, like that, place your memory on a level with those great poets. Such is an ambition (excuse the baseness of the word) alone worthy of you. You say that you feel indifferent to the stimuli of life. But this is a good rather than an evil augury. Long after the man is dead, the immortal spirit may survive, and speak like one belonging to a higher world. But I shall talk bombast, when I mean only to tell a plain truth in plain words.

Mary desires her kindest remembrances, and I am, my dear Lord Byron,

Yours faithfully and affectionately,

Percy B. Shelley.

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88: Marino Faliero, *Letter to John Murray*, and *The Prophecy of Dante*. The first and third were published in one volume on April 21st 1821. The second was published on March 21st 1821.

89: See *Iliad* VI, 231.

90: *Adonais*.

91: See Jones II 205n.

92: See Judges 19:29, in which the Levite sends one piece of the body of his violated concubine to each of the twelve tribes of Israel, urging them to vengeance.
from Byron to John Murray, from Ravenna, July 30th 1821:
(Source: text from NLS Ms.434891; LJ V 329-31; QII 660-1; BLJ VIII 161-3)
Byron jokes about the idea of the Quarterly having killed Keats.

… Are you aware that Shelley has written an elegy on Keats – and accuses the Quarterly of killing him?

Who killed John Keats?
I, says the Quarterly
So savage & <Martyrly> {Tartarly}
'Twas one of my feats –
Who <drew the> <pen> {shot the arrow?}
The poet=priest Milman
(So ready to kill man –)
Or Southey or Barrow. –

You know very well that I did not approve of Keats’s poetry – or principles of poetry – & abuse of Pope> – or {of} his abuse of Pope – but as he is dead – omit all that is said about him in any M.S.S. of mine – or publication. – His Hyperion is a fine monument & will keep his name. – I do not envy the man – who wrote the article – your review people have no more right to kill than any other footpads. – However – he who would die of an article in a review – would probably have died of something else equally trivial – he same thing nearly happened to Kirke White – who afterwards died of [text curls up right-hand side:]

Byron to Shelley, from Ravenna, July 30th-31st 1821:
(Source: Ms. Texas Christian University Library; this text from BLJ VIII 163)
Byron has read Keats’ Hyperion.

[First page missing] … omitted. The impression of Hyperion upon my mind was – that it was the best of his works. – Who is to be his editor? It is strange that Southey who attacks the reviewers so sharply in his Kirk White – calling theirs “the ungentle craft” – should be perhaps the killer of Keats. – Kirke White was nearly extinguished in the same way – by a paragraph or two in “the Monthly” – Such inordinate sense of censure is surely incompatible with great exertion – have not all known writers been the subject thereof?

yrs. ever & truly B

P.S. – If moving at present should be inconvenient to you – let me settle that – draw upon me for what you think necessary – I should do so myself on you without ceremony – if I found it expedient – Write directly.

Byron to Shelley, from Ravenna, early August 1821:
(Source: this text from BLJ VIII 171)
Refers to the previous item. This is Byron’s shortest letter.

Dr S. – I wrote to you last week.

yrs ever

B

August 6th 1821: Shelley arrives in Ravenna.

Shelley to Mary Shelley, from Ravenna, August 8th 1821:
(Source: text from Bodleian MS. Shelley c.1. ff.440-2; Jones II 316-20)
Shelley tells Mary about the Hoppner rumour.

My dearest Mary

I arrived at 10 oClock [last night] & sate up last night talking with Lord Byron until 5. <in> this morning. – I then went to sleep, & now awake at eleven, and having dispatched my breakfast as quick as possible, mean to devote the interval until 12 when the post departs to you. –

93: See TVOJ 98, 3.
Lord Byron is very well, & was delighted to see me. He has in fact completely recovered his health, & lives a life totally the reverse of that which he led at Venice. He has a permanent sort of liaison with Contessa Guiccioli, who is now at Florence, & seems from her letters to be a very amiable woman. – She is waiting there until something shall be decided as to their emigration to Switzerland or stay in Italy: which is yet undetermined on either side. – She was compelled to escape from the Papal territory in great haste, as measures had already been taken to place her in a Convent where she would have been unrelentingly confined for life. The oppression of the marriage compact, as existing in the laws & opinions of Italy, though less frequently exercised is far severer than that of England. – I tremble to think of what poor Emilia is destined to. – Lord Byron had almost destroyed himself at Venice: his state of debility was such that he was unable to digest any food – he was consumed by hectic fever, and would speedily have perished but for this attachment which reclaimed him from the excesses into which he threw himself from carelessness & pride rather than taste. – Poor fellow – he is now quite well and immersed in politics & literature. He has given me a number of the most interesting details on the former subject – but we will not speak of them in a letter. – Fletcher is here, & as if like a shadow he waxed & waned with the substance of his master, Fletcher also has recovered his good lookes & from amidst the unseasonable grey hairs fresh harvest of flaxen locks put forth. – We talked a great deal of poetry & such matters last night: & as usual differed & I think more than ever. – He affects to patronize a system of criticism fit only for the production of mediocrity, & although all his fine poems & passages have been produced in defiance of this system: yet I recognize the pernicious effects of it in the “Doge of Venice”, & it will cramp & limit his future efforts however great they may be unless he gets rid of it. I have read only parts of it, or rather he himself read them to me & gave me the plan of the whole – Allegra he says, is grown very beautiful: but he complains that her temper is violent and imperious. – He has no intention of leaving her in Italy –, indeed the thing is too improper in itself not to carry condemnation along with it. Contessa Guiccioli he says is very fond of her: indeed I cannot see why she should not take care of it, if she is to live as his ostensible mistress. – all this I shall know more of soon. 

Lord Byron has also told me a circumstance that shocks me exceedingly, because it exhibits a degree of desperate & wicked malice for which I am at a loss to account. When I hear such things my patience & my philosophy are put to a severe proof, whilst I refrain from seeking out some obscure hiding place where the countenance of man may never meet me more. It seems that Elise, actuated either by some inconceivable malice for our dismissing her – or bribed by my enemies – or making common cause with her infamous husband has persuaded the Hoppners of a story so monstrous & incredible that they must have been prone to believe any evil to have believed such assertions upon such evidence. Mr. Hoppner wrote to Lord B. to state this story as the reason why he declined any further communication with me, & why he advised him to do the same. Elise says that Clare was my mistress – that is all very well & so far there is nothing new: all the world has heard so much & people may believe or not believe as they think good. – She then proceeds to say that Clare was with child by me – that I gave her the most violent medicines to procure abortion – that this not succeeding she was brought to bed & that I immediately tore the child from her & sent it to the foundling hospital – I quote Mr. Hoppners words – and this is stated to have happened in the winter after we left Este. In addition she says

94: Teresa left Ravenna on July 25th 1821.
95: Emilia Viviani, subject of Epipsychidion.
96: “Poor fellow” is one of H.’s favourite epithets for B.
97: Sh. refers to B.’s classical standards, which dictate that Faliero should observe the unities.
that both I & Clare treated you in the most shameful manner – that I neglected & beat you, & that Clare never let a day pass without offering you insults of the most violent kind in which she was abetted by me. – As to what Reviews & the world says I do not care a jot; but when persons who have known me are capable of conceiving of me – not that I have <xxxxx/>fallen into a great error & imprudence as would have been the living with Clare as my mistress – but that I have committed such unutterable crimes as destroying or abandoning a child – & that my own – imagine my despair of good –imagine how it is possible that one of so weak & sensitive a nature as mine can run further the gauntlet through this hellish society of men. – <Three lines heavily deleted.> You should write to the Hoppners a letter refuting the charge in case you believe & know & can prove that it is false: stating the grounds & the <proof> proofs of your belief.98 – I need not dictate what you should say, nor I hope inspire you with warmth to rebut a charge which you only can effectually rebut. – If you will send the letter to me here, I will forward it to the Hoppners. – Lord Byron is not up, I do not know the Hoppners address – & I am anxious not to lose the post. – <line deleted>

[Ms. ends; sheet 2 has been torn in half and side 3 and 4 are lost.]

August 8th 1821: Don Juan III, IV and V published.

Shelley to Teresa Guiccioli, from Ravenna, August 9th 1821:
(Source: English translation of Teresa Guiccioli’s translation of the Italian original, from Guiccioli’s Lord Byron jugé par les Témoins de sa Vie, Paris 1868; Jones II 323-9; LBLI 613-15)
Shelley dissuades Teresa from thinking of a move to Switzerland.

Ravenna, 10 August 1821

Madam,

At the request of my friend Lord Byron, I feel it a duty to present to you some thoughts relative to the proposed journey to Geneva, in order to give you an idea of the inconveniences which might result from it. I am sure that you will acknowledge this request, as also the motives which impel me to fulfill it, as an excuse for the liberty taken by a person who is a complete stranger to you. In doing this, my sole aim is the tranquillity of my friend and of those in whom he is so profoundly interested. I cannot have any other motive, and let it be a gauge of my perfect sincerity that I also have been the victim of the intolerance of the clergy and of tyranny, and like you and your family I have, for my love of my country, been rewarded with persecution and calumny.

Allow me, Madam, to lay before you the reasons for which I feel that Geneva would be an undesirable retreat for you. Your circumstances present some analogy with those in which my family and Lord Byron found themselves, in the summer of 1816. Our houses were close together and, not seeking any other society, our mode of life was retired and tranquil; one could not imagine a simpler life than ours, or one less calculated to attract the calumnies that were aimed at us.

These calumnies were monstrous, and really too infamous to leave us, their victims, even the refuge of contempt. The natives of Geneva and the English people who were living there did not hesitate to affirm that we were leading a life of the most unbridled libertinism. They said that we had formed a pact to outrage all that is regarded as most sacred in human society. Forgive me if I omit the details of this—atheism, incest, and many other things—sometimes ridiculous and sometimes terrible—were imputed to us. The English papers did not delay to spread the scandal, and, in that nation, to give entire belief to it.

Hardly any affliction was spared us. The inhabitants on the banks of the lake opposite Lord Byron’s house used telescopes to spy upon his every movement. One English lady fainted from horror (or pretended to!) simply upon seeing him. The most outrageous caricatures of him and his friends were spread about; and all this took place in the short space of three months.

The effect on Lord Byron’s spirits was very unfortunate. His natural gaiety had almost entirely left him. A man must be perhaps more or less a Stoic, rather than a man, to bear with such insults patiently.

Do not delude yourself, Madam, with the idea that the English people—accepting Lord Byron as the greatest poet of our time—would on that account abstain from troubling him and from persecuting him so far as they were able. Their admiration for his works is involuntary and they slander him in

98: M.S. wrote this letter (see below) but B. seems not to have forwarded it to the Hoppners.
consequence of their immoderate prejudices as much as they read him, for their pleasure.

As for the Genevese, they would not be hostile were there not at Geneva a colony of English who retain their narrow prejudices; it is their restless hatred for all those who surpass or shun them; and these causes being unremovable by actual circumstances, the usual effects would follow.

The English are as almost as numerous as the natives at Geneva; their wealth makes them sought after, the Genevese being, in comparison with their guests, as valets, or rather as inn-keepers of their city, entirely hired out to foreigners.

One circumstance known to me personally will furnish proof of the reception one can expect in Geneva. The one Genevese from whom Lord Byron had every reason to expect fidelity and loyalty was precisely one of those who spread the most infamous calumnies. This man involuntarily revealed all his malignity to a friend of mine; this led me to warn that friend of the hypocrisy and the perversity of the person concerned.

You cannot, Madam, conceive the excessive violence with which a certain class of the English detest those whose conduct and opinions are not precisely modelled on their own. The systems of those ideas form a superstition, which constantly demands and constantly finds fresh victims. Strong as theological hatred may be, it is always yields to social hatred. This state of mind is, in Geneva, the order of the day and, once awakened in order to torment Lord Byron and his friends, I very much fear that similar causes would not fail to produce the same consequences, if the journey you are planning should take place. Accustomed as you are, Madam, to the gentler manners of Italy, you can hardly conceive what an intensity this social hatred has reached in less happy climes. I have had to experience this, I have seen all who were dearest to me inextricably tangled in these calumnies. My position had some analogy with that of your brother, and this is why I am eager to write you all this, to spare you and him all the evils which I have so fatally experienced.

I abstain from citing other reasons, and I beg you to excuse the freedom with which I have written, because it is dictated by the most sincere motives, and justified by the request of my friend, to whom I leave the duty of assuring you of my devotion to his interests as well as to those of all who are dear to him.

Accept, Madam, the expression of my highest esteem.

Your sincere and humble servant,
Percy B. Shelley.

P.S. You must pardon, Madam, in a foreigner the bad Italian which clothes the honest sentiments of my letter.

from Shelley to Mary Shelley, from Ravenna, August 10th 1821:
(Source: text from Ms. Bodleian Shelley c.1.ff.445-8; Jones II, 323-5)

[2:1 continues:]
Friday.

We ride out in the evening through the pine forests which divide the city from the sea – Our way of life is this – and I have accommodated myself to it without much difficulty. L.B. gets up at two – breakasts – we talk read &c. until <by> six then we ride, & dine at eight, & after dinner sit talking until four or five in the morning. I get up at 12 and am now devoting the interval between my rising & his, to you. –

2:2

L.B. is greatly improved in every respect – in genius in temper in moral views, in health in happiness. The connexion with la Guiccioli has been an inestimable benefit to him. – He lives in considerable splendour, but within his income which is now about 4000 a year: – 1000. of which he devotes to purposes of charity. He has had mischievous passions, but these he seems to have subdued; and he is becoming what he should be, a virtuous man. – The interest which he took in the politics of Italy, & the actions he performed in consequence of it, are subjects not fit to be written, but are such as <would> will delight & surprise you. – He is not yet decided to go to Switzerland: a place indeed little fitted for him: the gossip & the cabals of those anglicised coteries would torment him as they did before & might exasperate him into a relapse of libertinism – which he says he plunged into not from taste but from despair. – La Guiccioli & her brother (who is Lord B’s friend & confidant and acquiesces perfectly in her connexion with him) wish to go to Switzerland, as L.B. says

2:3

merely from the novelty & pleasure of travelling. L.B. prefers Tuscany or Lucca, & is trying to
persuade them to adopt his views. He has made me write a long letter to her\(^99\) to engage her to remain. – An odd thing enough for an utter stranger to write on subjects of the utmost delicacy to his friend’s mistress. – But it seems destined that I am always to have some active part in every body’s affairs whom I approach. – I have set down in lame Italian\(^{100}\) the strongest reasons I can think of against the Swiss emigration – to tell you truth I should be very glad to accept as my fee his establishment in Tuscany. Ravenna is a miserable place: the people are barbarous & wild, & their language the most infernal patois that you can imagine. He would be in every respect better among the Tuscanns. I am afraid he would not like Florence on account of the English. – What think you of Lucca for him – he would like Pisa better, if it were not for Clare, but I really can hardly recommend him either for his own sake or for hers to come into such close contact with her. – Gunpowder & fire ought to be kept at a respectable distance from each other – .. There is Lucca, Florence, Pisa, Sienna – and I think nothing more. – What think you of Prato or Pistoia for him – no Englishman approaches those towns – but I fear that no house could be found good enough for him in that region.– –. I have not yet seen Allegra, but shall tomorrow or next day, as I shall ride over to Bagnacavallo for that purpose. – He has read me one of the unpublished cantos of Don Juan,\(^{101}\) which is astonishingly fine. – It sets him not above but far above all poets of the day: every word has the stamp of immortality. – I despair of rivalling Lord Byron, as well I may: and there is no other with whom it is worth contending. This canto is in style, but totally, & sustained with incredible ease & power, like the end of the second canto: there is not a word which the most rigid assertor of the dignity of human nature could desire to be cancelled: it fulfills in a certain degree what I have long preached of producing something wholly new & relative<ly> to the age – and yet surpassingly beautiful. It may be vanity, but I think I see the trace of

\(^{3:1}\) my earnest exhortations to him to create something wholly new. – – He has finished his life up to the present time & given it to Moore with liberty for Moore to sell it for the best price he can get & publish it\(^{102}\) with condition that the bookseller should publish it after his death. – Moore has sold it to Murray for two thousand pounds. – I wish I had been in time to have interceded for a part of it for poor Hunt. – I have spoken to him of Hunt, but not with a direct view of demanding a contribution; & though I am sure that if asked it would not be refused – yet there is something in me, that makes it impossible. – Lord Byron & I are excellent friends, & were I reduced to poverty, or were I a writer who had no claims to a higher station than I possess – or did I possess a higher than I deserve, we should appear in all things as such, & I would freely ask him any favour. Such is not {now} the case – The demon of mistrust & pride lurks between two persons in our situation poisoning the freedom of their intercourse. – This is a tax and a heavy one which we must pay for

\(^{3:2}\) being human – I think the fault is not on my side; nor is it likely, I being the weaker. I hope that in the next world these things will be better managed. – What is passing in the heart of another rarely escapes the observation of one who is a strict anatomist of his own. ==== 

\(<D>\) Write to me at Florence, where I shall remain a day at least & send me letters or news of letters. – How is my little darling? And how are you, and how do you get on with your book.\(^{102}\) Be severe in your corrections & expect severity from me, your sincere admirer. – I flatter myself you have composed something unequalled in its kind, & that not content with the honours of your birth & your hereditary aristocracy, you will add still higher renown to your name – Expect me, at the end of my appointed time – I do not think I shall be detained. – Is Clare with you? or is she coming? Have you heard any thing of my poor Emilia, from whom I got a letter the day of my departure, saying that her marriage was deferred for a very short time on account of the illness of her sposo? – How are the

\(^{99}\): See previous item.  
\(^{100}\): Sh.’s Italian original has never been published.  
\(^{101}\): B. read Sh. Don Juan’s fifth canto – the only record of his reading a poem of his own aloud.  
\(^{102}\): Valperga.
Williams’s and Williams especially. – Give my very kindest love to them, & pray take care that they do not want money. –

Lord B. has splendid apartments in the palace of his mistress’s husband, who is one of the richest men in Italy. She is divorced,\textsuperscript{103} with an allowance of 1200 crowns a year – a miserable pittance from a man who has 120,000 a year. – Here are two monkies, five cats, eight dogs & ten horses – all of whom (except the horses) walk about [Ms. tear: “the”] house like the masters of it. Tita [Ms. tear: “the”] Venetian is here, & operates as my valet: a fine fellow with a prodigious black beard, who has stabbed two or three people, & is the most goodnatured looking fellow I ever saw.

We have good rumours of the Greeks here & a Russian war. I hardly wish the Russians to take any part in it – my maxim is with \textit{Æschylus} τὸ δυσσεβὲς μετὰ μὲν <μη> πλειονὰ τικεῖ, σφετρὰ δ’ ἐκοτα γεννα,\textsuperscript{104} – There is a Greek exercise for you. – How should slaves produce any thing but tyranny – even as the seed produces the plant. –

3:4

Adieu dear Mary.

Your’s affectionately,

S.

[vertically:] This is sent by express to Florence.

\textbf{Mary Shelley to Shelley, August 10th 1821:}

(Source: text from Ms. Bodleian Shelley c.1.f.471; Bennett I 204)

This very clear, large-handwriting document has the air of a copy.

My dear Shelley

Shocked beyond all measure as I was I instantly wrote the enclosed – if the task be not too dreadful pray copy it for me I cannot –

send that part of you letter – which contains the accusation – I tried but I could not write it – I think I could as soon have died – I send also Elise’s last letter – enclose it or not as you think best.

I wrote to you with far different felings last night – beloved friend – our bark is indeed tempest tost\textsuperscript{105} but love me as you have ever done & God preserve my child to me and our enemies shall not be too much for us.

Consider well if Florence be a fit residence for us – I love I own to face danger – but I would not be imprudent –

Pray get my letter to M’s H copied

2:1

for a thousand reasons

Adieu dearest take care of yourself

All yet is well – the shock for me is over

and I now despise the slander – but it must not pass uncontradicted\textsuperscript{106} – I sincerely thank Lord Byron for his kind unbelief affectionately yours

MaryWS.

Friday ——

do not think me imprudent in mentioning Clares illness at Naples – It is well to meet facts – they are as cunning as wicked – I have read over my letter it is written in haste – but it were as well that the first burst of feeling shå be expressed – No letters –

\textbf{Mary Shelley to Isabelle Hoppner, from Pisa, August 10th 1821:}

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43448; 1922 II 185-8; Jones II 336-8; Bennett I 205-8)

Shelley gave this letter to Byron to forward to the Hoppners; but it was found among his papers after his death.

[A Madame / Mad\textsuperscript{\textregistered} Hoppner]

\textsuperscript{103}: Teresa was separated, not divorced.

\textsuperscript{104}: \textit{Æschylus}, \textit{Agamemnon}, 759-60: “The unrighteous action breeds many others for the future like to its own race” (Jones).

\textsuperscript{105}: \textit{Shakespeare}, \textit{Macbeth}, I iii 25.

\textsuperscript{106}: M.S. leaves a syllable out of “uncontradicted”.
My dear Mrs. Hoppner –

After a silence of nearly two years I address you again, and most bitterly do I regret the occasion on which I now write. Pardon me that I do not write in French; you understand English well, and I am too much impressed to shackle myself in a foreign language; even in my own, my thoughts far outrun my pen, so that I can hardly form the letters. I write to defend him to whom I have the happiness to be united, whom I love and esteem beyond all creatures, from the foulest calumnies; and to you I write this, who were so kind, to M Hoppner; to both of whom I indulged the pleasing hope that I have every reason to feel gratitude. This is indeed a painful task.

Shelley is at present on a visit to Lord Byron at Ravenna and I received a letter from him today containing accounts that make my hand tremble so much that I can hardly hold the pen. It tells me that Elise wrote to you relating the most hideous stories against him, and that you have believed them. Before I speak of these falsehoods permit me to say a few words concerning this miserable girl. You well know that she formed an attachment with Paolo when we proceeded to Rome, & at Naples their marriage was talked of – We all tried to dissuade her; we knew Paolo to be a rascal, and we thought so well of her that we believed him to be unworthy of her. An accident led me to the knowledge that

1:2

without marrying they had formed a connexion; she was ill we sent for a doctor who said there was danger of a miscarriage – I w’d not turn the girl on the world without in some degree binding her to this man – We had them married at Sir W. A’Courts – she left us; turned Catholic at Rome, married him & then went to Florence. After the disastrous death of my child we came to Tuscany – we have seen little of them; but we have had knowledge that Paolo has formed a scheme of extorting money from Shelley by false accusations – he has written him threatening letters, saying that he w’be the ruin of him &c – we placed these in the hands of a celebrated lawyer here who has done what he can to silence him. Elise has never interfered in this and indeed the other day I received a letter from her, entreating with great professions of love that I w’d send her money – I took no notice of this; but although I knew her to be in Evil hands I w’d not believe that she was wicked enough to join in his plans without proof. And now I come to her accusations – and I must indeed summon all my courage while I transcribe them; for tears will force their way, and how can it be otherwise? You knew Shelley, you saw his face, & could you believe them? Believe them only on the testimony of a girl whom you despised? I had hopes that such a thing was impossible, and that although

1:3

strangers might believe the calumnies that this man propagated, none who had ever seen my husband could for a moment credit them.

She says Claire was Shelley’s mistress, that – Upon my word I solemnly assure you that I cannot write the words, I send you a part of Shelley’s letter that you may see what I am now about to refute – but I had rather die that copy anything so vilely, so wickedly false, so beyond all imagination fiendish.

I am perfectly convinced in my own mind that Shelley never had an improper connexion with Claire – At the time specified in Claire’s letter, the winter after we quitted Nap Est, I suppose while she was with us, and that was at Naples, we lived in lodgings where I had momentary entrance into every room, and such a thing could not have passed unknown to me. The malice of the girl is beyond all thought – I now do remember that Claire did keep her bed there for two days – but I attended on her – I saw the physician – her illness was one that she had been accustomed to for years – and the same remedies were employed as I had before ministered to her in England. Claire had no child – the rest must be false – but

1:4

that you should believe it – I th that my beloved Shelley should stand thus slandered in your minds – He, the gentlest & most humane of creatures, is more painful to me, oh far more painful than any words can express.

It is all a lie – Claire cuffed anything is timid; she always shewed respect even for me – poor dear girl! she has faults – you know them as well as I – but her heart is good – and if ever
we quarrelled, which was seldom, it was I, and not she, that was harsh, and our instantaneous reconciliations were sincere & affectionate.

Need I say that the union between my husband and myself has ever been undisturbed – Love caused our first imprudence, love which improved by esteem, a perfect trust one in the other, a confidence and affection, which visited as we have been by severe calamities (have we not lost two children?) has increased daily, and knows no bounds.

I will add that Claire has been separated from us for about a year – She lives with a respectable German family at Florence – The reasons of this were obvious – her connexion with us made her manifest as the Miss Clairmont, the Mother of Allegra – besides we live much alone – she enters much into society there – and solely occupied with the idea of the welfare of her child, she wished to appear such that she may not be thought in aftertimes to be unworthy of fulfilling the maternal duties. – you ought to have paused before you tried to convince the father of her child of such unheard-of atrocities on her part – If his generosity and knowledge of the world had not made him reject the slander with the ridicule it deserved what irretrievable mischief you would have occasioned her.

Those who know will believe my simple word – it is not long ago that my father said in a letter to me, that he had never known me to utter a falsehood – but you, easy as you have been to credit evil, who may be more deaf to truth – to you I swear – by all that I hold sacred upon heaven & earth by a vow which I should die to write if I affirmed a falsehood – I swear by the life of my child, by my blessed & beloved child, that I know these accusations to be false – Shelley is as incapable of cruelty as the softest woman – To those who know him his humanity is almost as a proverb. – He has been unfortunate as a father, the laws of his country & death has cut him off from his dearest hopes. – His enemies have done him incredible mischief – but that you should believe such a tale coming from such a hand, is beyond all belief, a blow quite unexpected, and the very idea of it beyond words shockings –

But I have said enough to convince you. And are you not convinced? Are not my words the words of truth? Repair – I conjure you the evil you have done by retracting your confidence in one so vile as Elise, and by writing to me that you now reject as false every circumstance of her infamous tale.

You were kind to us, and I shall never forget it; now I require justice; you must believe me, I solemnly entreat you, the justice to confess that you do so.

Mary W. Shelley.

Pisa, August 10th 1821

I send this letter to Shelley at Ravenna, that he may see it. For although I ought, the subject is too odious to me to copy it. I wish also that Lord Byron should see it – He gave no credit to the tale, but it is as well that he should see how entirely fabulous it is, and I:

Shelley to Thomas Love Peacock, August 10th 1821:
(Source: text from Fraser's Magazine lxI, March 1860: Jones II 330-1)

Shelley gives us the best description of Byron's Italian household.

My dear Peacock

I received your last letter just as I was setting off from the Bagni on a visit to Lord Byron at this place. Many thanks for all your kind attention to my accursed affairs. I am happy to tell you that my income is satisfactorily arranged, although Horace Smith having received it, and being still on his slow journey through France, I cannot send you, as I wished to have done, the amount of my debt immediately, but must defer it till I see him or till my September quarter, which is now very near. – I am very much obliged to you for your way of talking about it – but of course, if I cannot do you any good, I will not permit you to be a sufferer by me. –

I have sent you by the Gisbornes a copy of the Elegy on Keats. The subject, I know, will not please you; but the composition of the poetry, and the taste in which it is written, I do not think bad.

107: Adonais.
You and the enlightened public will judge. Lord Byron is in excellent cue both of health and spirits. He has got rid of all those melancholy and degraded habits which he indulged at Venice. He lives with one woman, a lady of rank here, to whom he is attached, and who is attached to him, and is in every respect an altered man. He has written three more Cantos of “Don Juan”. I have yet only heard the fifth, and I think that every word of it is pregnant with immortality. I have not seen his late plays, except “Marino Faliero”, which is very well, but not so transcendently fine as the “Don Juan”. Lord Byron gets up at two. I get up, quite contrary to my usual custom, but one must sleep or die, like Southey’s sea-snake in “Kehama”.108 at 12. After breakfast we sit talking till six. From six till eight we gallop through the pine forests which divide Ravenna from the sea; we then come home and dine, and sit up gossiping till six in the morning. I don’t suppose this will kill me in a week or fortnight, but I shall try it no longer. Lord B.’s establishment consists, beside servants, of ten horses, eight enormous dogs, three monkeys, five cats, an eagle, a crow, and a falcon; and all these, except the horses, walk about the house, which every now and then resounds with their unarbitrated quarrels, as if they were the masters of it. Lord B. thinks you wrote a pamphlet signed “John Bull”;109 he said he knew it by the style resembling “Melincourt”, of which he is a great admirer. I read it, and assured him that it could not possibly be yours. I write nothing, and probably shall write no more. It offends me to see my name classed among those who have no name. If I cannot be something better, I had rather be nothing, and the accursed cause to the downfall of which I dedicated what powers I may have had flourishes like a cedar and covers England with its boughs. My motive was never the infirm desire of fame; and if I should continue an author, I feel that I should desire it. This cup is justly given to one only of an age; indeed, participation would make it worthless: and unfortunate they who seek it and find it not.

I congratulate you – I hope I ought to do so – on your expected stranger. He is introduced into a rough world. My regards to Hogg, and to Co[ul]son if you see him.

Ever most faithfully yours

P.B.S.

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

Shelley to Mary Shelley, from Ravenna, August 13th 1821:
(Source: text from Ms. Bodleian Shelley c.1. ff.453-8; Jones II 333-9)

**Shelley’s letter gives us our most detailed picture of Allegra.**

**Wednesday, Ravenna**

My dearest love

I write, although I doubt whether I shall not arrive before this letter: as the post only leaves Ravenna once a week, on Saturdays, & as I hope to set out tomorrow evening by the Courier. But as I must necessarily stay a day at Florence, & as the natural incidents of travelling may prevent me from taking my intended advantage of the couriers, <there> it is probable that this letter will arrive first. – Besides as <usual> I will explain, I am not yet quite my own master. — — . But that by & bye. – I do not think it necessary to tell you of my impatience to return to you & my little darling or the disappointment with which I have prolonged my absence from you. – I am happy to think that you are not quite alone however, <ct> <try &) Lord Byron is still decided upon Tuscany and such is his impatience that he has desired me – (as if I should not arrive in time) – to write to you to inquire for the best unfurnished palace in Pisa, & to enter into treaty for it – It better not be on the Lung’arno: – but in fact there is no such hurry & as I shall see you so soon it is not worth while to trouble yourself about it. – One thing of great consequence however; & which cannot be thought of too soon is Allegra – & what is to be done with her. On my arr[ibl]t: “val”, before the Swiss scheme had been abandoned, I had succeeded in persuading L. B. to take her with him, & had given him such information as to the interior construction of convents as to shake his faith in the purity of those receptacles. This was all settled, & now, on the change of his plans to Tuscany, I wish to hold him to the same determination of taking her with him. – But how can I do this if I have nothing in Tuscany to

109: John Bull’s Letter to Lord Byron is by John Gibson Lockhart.
110: Sh. compares B. with Circe in Book X of the Odyssey or Armida in Gerusalemme Liberata (see Book IV Stanza 86) both of whom transform heroes into beasts.
propose better than Bagnacavallo? His own house is manifestly unfit, & although no longer a theatre of
Venetian excesses is composed entirely of dissolute men servants who **xxxxxx** will do her nothing but
mischief. Is there any family, any English or Swiss establishment, any refuge in short except the
Convent of S'. Anna where Allegra might be placed? Do you think M**\[**

1:3

Mason could be prevailed on, to propose to take charge of her? I fear not. – Think of this against I
come. If you can now see or write to Emilia ask her if she knows any one who would be fit for this
purpose – <I a> <And> But the circumstance that most presses is to find a maid to attend her from
Ravenna to Pisa, & to take charge of her until some better place than his own house shall be found for
her. Some person if possible <like> <little> <but> less odious & unfit than the Italian women – <to
which> whom he seems to have fallen upon. –
– . I went the other day to see Allegra at her convent, & stayed with her about three hours. – She is
grown tall & slight for her age, and her face is somewhat altered – the traits have become more
delicate, & she is much paler: probably from the effect of improper food. – She yet retains the beauty
of her deep blue eyes & of her mouth, but she has a contemplative seriousness which mixed with her
excessive vivacity which has not yet deserted her has a very peculiar effect in a child. She is under very
strict discipline as may be observed from the immediate obedience she accords to the will of her
attendants

1:4

<but I> <and> this seems contrary to her nature; but I do not think it has been obtained at the expense
of much severity. Her hair, scarcely darker than it was, is beautifully profuse & hangs in large curls on
her neck. She was prettily dressed in white muslin and an apron of black silk with trowsers. – Her light
& airy figure & her graceful motions were a striking contrast to the other children there – she seemed a
thing of a finer race & a higher order – – – At first she was very shy, but after a little caressing and
especially after I had given her a gold chain which I had bought at Ravenna for her she grew more
familiar, & led me all over the garden & all over the convent running & skipping so fast that I could
hardly keep up with her. She shewed me her little bed, & the chair where she sate at dinner & the
carozzina in which she & her favourite companion drew each other along a covered walk in the garden.
– I had brought her a Basket of sweetmeats, & before eating any of them she gave her companion & all
the nuns a portion – this is not much like the old Allegra. I asked her what I should say from her to her
mamma & she said – Che mi manda un bacio e un bel

vestitino” – “E come vuoi il vestitino sia fatto “Tutto di seta e d’oro” was her reply. – Her predominant
<xxxxx> {foible} seems the love of distinction & vanity – and this is a plant which produces good or
evil according to the gardeners skill. – I then asked – what shall I say to papa – “che venga farmi un
visitino, e che porta seco la mammina” – a message which you may conjecture that I was too discreet
to deliver. Before I went away she made me run all over the convent like a mad thing – the nuns who
were half in bed were ordered to hide themselves, & on returning Allegra began ringing the bell which
calls the nuns to assemble, the tocsin of the convent sounded, & it required all the efforts of the prioress
to prevent the spouses of God to render themselves dressed or undressed to the accustomed signal. –
Nobody scolded her for these scappature: so I suppose that she is well treated as far as temper is
concerned. – Her intellect is not much cultivated here – she knows certain orazioni by heart & talks &
dreams of Paradise & angels & all sorts of things. – and has a prodigious list of saints – and is always
talking of the Bambino. This _fuora_ will do her no harm – but the idea of bringing up so sweet a creature
in the midst of such trash till sixteen! ——
I told you I had written by Albe’s desire to

2:1

la Guiccioli to dissuade her & her family from Switzerland. Her answer is this moment arrived and my
representation seems to have reconciled them to the unfitness of that step – <But> At the conclusion of
a letter full of all the fine things she says she has heard of me is this request – which I transcribe.

‘Signore. – la vostra bontà mi fa ardita di chiedervi un favore – me lo accorderete voi? Non partite da
**Ravenna senza Milord**’ Of course being now, by all the laws of knighthood, captive to a ladys request,
I shall only be at liberty on my parole until Lord Byron is settled at Pisa. I shall reply of course that the boon is granted, but that if her lover is reluctant to quit Ravenna after I have made arrangements for receiving him at Pisa; I am bound to place myself in the same situation as now, to assail him with importunities to rejoin her. – Of this there is fortunately no need: and I need not tell you that there is no fear that this chivalric submission of mine to the great general laws of antique courtesy, against which I never rebel, and which is my religion, should interfere with my quick soon returning & long remaining with you, dear girl. –

3:1

I have seen Dantes tomb & worshipped the sacred spot. The tomb building & its accessories are comparatively modern, but the tomb itself & the tablet of marble with his portrait in relief are evidently of equal antiquity with his death. – The countenance has all the marks of having been taken from his own: the eyes lines are strongly marked; far more than the portraits which however it resembles; except indeed the eye, which is half closed & reminded me of Pacchiani. – It was probably taken after death. – I saw the library & some specimen of the earliest illuminated printing, from the press of Faust. They are on vellum & of an execution little inferior to that of the present day: –

We ride out every evening as usual & practise pistol shooting at a pumpkin, & I am not sorry to observe that I approach towards my noble friend's exactness of aim. – The water here is villainous & I have suffered tortures – but I now drink nothing but alcalescent water & am much relieved. I have the greatest trouble to get away & L. B. as a reason for my stay has urged that without either me or the Guiccioli he will certainly fall into his old habits. – I then talk, & he listens to reason and I earnestly hope that he is too well aware of the terrible & degrading consequences of his former mode of life, to be in danger from the short interval of temptation that will be left him. – L. B. seems speaks with great kindness & interest of you – & seems to wish to see you.

3:2

Thursday – Ravenna.

I have received your letters, with that to M's Hoppner. I do not wonder my dearest friend that you should have been moved with the infernal accusations of Elise – I was at first but I speedily regained the indifference which the opinion of any thing or any body except our own consciousness amply merits & day by day shall more receive from me. – I have not recopied your letter: such a measure would necessarily destroy its authenticity; but have given it to Lord Byron, who has engaged to send it with his own comments to the Hoppners. –

People do not hesitate it seems to make themselves pandars & accomplices to slander, for the Hoppners had exacted from Lord Byron that these accusations should be concealed from me. – Lord Byron is not a man to keep a secret good or bad – but in openly confessing that he has not done so he must observe a certain delicacy – & therefore he wishes to send the letter himself – & indeed this adds weight to your representations. – Have you seen the attack of the Literary Gazette on me? They evidently allude to some story of this kind – however cautious the Hoppners have been in preventing the calumniated person from asserting his justification – You know too much of the world not to be certain that this was the utmost limit of their caution. – So much for nothing. –

Lord Byron is immediately coming to Pisa – He will set off the moment I can get him a House. Who would have imagined it! – Our first thought ought to be Allegra. – Our second our own plans. The hesitation in your letter about Florence has communicated itself to me: although I hardly see what we can do about Horace Smith to whom our attentions are so due & would be so useful – If I do not arrive before this long scrawl write something to Florence to decide me. I shall certainly not without strong reasons at present sign the agreement for the old codgers house, although the extreme beauty & fitness of the place, should we decide on Florence might well overbalance the objection of your deaf visitor. –

One

111: It is not clear that B. did forward M.S.’s letter to the Hoppners.
thing – with Lord Byron & the people we know at Pisa we should have a security & protection which I believe seems to be more questionable at Florence. But I do not think this consideration ought to weigh – What think you of remaining at Pisa? The Williams’s would probably be induced to stay there if we did; Hunt would certainly stay at least this winter near us, should he emigrate at all; Lord Byron and his Italian friends would remain quietly there; & Lord Byron has certainly a great regard for us – the regard of such a man is worth – some of the tribute we must pay to the base passions of humanity in any intercourse with those within its circle – he is better worth it, than those on whom we bestow it from mere custom. – The Masons are there – & as far as solid affairs are concerned are my friends. – I allow this is an argument for Florence. – M’s. Masons perverseness is very annoying to me especially as M. Tighe is seriously my friend & this circumstance makes me averse from that intimate continuation of intercourse which once having begun I can no longer avoid. – At Pisa I need not distill my water – if I can distill it anywhere. – Last winter I suffered less from my painful disorder than the winter I spent at Florence. ——— . The arguments for Florence you know, & they are very weighty – judge (I know you like the job) which scale is overbalanced. —

My greatest content would be utterly to desert all human society. I would retire with you & our child to a solitary island in the sea, would build a boat, & shut upon my retreat the floodgates of the world. – I would read no reviews & talk with no authors. – If I dared trust my imagination it would tell me that there were two or three chosen companions beside yourself whom I should desire. – But to this I would not listen. – Where two or three are gathered together the devil is among them, and good far more than evil impulses – love far more than hatred – has been to me, except as you have been it’s object, the source of all sort of mischief. So on this plan I would be alone & would devote either to oblivion or to future generations the overflows of a mind which, timely withdrawn from the contagion, should be kept fit for no baser object – But this it does not appear that we shall do. – – . The other side of the alternative (for a medium ought not to be adopted) – is to form for ourselves a society of our own class, as much as possible, in intellect or in feelings: & to connect ourselves with the interests of that society. – Our roots were never struck so deeply as at Pisa & the transplanted tree flourishes not. – People who lead the lives which we led until last winter are <Wahab> like a family of Wahabee Arabs pitching their tent in the midst of London. – We must do one thing or the other: for yourself for our child, for our existence ==— These calumnies, the sources of which are probably deeper than we perceive – have ultimately for object the depriving us of the means of security & subsistence. You will easily perceive the gradations by which calumny proceeds to <persecution & persuation to> pretext, pretext to persecution, & persecution to the ban of fire & water. – It is for this, & not because this or that fool or the whole court of fools curse & rail, that calumny is worth refuting or chastising. [Ms. ends here; sheet 5 is missing.]

Shelley to Teresa Guiccioli, from Pisa, August 22nd 1821:
(Source: Gamba papers; Origo, The Last Attachment, p.178; Jones II 340-1; LBLI 615-16)

Pisa 22 Ag°. 1822

Signora

Non ho che un momento per rispondere alla sua lettera – e mi sento affatto incapace di esprimere i miei sentimenti per la confidenza di cui Ella si è compiaciutta [sic] onorarmi. Spero che me ne troverà degno. Si assicuri che nessun mezzo da me sarà omesso per affrettare la partenza di Milord, persuaso che sono che la di lui felicità non meno che la sua dipende dalla vicinanza di quella che è stata il suo buon Angelo, di quella che lo ha menato dalle tenebre alla luce, e che merita la riconoscenza non solamente di lui ma anzi di tutti i quelli che lo amano. Ho quasi fissato la sua Casa, e spero di essere in tempo per annunciare il termine del trattato prima della partenza della posta. Scusi la rozza frase d’un cuore sincero, e non dubiti del profondo interesse che Ella mi ha svegliato, e che sono e sarà con somma devozione suo servo e amico

P.S. La prego dei saluti della mia amicizia al suo stimato fratello.
Translation: Pisa, 22 August 1821. / Madam, I have only a moment to answer your letter before leaving, and I feel quite incapable of expressing my feelings about the confidence with which you have been pleased to honour me. I hope that you will find me worthy of it. Be assured that I shall omit no measure that may hurry the departure of his lordship, for I am certain that his happiness, no less than yours, depends on the nearness of her who has been his good angel, of her who has led him from darkness into light, and who deserves not only his gratitude, but that of everyone who loves him. / I have almost settled on your house, and hope to be in time to announce the signing of the contract, before the post goes. Forgive the rough phrases of a sincere heart, and do not doubt the profound interest you have awakened in me, and that I am and always shall be, with the greatest devotion / Your servant and friend / Percy B. Shelley / P.S. Please give my friendly greetings to your esteemed brother.

Shelley to Byron, from Pisa, August 1821:
(Source: this text from 1922 II 190; Jones II 343)

My dear Lord Byron

I have taken your house112 for 400 crowns a year, and signed the compact on your part; so we are now secure. I have as yet bought nothing, guiding myself in that respect by the instructions of the Gambas, who advise me to hear from you, or to wait for Lega before I do anything. They are very much pleased with the house, the Contessa especially delighted.

You must pass by Barberini to avoid Florence. If you enquire two posts on that side of Florence, the people will indicate the road. You come out on the Pisa road about ten miles on the other side of Florence.

Pray send me explicit instructions as to what ought to be done about furnishing, &c., the Palace Lanfranchi. I have money enough here, so you need not trouble yourself to restrict me on that head. I am looking out for additional stables, and shall soon have found them.

I put off writing this letter till I got to Pisa, and now I have only time to end.  

Ever faithfully yours,

P.B.Shelley.

Byron to Shelley, from Ravenna, August 26th 1821:
(Source: this text from BLJ VIII 189-90)

Ra. Ao. 26th. 1821.

My dear Shelley

Conclude for the house then forthwith. – I wish that there were two more stalls – for I have eight horses. – We are in all the agonies of packing. – – If my furniture be not sufficient pray engage for some more – and if any money is necessary – draw on me at sight; – you had better clinch the Padrone of the palazzo – lest he rise in his price or play some trick with some others of the hectic English. – – Do the essential and I will approve a sanction yr. Proceedings.

yrs. ever

Byron

P.S. – I mean to send off all furniture before setting out. – – My respects to Mrs. S. &c. &c. &c. Let me know the road without passing through Florence. – –

Byron to Shelley, from Ravenna, September 8th 1821:
(Source: Ms. Morgan; this text from BLJ VIII 202-3)

Ra Septr. 8th. 1821

Dear Shelley

They pretend here to two hundred Scudi for the carriage of about two thirds of my furniture only, & not for the whole. – As this seems to me very exorbitant – (and indeed whether it be so or no) I should prefer that you sent me from Pisa – waggons horses & drivers according to the fairest contract you can make with them for me. I will sanction it – be it more or less. – It is the same thing as the drivers &c. must return here – and the Tuscans will only have to come here first. – – The number of waggons wanted on the whole will be eight – the number of beasts, what they please – the baggage is heavy – but whether drawn by horses – mules – or oxen, is indifferent to me. – – It was for six cars only that the Indigenous masters of horse asked two hundred crowns – i.e. half a year’s rent of the house for a transport of chattels – Send me Etrurians at their own price – for of the two – I prefer being

112: The Casa Lanfranchi.
cheated by the new comers to continuing to minister to the antient Scoundrels of this venerable city. – –
When I talked to you about purchase of other moveables – I meant such as may be requisite – to
complete mine in a new mansion. – – Of course I meant things requisite – according to the premises –
and did not mean to limit the [price?] to an exact sum or to a few Scudi more or less according to what
was wanted. – – Of course you have seen this house & that house & can judge. – You may do it now –
or wait till I come as you please. – Believe me
yours ever & truly
Byron

P.S. – Expedite the Baggage Waggon – we wait only now for those to march. – – Make my
remembrances to everybody I don’t know – & my respects to all I do.

Shelley to Byron, from Pisa, September 14th 1821:
(Source: this text from 1922 II 199-201; Jones II 346-7)

My dear Lord Byron

The moment I received your last letter, I proceeded to send off, at the lowest possible price I
could get, eight waggon, &c. The Signor Pietro did the same, and the equivoke would have sent
sixteen instead of eight waggon to Ravenna, if the same Providence that watches over the fall of a
sparrow had not determined that my express should arrive in time at Florence to prevent the
departure of the additional number, and save me (for I never should have had the conscience to
charge you with the consequences of my bungling) a certain number of scudi. Now, however, all is
right, and I hope that before this your caravan will be upon its march.

I have not bought any furniture – the Gambas think we had better wait for your or for Lega’s
arrival, as you do not give any special instructions on this point.

Horace Smith, whom I expected in Tuscany this autumn, is detained in Paris by the illness of his
wife. I have not yet heard from Hunt. My convent friend, after a great deal of tumult, &c., is at
length married, and is watched by her brother-in-law with great assiduity. This whole affair has
taught me to believe that convents may be well enough for young children, but that they are the
worst possible places for them as soon as they begin to be susceptible of certain impressions. They
have made a great fuss at Pisa about my intimacy with this lady. Pray do not mention anything of
what I told you; as the whole truth is not known and Mary might be very much annoyed at it. “Don
Juan”, Cantos 3, 4, and 5, I see are just republished in Paris. I have written for them, but they are not
yet arrived. I hear from all sides the most enthusiastic praises of “Marino Faliero”; and from one
person in particular, a professed critic, who is in raptures with the “Prophecy of Dante”. The poetry
of this piece is indeed sublime; and if it have not general admiration, you ought still to be contented;
because the subject, no less than the style, is addressed to the few, and, like some of the highest
passages in “Childe Harold”, will only be fully appreciated by the select readers of many
generations. But “Don Juan” is your great victory over the alleged inflexibility of your powers; and
interest must be made to take an embargo off such precious merchandise. I have seen the Countess
frequently, and I pronounce you secure against any of my female friends here. I will trust you with
Mrs. W[illiams].

Have you formed any plan for Allegra here? It would be very easy to find a proper place for her
in this part of the world; and if you would be inclined to trust to my recommendation, I would of
course engage that Clare should not interfere with any plan that you might lay down. Of course, after
my experience, I cannot say much in favour of convents; but respectable private families might be
found who would undertake the care of her. I speak freely on this subject, because I am sure you
have seen enough to convince you that the impressions, which the Hoppners wished to give you of
myself and Mary, are void of foundation.

I hope soon to see you. If Lega comes first, I will give him all the assistance, and information I
can. The Gambas will tell him where to find me.

Believe me, my dear Lord B.,
Yours very faithfully,
P. B. S.

Shelley to Byron, from Pisa, October 21st 1821:

113: Hamlet V ii 211-12.
114: Emilia Viviani, subject of Epipsychidion.
115: B. ignored the advice, and Allegra stayed in the convent at Bagnacavallo.
Shelley's enthusiasm for *Don Juan* III, IV and V.

Pisa, Oct. 21, 1821.

My dear Lord Byron,

I should have written to you long since but that I have been led to expect you almost daily in Pisa, & that I imagined you would cross my letter on your road. – Many thanks for *Don Juan* – It is a poem totally of its own species, & my wonder and delight at the grace of the composition no less than the free & grand vigour of the conception of it perpetually increase. – The few passages which any one might desire to be cancelled in the 1st. & 2nd. Cantos are here reduced almost to nothing. This poem carries with it at once the stamp of originality and a defiance of imitation. Nothing has ever been written like it in English – nor if I may venture to prophesy, will there be: without carrying upon it the mark of a secondary and borrowed light. – You unveil & present

1:2

in its true deformity what is worst in human nature, & this is what the withlings of the age murmur at, conscious of their want of power to endure the scrutiny of such a light … We are damned to the knowledge of good & evil, and it is <good> well for us to know what we should avoid no less than what we should seek. – The character of Lambro – his return – the <te> merriment of his daughters guests made as it were in celebration of his funeral – the meeting with the lovers – and the death of Haidee, – are circumstances combined & developed in a manner that I seek elsewhere in vain … The fifth canto, which some of your pet Zoili116 in Albemarle S’s. said was dull, gathers instead of loses, splendour & energy – the language in which the whole is clothed – a sort of cameleon117 under the changing sky of the spirit that kindles it – is such as these lisping days could not have expected, – and are, believe me, in spite of the approbation which you wrest from them – little pleased to hear. One can hardly judge from recitation and it was not until I read it in print

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that I have been able to do it justice. – This sort of writing only <perhaps> o</f>n a great plan & perhaps in a more compact form is what I wished you to do when I made my vows for an epic. – But I am content – You are building up a drama, such as England has not yet seen, and the task is sufficiently noble & worthy of you.

When may we expect you? The Countess G. is very patient, though sometimes she seems apprehensive that you will never leave Ravenna.118 I have suffered from my habitual disorder & from a tertian fever since I returned, & my ill health has prevented me from shewing her the attentions I could have desired in Pisa. I have heard from Hunt, who tells me that he is coming out in November, by sea I believe – Your house is ready & all the furniture arranged. Lega they say is to have set off yesterday – The Countess tells me that you think of leaving Allegra for the present at the convent. Do as you think best – but I can pledge myself to find a situation for her here such as you would approve, in case you change your mind. –

I hear no political news but such as announces the slow victory of the spirit of the past over that of the present. The other day a number of Heteristi,119 escaped from the defeat in Wallachia, past through Pisa, to embark at Leghorn & join Ipsilanti in Livadia. – It is highly to the credit of the actual government of Tuscany, that <they> {it} allowed these brave fugitives 3 livres a day each, & free quarters during their passage through these states. – Mrs. S. desires her best regards

My dear Lord Byron –

Yours most faithfully

P. B. Shelley.

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116: Zoili are critics motivated by envy, as Zoilus was of Homer.
117: “chameleon” (Jones); but see *Don Juan* II, 92, 1.
118: B.’s unwillingness to move to Pisa was motivated in part by a wish to show the Ravenna authorities that he would not yield to their pressure, in part by a desire to keep away from Teresa for a while.
119: Greek followers of Alexander Ipsilantis, defeated by the Austrians at Hermanstad in June 1821.
October 29th 1821: Byron moves from Ravenna to Pisa to rejoin Teresa’s family, and Shelley’s circle of friends.

Byron to Shelley, from Pisa, December 12th 1821:
(Source: Österreichische Nationalbibliothek; LJ V 495; this text from BLJ IX 78-9)
A man is rumoured to have been sentenced to the stake for stealing the wafer-box from a church.

Decr. 12th. 1821.

My dear Shelley

Enclosed is a note for you from Taaffe. – – His reasons are all very true – I dare say – and might & may be of personal inconvenience to us – but that does not appear to me to be a reason to allow a being to be burnt without trying to save him. – [To save] him by any means but remonstrance is [of course] out of the question – but I do not see [why] only a temperate remonstrance should hurt any one. – Lord Guilford is the man, if he would undertake it. – He knows the Grand Duke personally – & might perhaps prevail upon him to interfere. – But as he goes tomorrow – you must be quick – or it will be useless. – Make any use of my name that you please.

yrs. ever & truly
Byron

Shelley to Byron, from Pisa, December 13th 1821:
(Source: text from Moore’s Life II 568-9; Jones II 368-9)
Shelley answers the previous item.

Thursday morning

My dear Lord Byron

I hear this morning that the design which certainly had been in contemplation of burning my fellow serpent20 has been abandoned & that he has been condemned to the galleys. – Lord Guilford is at Leghorn, & as your courier applied to me to know whether he ought to leave your letter for him or not, I have thought it best, since this information, to tell him to take it back. –

Ever faithfully yours
P.B.S.

from Shelley to Clare Claremont, from Pisa, February 1822:
(Source: Ms. not found; this text from Jones II 391-2)
Shelley, aware that Byron believes him to have fathered a child on Claire, wants to be rid of his company.

It is of vital importance both to me and to yourself, to Allegra even, that I should put a period to my intimacy with L[ord] B[yon], and that without éclat. No sentiments of honour or justice restrain him (as I strongly suspect) from the basest insinuations, and the only mode in which I could effectually silence him I am reluctant (even if I had proof) to employ during my father’s life. But for your immediate feelings I would suddenly and irrevocably leave this country which he inhabits, nor ever enter it but as an enemy to determine our differences without words. But at all events I shall soon see you, and then we will weigh both your plans and mine.

Shelley to Byron, from Pisa, February 15th 1822:
(Source: Ms not found; text from Moore’s Life II 626-7; Jones II 389)
Leigh Hunt now adds to the stresses of the poets’ relationship.

February 15, 1822.

My dear Lord Byron,

I enclose you a letter from Hunt which annoys me on more than one account. You will observe the postscript, and you know me well enough to feel how painful a task is set me in commenting upon it. Hunt had urged me more than once to ask you to lend him this money. My answer consisted in sending him all I could spare, which I have now literally done. Your kindness in fitting up a part of your own house for his accommodation I sensibly felt, and willingly accepted from you on his part, but, believe me, without the slightest intention of imposing, or, if I could help it, allowing to be imposed, any heavier task on your purse. As it has come to this in spite of my exertions, I will not conceal from you the low ebb of my own money affairs in the present moment, – that is, my absolute incapacity of assisting Hunt farther.

120: “My fellow serpent” is a joke name given by B. to Sh., adapting Goethe’s Faust.
I do not think poor Hunt’s promise to pay in a given time is worth very much; but mine is
less subject to uncertainty, and I should be happy to be responsible for any engagement he may
have proposed to you. I am so much annoyed by this subject that I hardly know what to write,
and much less what to say; and I have need of all your indulgence in judging both my feelings
and expressions.

I shall see you by and by. Believe me,
Yours most faithfully and sincerely,
P.B. Shelley

from Byron to Thomas Moore, from Pisa, March 4th 1822:
(Source: Ms. not found; text from Moore’s Life II 579-80; LJ VI 30-33; QII 688-90; BLJ IX 118-19)

Byron’s defence of Shelley would surprise Shelley.

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

On March 24th, Sergeant-Major Masi is pitchforked by one of Byron’s servants after he has
provoked an affray at the city gate. Also injured are Shelley, a servant called Giuseppe Strauss,
and John Hay.

Mary Shelley to Maria Gisborne, from Pisa, April 6th-10th 1822:
(Source: Ms. not found; text from copy in
John Gisborne Notebook No 4, Abinger Mss., Bodleian,
ff.3v-6r.; Bennett I 227-30)

Mary’s letter is the most detailed account of the Pisan Affray.

My Dear Mrs Gisborne –

Not many days after I had written to you concerning the fate which ever pursues us at
spring-tide, a circumstance happened which shewed that we were not forgotten this year. Although,
indeed, now that it is all over, I begin to fear that the King of Gods, and men will not consider it a
sufficiently heavy visitation, although for a time it threatened to be frightful enough – Two Sundays
ago[121] Lord Byron, Shelley, Trelawney, Capt.. Hay, Count Gamba, and Taaffe were returning from
their usual Evening ride, when near the Porta della Piaggia, they were passed by a soldier, who
gallopped through the midst of them, knocking up against Taaffe – This wise little gentleman
exclaimed, “Shall we endure this man’s insolence?” – Lord Byron replied, “No! we will bring him to
an account” – and Shelley (whose blood always boils at any insolence offered by a soldier,) added, “as
you please!” So they put spurs to their horses, (i.e. all but Taaffe, who remained quietly behind,) followed and stopped the man, and fancying that he was an Officer, demanded his name, and address,
and gave their Cards – The man who, I believe, was half drunk, replied only by all the oaths, and abuse
in which the Italian language is so rich – He ended, by saying, If I liked, I could draw my sabre and cut
you all to pieces, but as it is, I only arrest you, and he called out to the guards at the gate, “arrestateli” –
Lord B. laughed at this, and saying, “arrestateci pure,” gave spurs to his horse, and rode towards the
gate, followed by the rest – Lord B – and Gamba passed, but before the others could get through, the
soldier got under the gate-way, called on the guard to stop them, and, drawing his sabre, began to cut at
them – It happened that I, and the Countess Guiccioli were in a carriage close behind, and saw

[4.r]

it all, and you may guess how frightened we were, when we saw our Cavaliers cut at, They being
totally unarmed. Their only safety was, that the field of battle being so confined, they got close under
the man, and were able to arrest his arm – Capt. Hay was, however, wounded in the face, and Shelley
thrown from his horse. I cannot tell you how it all ended, but after cutting and slashing a little, the man
sheathed his sword and rode off; while the others got from their horses to assist poor Hay, who was
faint from loss of blood – Lord B—, when he had passed the gate, rode to his own house, got a sword-stick
from one of his servants, and was returning from the gate Lung’ Arno, when he met this man, who held out his hand, saying “siete contento?” Lord B— replied, “No”! I must know your name, that I
may require satisfaction of you – The soldier said, “Il mio nome é Masi, sono sargente maggiore” &c

121: The Pisan Affray occurred on March 24th 1822.
&c – while they were talking, a servant of Lord B— came, and took hold of the bridle of the serjeant’s horse – Lord B— ordered him to let it go, and immediately the man put his horse to a gallop, but, passing Casa Lanfranchi, one of Lord B—’s servants thought that he had killed his master, and was running away, determining that he should not go scot-free he ran at him with a pitch-fork, and wounded him – the man rode on a few paces, cried out, “sono ammazzato,” and fell, was carried to the hospital, the misericordia bell ringing – We were all assembled at Casa Lanfranchi, nursing our wounded man, and poor Teresa, from the excess of her fright, was worse than any, when, what was our consternation, when we heard that the man’s wound was considered mortal – Luckily none but ourselves knew who had given the wound; it was said by the wise Pisani to have been one of Lord B—’s servants, set on by his padrone, and they pitched upon a poor fellow, merely because, “aveva lo sguardo fiero,” quanto un’ assassino” – For some days, Masi continued in great danger, but he is now recovering – As long as it was thought he would die, the government did nothing: but now that he is nearly well, they have imprisoned two men, one of Lord B—’s servants, (the one with the sguardo fiero), and the other, a servant of Teresa, who was behind our carriage, both perfectly innocent, but they have been kept “in segreto,” these ten days, and God knows when they will be let out. What think you of this? Will it serve for our spring adventure? It is blown over now, it is true, but our fate has, in general, been in common with dame Nature, and March winds, and April showers have brought forth may flowers – You have no notion what a ridiculous figure Taaffe cut in all this – he kept far behind, during the danger, but the next day he wished to take all the honour to himself, vowed that all Pisa talked of him alone, and coming to Lord B— said, “My Lord, if you do not dare ride out today, I will alone” – But the next day he again changed – he was afraid of being turned out of Tuscany, or of being obliged to fight with one of the officers of the Serjeant’s regiment, of neither of which things there was the slightest danger, so he wrote a declaration to the Governor to say that he had nothing to do with it, so embroiling himself with Lord B—, he got between Scylla and Charybdis, from which he has not yet extricated himself, – for ourselves, we do not fear any anterior consequences –

April 10 – We received Hellas today, and the Bill of Lading. S — is well pleased with the former, though there are some mistakes. The only danger would arise from the vengeance of Masi, but the moment he is able to move, he is to be removed to another town – he is a “pessimo soggetto,” being the crony of Soldaini, Rosselmini and Anguistini, Pisan names of evil fame, which, perhaps, you may remember. There is only one consolation in all this, that, if it be our fate to suffer, it is more agreeable, and more safe to suffer in company with five or six, than alone –

Well! after telling you this long story, I must relate our other news – And first the Greek – Ali Pashaw is dead, and his head sent to Constantinople – the reception of it was celebrated there by the massacre of four thousand Greeks – The latter however get on – The Turkish fleet of <1>25 Sail of the line of war-vessels, and 40 Transports endeavoured to surprise the Greek fleet in its winter quarters – finding them prepared they bore away for Zante, and, pursued by the Greeks, took refuge in the bay of Naupacto – Here they first blockaded them, then fought them, and obtained a complete victory – All the {soldiers on board the} transports, on endeavouring to land, were cut to pieces, and the fleet taken or destroyed – I heard something about Hellenists, which greatly pleased me – When any one asked of the peasants of the Morea – what news there is? and if they have had any victory; they reply, “I do not know, but for us it is, ἡ Τάν, ἡ εωτός Τής,” being their Doric pronunciation of ἡ Ταν κοίνης, the speech of the Spartan mother, on presenting his shield to her son – “with this, or on this.”

122: M.S. does not mention the groom Giuseppe Strauss, who was coughing blood for months after.
123: The two arrested servants were B.’s gondolier Titia Falciarei, and Antonio Malucceli, a groom of Teresa’s. Mary Shelley does not mention Vincenzo Papi, a servant of the Gambas, who was not arrested (though he was probably guilty of the near-fatal attack on Masi).
124: Mario Curelli writes, “These men belong to some of the first families of Pisa, and Mary may have met them through contessa Mastiani, whom she met quite frequently. The spellings of Rosselmini and Soldaini are quite correct. but Anguistini does not exist: Mary may have mixed up Anguillesi (the chancellor of the University) and count Agostini (the owner of the Lungarno Palace where the Café dell’Usso was, and still is, housed).”
125: B.’s old host Ali Pasha had been killed at Ioannina by agents of the Porte on February 5th 1822.
126: See B.’s note to On This Day I Complete My Thirty-Sixth Year.
I wish, my Dear Mrs. G— that you would send the first part of this letter, addressed to Mr. W. Godwin, at Nash’s Esq. at Dover Street – I wish him to have an account of the fray, and you will thus save me the trouble of writing it over again, for what with writing and talking about it, I am quite tired – In a late letter of mine to my father, I requested him to send you Matilda – I hope that he has complied with my desire, and, in that case, that you will get it copied, and send it to me by the first opportunity, perhaps by Hunt, if he comes at all – I do not mention commissions to you, for although wishing much for the things, about which I wrote, for the present no money to spare. We wish very much to hear from you again, and to learn if there are any hopes of your getting on in your plans, what Henry is doing, and how you continue to like England – The months of February and March were, with us, as hot as an English June – the first days of April we have had some very cold weather; so that we are obliged to light fires again – S— has been much better in health this winter than any other since I have known him. Pisa certainly agrees with him exceedingly well, which is it’s only merit, in my eyes. I wish fate had bound us to Naples instead. Percy is quite well – he begins to talk – Italian only now, and to call things bella and buono, but the droll thing is, that he is right about the genders – a silk vestito is bello, but a new frusta is bella – He is a fine boy – full of life, and very pretty – Williams is very well, and they are getting on very well – Mrs. W— is a miracle of economy, and, as Mrs. G— used to call it, makes both ends meet with great comfort to herself and others. Medwin is gone to Rome; we have heaps of the gossip of a petty town this winter, and been just in the coterie where it was all carried on – but now, Grazie a Messer domedio, the English are almost all gone, and we, being left alone, all subjects of discord and clacking cease – You may conceive what a bisbiglio our adventure made. – Adieu. State bene e felice – best remembranc=es to Mr. Gisborne, and Comp’s to {Emma.} Henry, who will remember Hay as one of the Maremma hunters; he is a friend of Lord B—

Yours ever truly Mary WS.

from Shelley to Horace Smith, from Pisa, April 11th 1822:
(Source: text from Moore’s Life, II 585n; full text at Jones II 699-700)
Shelley denies having any influence on Byron.

Lord Byron has read me one or two letters of Moore to him, in which Moore speaks with great kindness of me; and of course I cannot but feel flattered by the approbation of a man, my inferiority to whom I am proud to acknowledge. Amongst other things, however, Moore, after giving Lord B, much good advice about public opinion, &c. seems to deprecate my influence on his mind on the subject of religion, and to attribute the tone assumed in Cain to my suggestions. Moore cautions him against any influence on this particular with the most friendly zeal, and it is plain that his motive springs from a desire of benefiting Lord B. without degrading me. I think you know Moore. Pray assure him that I have not the smallest influence over Lord Byron in this particular; if I had, I certainly should employ it to eradicate from his great mind the delusions of Christianity, which, in spite of his reason, seem perpetually to recur, and to lay in ambush for the hours of sickness and distress. Cain was conceived many years ago, and begun before I saw him last year at Ravenna. How happy should I not be to attribute to myself, however indirectly, any participation in that immortal work!

Mary Shelley to Byron, from Pisa, April 12th 1822:
(Source: text from NLS Ms.43506; Bennett I 231)

I understand that Your Lordship wishes that Hunt should have a detailed account of your zuffa: and Shelley (who is gone to Livorno) wished to send a copy of the report presented to the Governor here; could your secretary furnish me with a copy written small on thin paper.

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127: Mo. to B., January 1822: “Shelley I look upon as a man of real genius; but I must again say, that you could not give your enemies (the ***’s, “et hoc genus omnne”) a greater triumph than by forming such an unequal and unholy alliance.”
We had a letter from Hunt today; he has engaged another passage & hopes to sail in the course of the present month. He has sent Fletcher’s letter to his wife with directions what to do.

I had a note from Mrs. Beauclerk today who says that she has only heard praises of your Lordship’s conduct to in the late affair both from M’. Dawkins & the court;

1:2

Excuse this annoyance from womankind & allow me to hope that it will not be long before you employ me on my usual interesting task. Is there any hope of our ever getting a copy of the Vision of Judgement?

truly Yours,
Mary Shelley

[1:3 blank apart from pencilled note: “Found between Byron letters to Kinnaird Apr 2 & Apr 9 1822”.
1:4 blank.]

Mary Shelley to Thomas Medwin, from Pisa, April 12th 1822:
(Source: text from scan of Ms. at Keats-Shelley House Rome; my thanks to Catherine Payling; Bennett I 231-3)

Dear Medwin

Excuse me that I write instead of Shelley, who you know is a very bad correspondent. At Lord Byron’s desire I send you copies of some of the documents concerning the row that took place a fortnight ago. You what a goose Taaffe makes of himself; Lord B. says that the words he used were, “Shall we endure this man’s insolence?” Lord B. replied, “No, we will bring him to an account.” Masi after having been in great danger is now recovering & is to be removed from Pisa, as he vows deadly revenge; the Police here have imprisoned Tita & the Countess Guiccioli’s servant, as suspected of having wounded the sergeant, they have been there a fortnight and one can guess when they will be let out; they are both perfectly innocent. It so happened that Madame Guiccioli & I were in the carriage ten paces behind and saw the whole zuffa, and as you may suppose were not a little frightened. No measures have been taken except with these two men, no other person, more particularly none of the Gentlemen have been in any degree molested, but have ridden out as usual every day since. I say this because I hear that various reports have been circulated at Rome concerning the arrest of Lord B. all utterly devoid of foundation. You cannot conceive the part Taaffe played; as you may guess from his affidavit and as I saw with my own eyes, he kept at a safe distance during the row, but fearing to be sent out of Tuscany, he wrote at first such a report as embroiled him with Lord Byron, and what between insolence and dastard humility (a combination by no means uncommon in real life) kept himself in water when in fact he had nothing to fear.

You have of course heard that Madame Beauclerk has removed to Florence; Pisa is fast emptying of strangers. Lord B. will, I believe pass the summer in the vicinity of Livorno; but in all probability the W’s & we shall be at la Spezia. During the last week we have suffered greatly from the cold; winter returned upon us, doubly disagreeable from our having fostered the agreeable hope that we had said a last rivederla. The country is however quite green, the blossoms are fading from the fruit trees, and if the wind change we shall feel summer at last.

Shelley has received Hellas from England; it is well printed & with not many faults. Lord B. seems pleased with it. His Lordship has had out from England a volume of poems entitled “Dramas of the Ancient World” – and by a strange coincidence, the author (one David Lindsey) has chosen three subjects treated by Lord Byron; Cain, the Deluge and Sardanapalus. The two first are treated quite differently. Cain begins after the death of Abel & is entitled the Destiny & death of Cain. I mention them because they are works of considerable

1:2

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128: Real name Mary Diana Dods.
talent, and strength of poetry & expression; although of course in comparison with Lord Byron as unlike as Short Life and Immortality. This is all the literary news I have for you.

I am afraid that you will be frightened at the immensity of the packet I send; but the papers were consigned to us by Lord B., and his name must be our excuse. The affidavits being in Italian will be an exercise for you, especially <Trf> Taaffe’s who has used all the many adverbs with which the Italian language is enriched withal. I could not prevail on myself to undertake the task of translating & transcribing such a rigmarole; especially as I am heartily tired of the whole subject; it flooded us at first, but the tide <is> has now made its reflux, leaving the shingles of the mind as dry as ever. With the exception of some anxiety on the score of the two prisoners.

1:4

Edward is quite well; Jane I fancy will soon write to you. Our little Percy is as blooming as ever. I hope we shall be favoured with a visit on your return Northward; Shelley desires his best remembrances

Truly Yours
Mary W. Shelley

Pisa. April 12th 1822

[vertically:] Thomas Medwin Esqre

Elise Foggi to Mary Shelley, April 12th 1822:
(Not yet found in NLS Ms.43448; text from 1922 II 190)

Elise Foggi denies spreading the Naples Hospital rumour. The presence of this and the next item among Byron's papers suggests that they, like Mary's to Isabelle Hoppner, were not forwarded.

FLORENCE, 12 Avril, 1822.

CHERE MADAME, – Ayant rencontré Mademoiselle dans une maison ici a Florence j’ai été très chagriée quando elle ma accusée devoir dit des horreurs d’elle a Madame Hoppner, elle ma dit aussi que vous et Monsieur etaiten tous les deux fache contre moi à cause de cese: je vous assure, ma chére Madame Shelley, que vous pouvez croire ma parole d’honneur que je n’ai jamais dit a Madame Hoppner, ni contre vous, ni contre Mademoiselle, ni contre Monsieur, et de quelque part que cela vienne, c’est un mensonge contre moi. J’espère, ma chère Madame, que vous voulez bien me prendre votre amitié que je vous repéte encore une seconde fois que je vous envoie une lettre pour Madame Hoppner, comme Mademoiselle ma dit que vous désiriez que je lui écris. Je suis votre tres devoué et affectionne,

ELISE FOGGI.

Translation: Florence, April 12th 1822 / Having met Mademoiselle at a house here in Florence, I was very upset when she accused me of having said horrible things about her to Madame Hoppner, she told me that you and Monsieur were both angry with me also because of these things: I assure you, my dear Madame Shelley, that you may believe my word of honour that I never said [anything] to Madame Hoppner, neither against you, nor against Mademoiselle, nor against Monsieur, and whoever said it, it is a lie against me. I hope, my dear Madame, that you really will grant me your friendship that I repeat to you again that I send you a letter for Madame Hoppner, as Mademoiselle told me that you wish me to write to her. I am your devoted and affectionate / Elise Foggi.

Mary Shelley to Leigh Hunt, from Pisa, April 13th 1822:
(Source: text from Bodleian Ms. Shelley, c.1, ff.516-17; Bennett I 233-4)

[Leigh Hunt Esq. / Stone House / Near Plymouth / Devon / Inghilterra / Angleterre]

The single sheet has been torn in half.

My dear Hunt

Shelley sends the enclosed order on Brooks although he hopes there is no necessity for<lt> it. This order was addressed to Brooks & you could not have the money until<lt> past Lady Day.

You will wonder what the enclosed is – If you read the first page you will find that it is an account of a brawl between the 5 gentlemen whose name <is> {are} subjoined and a soldier here – It made a great noise, for the man (as you will find by the last affidavit) was wounded by a pitchfork & his life despaired of for some days. He was wounded, as is asserted, by a servant of Lord Byrons, <the
and two of them are still imprisoned on suspicion though we know that those two in particular are perfectly innocent. The mode of conducting the judicial part of the affair is a specimen of their law here. While ["the" omitted] Man was in danger not a single step was taken, & the man who wounded him had every opportunity to evade; as he got better they imprisoned these 2 men on suspicion & they have been kept a fortnight on jail allowance without being <alloud> allowed to see any friends, not even their wives, or [to receive] any assistance or even change

of linen from their friends. The second paper is Taaffes affidavit – I <thing> think that before now I have had occasion to mention this wise little gentleman – he was riding with Lord B. at the time – & when he saw his friends in danger prudently kept out of the way: was afterwards terribly afraid of being implicated & turned out of Tuscany & so wrote the enclosed to justify himself. Of course if none of the public papers take notice of this affair <of course> do you not in your Examiner for there is no great glory attached to such a row; if however any garbled accounts get current, I should think you might manufacture from these documents, which are the judicial ones, a true statement. I ought not to omit that a lady writes to me from Florence to say – that she hears nothing but praise of Lord Byron’s & his friends’ conduct on this occasion both from the English Minister, {Mr. Dawkins} & the Tuscan Court.

So much, my dear Friend, for this business to which Lord Byron attaches considerable importance, although to us, ever since the convalescence of the soldier it has been a matter of perfect indifference. Tell poor Marianne not to teaze her spirits by writing, but to nurse herself so that she may come safely and well. It appears to me a dream that you will ever reach these Tuscan shores – One begins to distrust every thing after so many disappointments. You will find Shelley in infinitely better health; indeed he has got over this winter delightfully, Pisa is a Paradise during that season for invalids, although I fear that Marianne will find it rather hot in the summer – but once here, I doubt not but that in some way all will go well.

You do not mention your health in the last letter, but I do not doubt that it is improved [Ms. tear: “in” pasted back] exact proportion to the number of miles you are distant from London; God knows when I shall again see that benedetto luogo – but even at this distance it sometimes strikes me with sudden fright to <thing> think that any chain binds me to it.

My love to Marianne; I hope to have no answer to this letter but you will in person acknowledge it – My dear Hunt

Affectionately yours

Mary WS.

The Gisbornes have my account of the zuffa; if you wd like to see it.

By the note to Taaffe’s giuramento you will see that he is a bad horseman & that Lord Byron is accustomed to joke him on the many falls he has had – while Taaffe always vows it was only salti del cavallo "come di entrare nel fosso" was a very famous affair.

April 20th 1822: Allegra dies in the convent at Bagnacavallo.

Byron to Shelley, from Pisa, April 23rd 1822:
(Source: Ms. not found; text from Moore’s Life II 591-2; LJ VI 53-4; QII 691-2; BLJ IX 147-8)

The blow was stunning and unexpected; for I thought the danger over, by the long interval between her stated amelioration and the arrival of the express. But I have borne up against it as I best can, and so far successfully, that I can go about the usual business of life with the same appearance of composure, and even greater. There is nothing to prevent your coming to-morrow; but, perhaps, to-day, and yester-evening, it was better not to have met. I do not know that I have any thing to reproach in my conduct, and certainly nothing in my feelings and intentions towards the dead. But it is a moment when we are apt to think that, if this or that had been done, such event might have been prevented,—though every
day and hour shows us that they are the most natural and inevitable. I suppose that Time will do his usual work—Death has done his.

Yours ever,
N.B.

April 30th 1822: the Shelleys and Claire take a summer residence at the Casa Magni, Lerici.

Shelley to Byron, from Lerici, May 3rd 1822:
(Source: this text from 1922 II 223-4; Jones II 415-16)

Shelley to Byron, from Lerici, May 3, 1822
Villa Magni, Lerici, May 3, 1822

My dear Lord Byron

I have been compelled by circumstances to tell Clare the real state of the case. I will not describe her grief to you; you have already suffered too much; and, indeed, the only object of this letter is to convey her last requests to you, which, melancholy as one of them is, I could not refuse to ask, and I am sure you will readily grant. She wishes to see the coffin before it is sent to England, and I have ventured to assure her that this consolation, since she thinks it such, will not be denied her. It had better be at Leghorn than at Pisa, on many accounts; you can tell me exactly on what day the funeral will be there, and thus save an hour of unnecessary delay in our journey, during which I shall suffer scarcely less than Clare. She also wishes you would give her a portrait of Allegra, and if you have it, a lock of her hair, however small. May I ask you, if you think fit to do this, to send the portrait and the hair by the bearer of this letter; anything, however slight, might be at once the food and the diversion of grief so excessive as she suffers. If you have only one portrait, and desire to retain the original, I will engage to obtain a copy of it, and to return you the former.

This letter will, I fear, infect you, as it has been infected, with the melancholy that reigns here. But Nature is here as vivid and joyous as we are dismal, and we have built, as Faust says, “our little world in the great world of all” as a contrast rather than a copy of that divine example. I ought to tell you Tita is arrived with Mr. Dawkins’ passport, and has reassumed his marine life. He seems as happy as a bird just let loose from a cage. Will you have the goodness to pay Pietro [Gamba] ten crowns for me, which in the hurry of my departure I forgot to leave with him for Mary’s Greek master? which we will settle when we meet. Pray give my kindest regards to Pietro, who is a person for whom I feel no common liking, and remind him of his promise to come quickly and stay long with us here. You will be delighted with Spezia, although the accommodations are as wretched as the scenery is divine. The Williamses, with all their furniture embarked, and no place to sleep in, have taken refuge with me for the present; and they are, in my actual situation, a great relief and consolation. Of this, indeed, I have great need. Poor Clare begins to get very ill with the excessive and unintermitted suffering she sustains; although what I chiefly dreaded is spared, as she retains her senses. The messenger will wait for your reply. I shall probably see you soon. Tell me how you are, and what news, good or bad, you have received, and believe me,

My dear Lord B.,

Yours most faithfully,
P.B.Shelley.

Shelley to Byron, from Lerici, May 9th 1822:
(Source: text from NLS Ms.43507; LJ VI 53; Jones II 416-17)

<Spezia> Lerici May 9. 1821

My dear Lord Byron

I have succeeded in dissuading Clare from the melancholy design of visiting the coffin at Leghorn, much to the profit of my own shattered health & spirits, which would have suffered much in accompanying her on such a journey – She is much better – she has indeed altogether suffered in a manner less terrible than I expected, after the first shock, during which of course she wrote the letter you enclose. I had no idea that her letter was written in that temp[er], – and I think I need not assure you, that whatever mine or Mary’s ideas might have been respecting the system of education you intended to adopt,

1:2

129: About Allegra’s death.
130: Goethe, Faust I, 1346-7: Wenn sich der Mensch, die kleine Narrenwelt, / Gewöhnlich für ein Ganzes hält. Sh. had translated the scene.
131: Alexander Mavrocordatos had given Mary Greek lessons.
we sympathise too much in your loss, & appreciate too well your feelings, to have allowed such a letter to be sent to you had we suspected it’s contents – – – – <Xxxx>

The portrait & the hair arrived safe – I gave them to Clare, & made her acquainted with your concession to her requests. – – – She now seems bewildered; & whether she designs to avail herself further of your permission to regulate the funeral, I know not. In fact, I am so exhausted with the scenes through which I have passed, that I do not dare to ask. – I think she will be persuaded not to interfere, as I am convinced that her putting herself forward in any manner would be as injurious to herself, as it would be painful to me, & probably to you. She has no objection (thus much she has said) to the interment taking place in England.

1:3

Tita, I think I told you, is with me – – Williams heard this morning from Trelawny, who says that a good deal yet remains to be done with the Bolivar. My boat is not yet arrived – – – –

Believe me, ever my dear Lord B.

Your’s very faithfully

P. B. Shelley

Shelley to Byron, from Lerici, May 12th [??] 1822:
(Source: text from NLS Ms.43507; Jones II 417-18)

Lerici Sunday –

My dear Lord Byron

I have just heard <Hunt> from Hunt, & what is still more decisive from a friend of his, announcing <In> [his] third embarkation on the 13th of May. We may therefore expect him every day at Leghorn, & although he omits to mention the name of the ship you who are on the spot will easily be able by the intervention of Dunn132 or some other omniscient of that sort to intercept him before he proceeds to Pisa, & give him my direction, &

1:2

contrive that the poor fellow’s first impressions on his arrival in Italy should be such as they could not fail to be from an unexpected meeting with you. – I shall sail over to pay both him & you a visit as soon as I hear of his arrival. – But perhaps he has written to you more explicitly, – – – I hear that the Americans are tempting you to migrate, in hopes perhaps that when Time who blots out escutcheons & patents of nobility shall have made the title page of Cain & Childe Harold still brighter, the Homeric doubt shall be renewed about your birthplace throughout all the regions in which English will be spoken: It will be curious enough to hear the academies of New Holland & Labrador disputing on such a subject. – – – – What news of our process? I hear that Antonio133

1:3

is treated with more mildness & likely to be released. – – – They say too that Masi is to be degraded & severely punished.134 This would be a pity, & I think you would do well, so soon as our own points are gained & our own a to intercede for the poor devil – whom it w’d, not be right to confound with his government, or rather with the popular prejudice of the Pisans to the suggestions of which the government conformed itself. – – –

Clare desires me to <enclose the pack[Ms. tear: “et”]> send you the enclosed packet, & to request that her letters may be returned to her. – – – I hear nothing of your Schooner – Williams is on the lookout for her all day & has hoisted his flags at least ten times in honour of the approach of her Phantom – – These filthy people have covered my letter with oil, but it is too late to do any thing else than beg you to excuse it – Ever faithfully your’s – P.B.S.

Shelley to Byron, from Lerici, May 16th 1822:
(Source: this text from NLS Ms.43507; LJ VI 66; Jones II 420)

132: Henry Dunn was Byron’s agent at Leghorn: he had the job of shipping Allegra’s body back to England.
133: Antonio Malucelli, arrested after the Pisan Affray.
134: Masi retired and was given a handsome pension by the Grand Duke of Tuscany.
Shelley’s last letter to Byron.
[The Right Hon. Lord Byron / <Pisa> Livorno]

Lerici May 16. 1822.

My dear Lord B – – –.

I received this morning a letter from Lega, with one enclosed of Cellini’s relating, if I rightly understand them, to the prosecution of Masi. – I wish it to be understood that I personally have not the least desire to proceed against the poor devil; but if you think it might conduce to Antonio’s enlargement or [be in] any other respect advantageous to you I am willing to act as you think best – Pray write to me precisely what you wish me to do on this subject, & how to proceed; for as to Lega’s compositions, & that enclosed as they seem written under the supposition of my having a secretary at my elbow as learned in the law as himself, they are & probably will continue to be totally unintelligible to me. – – –

Clare is much better: after the first shock she has sustained her loss with more fortitude that I had dared to hope. – I have not however renewed any conversation on the subject of my last letter: I think you ought to consider yourself free from any interference of her’s in the disposal of the remains. — —

My boat is arrived & the Bolivar expected I hear in about a fortnight. Williams (who by the bye desires his best remembrances) is delighted with her, & she serves me at once for a study & a carriage. – – I dare say I shall soon see you at Leghorn, when or before I hope to hear all the news literary & domestic, which you have received, & which if there be any faith in augury cannot be otherwise than good. –

Believe me, my dear Lord B.
Yours very truly
P.B. Shelley

Lerici – May 1821

P.S. – I can only suggest, on the subject of Clare, the propriety of her being made acquainted through me of the destination of the remains. – I hear nothing of Hunt – do you?

Byron to Shelley, from Pisa, May 20th 1822:
(Source: this text from LJ VI 66; BLJ IX 160-1)

Byron’s last letter to Shelley. He answers the previous item.

Pisa. May 20th. 1822

Dear Shelley – It is proper that you should prosecute on every account, but you need not apprehend that any punishment will be inflicted on the fellow – or expect any very splendid severity from the Tuscan Government, to their own ragamuffin. – After their obvious injustice in the case of Tita and Antonio – I really see no occasion for any delicacy with regard to the Serjeant – either on account of his own conduct or that of his Government. – As he did not assault me – and as I gave him a card (believing him to be an officer) which with us bears a hostile interpretation – I cannot prosecute him – but otherwise I would I assure you – and shall be very much surprized if you decline to do so. – Indeed it is absolutely necessary on account of Antonio & Tita. – – The accounts in England of the Squabble – appear on the whole to have been tolerably fair – & without prejudice as far as I have heard or seen. The only literary news that I have heard of the plays – (contrary to your friendly augury) is that the Edinburgh R[view] has attacked them all three – as well as it could. – I have not seen the article. – Murray writes discouragingly – and says “that nothing published this year has made the least impression” including I presume what he has published on my account also. – You see what it is to throw pearls to Swine – – as long as I wrote the exaggerated nonsense which has corrupted the public taste135 – they applauded to the very echo – and now that I have really composed within these three or

135: B. refers to the Turkish tales – and perhaps CHP?
four years some things which should “not willingly be let die”\textsuperscript{136} – the whole herd snort and grumble and return to wallow in their mire. – However it is fit that I should pay the penalty of spoiling them – as no man has contributed more than me in my earlier compositions to produce that exaggerated & false taste – it is a fit retribution that anything [like a?] classical production should be received as these plays have been treated. – – The American Commodore has invited me on board his Frigate here – and I go to see her and him tomorrow. – – I have not yet decided on the subject you mention waiting for letters from England. – – Of Hunt I hear nothing – nor you – I suppose that he has embarked then.

\textit{Yrs. ever & truly}

\textit{NB}

\textit{May 21st 1822: Byron goes on board the U.S.S. Constitution in Leghorn harbour.}

\textit{May 22nd 1822: Byron moves to the Villa Dupuy at Montenero.}

\textbf{Mary Shelley to Maria Gisborne, from Casa Magni, Lerici, June 2nd 1822:}

\textit{(Source: Ms. not found; text from copy in John Gisborne Notebook No. 4, Abinger Ms., Bodleian, ff.6r.-8r.; Bennett I 234-7)}

\textit{Casa Magni, presso a Lerii}

\textit{June 2\textsuperscript{nd} 1822,}

\textbf{My Dear Mrs. Gisborne}

We received a letter from Mr. G— the other day, which promised one from you – It is not yet come, and although I think that you are two or three in my debt, yet I am good enough to write to you again, and thus to increase your debt – nor will I allow you, with one letter, to take advantage of the Insolvent act, and thus to free yourself from all claims at once. When I last wrote, I said, that I hoped our spring visitation had come and was gone – but this year we were not quit so easily – however, before I mention anything else, I will finish the story of the Zuffa, as far as it is yet gone. I think that in my last I left the Serjeant recovering; One of Lord B—’s and one of the Guiccioli’s servants in prison.\textsuperscript{137} on suspicion, though both were innocent. The Judge or Advocate, called a Cancelliere, sent from Florence to determine the affair, disliked the Pisans, and having \textit{poca paga}, expected a present from Milordo, and so favoured our part of the affair, was very civil, and came to our houses to take depositions, against the law. For the sake of the Lesson, Hogg should have been there, to learn to cross question The Cancelliere, a talkative buffon of a Florentine, with “mille scuse per l’incomodo,” asked, “Dove fu lei la sera del 24 Matzo?” “Andai a spasso in carozza, fuori della Porta della Piaggia—” A little clerk, seated beside him, with a great pile of papers before him, now dipt his pen in his Ink-horn – and looked expectant, while the Cancelliere, turning his eyes up to the ceiling repeated, “Io fui a spasso &c”

\textit{[6v.]}\textit{

This scene lasted two, four, six hours, as it happened – In the span of two months, the depositions of fifteen people were taken – and finding Tita (Lord B—’s servant) perfectly innocent, the Cancelliere ordered him to be liberated, but the Pisan Police took fright at his beard – they called him “il barbone,” and although it was declared that on his exit from prison he should be shaved, they could not tranquillize their mighty minds, but banished him – We, in the meantime were come to this place, so he has taken refuge with us. He is an excellent fellow, faithful, courageous and daring – How could it happen that the Pisans should not be frightened at such a mirabile mostro of an Italian, especially as the day he was let out of \textit{secreto}, and was a \textit{larga} in prison, he gave a feast to all his fellow prisoners, hiring chandeliers and plate – But poor Antonio, the Guiccioli’s servant, the meekest hearted fellow the world is kept in \textit{secreto}, not found guilty, but punished as such – e chi sa when he will be let out – so rests the affair –

About a month ago Clare came to visit us at Pisa, and went, with the Williams’s to find a house in the Gulph of Spezia; when, during her absence, the disastrous news came of the death of Allegra – She died of a typhus fever, which had been raging in the Romagna; but no one wrote to say it was there – she had no friends, except the nuns of the Convent, who were kind to her, I believe, but you know Italians – If half of the Convent had died of the plague, they would never have written to have had her removed, and so the poor child fell a sacrifice. Lord B— felt the loss, at first, bitterly

\textit{[7r.]}\textit{

\textbf{137:} Tita Falcieri and Antonio Malucelli.
– he also felt remorse, for he felt that he had acted against everybody’s councils and wishes, and death had stamped with truth the many and often urged prophecies of Clare, that the air of the Romagna, joined to the ignorance of the Italians, would prove fatal to her. Shelley wished to conceal the fatal news from her, as long as possible, so when she returned from Spezia, he resolved to remove this there without delay – with so little delay, that he packed me off with Clare and Percy the very next day. She wished to return to Florence, but he persuaded her to accompany me – The next day, he packed up all our goods and chattels, (for a furnished house was not to be found in this part of the world) and like a torrent, hurrying everything in its course, he persuaded the W’s to do the same. – They came here – but one house was to be found for us all – It is beautifully situated on the sea shore, under a woody hill. – But such a place as this is! The poverty of the people is beyond anything – Yet, they do not appear unhappy, but go on in dirty content, or contented dirt, while we find it hard work to purvey, miles around for a few eatables – We were in wretched discomfort at first, but now we are in a kind of disorderly order, living from day to day as we can – After the first day or two, Clare insisted on returning to Florence – so S— was obliged to disclose the truth – You may judge of what was her first burst of grief, and despair – however she reconciled herself to her fate, sooner than we expected; and although of course, until she form new ties, she will always grieve, yet tranquil – more tranquil than, when prophesying

[7v.]

her disaster, she was forever forming plans for getting her child from a place she judged, but too truly, would be fatal to her. She has now returned to Florence, and I do not know whether she will join us again. Our colony is so much smaller than we expected, which we consider a benefit – Lord B— remains with his train at Monte Nero – Trelawny is to be the commander of his vessel, and of course, will be at Leghorn – He is, at present at Genoa, awaiting the finishing of this boat – Shelley’s boat is a beautiful creature. Henry would admire her greatly – though only 24 feet by 8, she is a perfect little ship, and looks twice her size – She had one fault – she was to have been built in partnership with Williams and Trelawny – T—y chose the name of the Don Juan – and we acceded; but when Shelley took her entirely on himself, we changed the name to the Ariel – Lord B— chose to take fire at this, and determined she should be called after the poem – wrote to Roberts to have the name painted on the mainsail, and she arrived thus disfigured – for days and nights full twenty one did Shelley and Edward ponder on her anabaptism, and the washing out the primeval stain. turpentine, spirits of wine, buccata, all were tried, and it became dappled and no more – at length the piece has been taken out, and reefs put, so the sail does not look worse. I do not know what L— B— will say, but Lord and poet as he is, he could not be allowed to make a coal-barge of our boat. As only one house was to be found habitable in this gulph, the W—’s have taken up their abode with us, and their servants and mine quarrel like cats and dogs; and besides you may imagine how ill a large family agrees with my laziness, when accounts and domestic concerns come to be talked of. – “Ma pazienza” –

[8r.]

after all, the place does not please me – the people are rozzi, and speak a detestable dialect. – and yet it is better than any other Italian sea-shore north of Naples – the air is excellent, and you may guess how much better we like it than Leghorn, where besides we should have been involved in English Society, a thing we longed to get rid of at Pisa. Mr G— talks of your going to a distant country. Pray write to me in time before this takes place, as I want a box from England first, but cannot now exactly name its contents. I am sorry to hear you do not get on; but perhaps Henry will, and make up for all. Percy is well and S— singularly so, his incessant boating does him a great deal of good. I had been very unwell for some time past, but am better now.

I have not even heard of the arrival of my novel;¹³⁸ but I suppose, for own sake, Papa will dispose of it to the best advantage – If you see it advertised, pray tell me – also its publisher &c &c. We have heard from Hunt the day he was to sail, and anxiously and daily now await his arrival – S— will go over to Leghorn to him, and I also, if I can so manage it – We shall be at Pisa next winter, I believe – fate so decrees – Of course you have heard that the lawsuit went against my father. – this was the summit and crown of our spring misfortunes – but he writes in so few words, and in such a manner, that any information that I could get, through anyone, would be a great benefit to me.

Adieu – Pray write now, and at length – remember both S— and I to Hogg – Did you get Matilda from Papa?

¹³⁸: Valperga.
Your’s ever,
Mary W. Shelley.

Continue to direct to Pisa

June 16th 1822: Mary nearly dies from a haemorrhage.

July 1st 1822: Leigh Hunt and his family arrive in Pisa.

July 8th 1822: Shelley, Edward Williams and Charles Vivian drowned.

from Byron to Thomas Moore, August 8th 1822:
(Source: Ms. not found; text from Moore’s Life II 607-8; LJ VI 99; QII 704-5; BLJ IX 190-1)

… You will have heard by this time that Shelley and another gentleman (Captain Williams) were drowned about a month ago (a month yesterday), in a squall off the Gulf of Spezia. There is another man gone, about whom the world was ill-naturedly, and ignorantly, and brutally mistaken. It will, perhaps, do him justice now, when he can be no better for it …

August 13th 1822: Williams cremated.

August 14th 1822: Shelley cremated.

Edward John Trelawny, description of Shelley’s cremation (after August 15th 1822):
(Source: text from HBF 10-14, which corrects Trelawny’s spelling)

On the insuing morning at 10 o’clock Cap. Shenley and myself, with the officer from the health office and two of our seamen from the Schooner, proceeded in a boat down the little river which runs through the Town to the Sea, pulling about a mile along the beach towards Massa, where we landed. I sent a cart for more Wood, and made all the preparations as the day before. There was little variety in the situation from the one I have described as the scene in which the funeral pile of his shipwrecked friend Williams was erected—the same view of the Sea, sand, and mountains—the mountains appearing nearer and more precipitous, but less wood and within a mile of the little port and Town of Via Reggio. The place indicated by three small white wand-like <sticks> reeds stuck in a line from low to high water mark was pointed out as the spot where Shelley’s body <was interred> had been thrown. Having some doubts of the <infallibility> or accuracy of such pyramids—and those stuck in the sand only the night previous—I ordered them to commence moving the sand till we could ascertain the <place> spot. After near an hour’s hard work without any indication as to the <spot where the body was> place—Lord Byron’s carriage appeared accompanied by two mounted dragoons and four foot soldiers, which I had sent for to protect us from intrusion, as there had been several boats full of people attempted to land to see the ceremony—and what was extraordinary that both days there had been a great number of well dressed women who were so eager to gratify their inordinate curiosity to behold a sight so novel—that it was with infinite difficulty and repeated supplications of the officers they could be dislodged from the positions they had taken, some long before we arrived. Lord B., Mr. Hunt, and several of the principal officers of the Town having now arrived, we proceeded to trench the ground in a straight line and then soon hit on the right place; it was just on the margin of the Sea—which when much agitated must have broken over it. They had scarcely trenched two spades deep when the line appeared which had been thrown on the body at the time of internment and a spade struck on the skull. Having previously made every preparation for burning, the body was dragged out of its shallow bed of sand and placed in the furnace. We had anticipated that this body from its having been interred with lime six weeks previously would have been nearly destroyed; but the lime being in large pieces and of bad quality, with salt water oozing into the grave, the body had not at all decomposed but was precisely in the same state [it] had been interred [in]. His dress and linen had become black, and the body was in a state of putridity and very offensive. Both the legs were off separated at the knee joint—the thigh bones bared and the flesh hanging loosely about them—the hands were off and the arm bones protruding—the skull black and no flesh or features of the face remaining. The clothes had in some degree protected the body—the flesh was of a dingy blue. Having collected together his remains I set fire to the pile <to day a> and we went through the same ceremonies as the previous day. The Poem of Lamia and Isabella which had been found open in Shelley’s Jacket Pockett—and buried with him, I was anxious to have—but we could find nothing of it remaining but the leather binding. Lord B. <was
likewise anxiety wished much to have the skull if possible—which I endeavoured to preserve—but before any part of the flesh was consumed on it, it attempted to move it—it broke to pieces—it was unusually thin and strikingly small. Although we made a tremendous fire—it burnt exceedingly slow; and it was three hours before the body separated—it then fell open across the breast—and the heart, which was now seen, was likewise small. The body was much longer consuming than the other—it was nearly four o’clock before the body was wholly consumed, that part nearest the heart being the last that became ashes—and the heart itself seemed proof against fire, for it was still perfect and the intensity of heat everything now even the sand on which the furnace stood being red hot and fierce fire still kept up the largest bones reduced to white cinders and nothing perfect distinguishable—but the heart placed on which although bedded on fire—would not burn—and after awaiting an hour continually adding fuel it becoming late we gave over by mutual conviction of its being unavailing—all exclaiming it will not burn—there was a bright flame around it occasioned by the moisture still flowing from it—and on removing the furnace nearer to the Sea to immerse the iron I took the heart in my hand to examine it—after sprinkling it with water: yet it was still so hot as to burn my hand badly and a quantity of this oily fluid still flowed from it—we now collected the dust and ashes and placed them in the box made for the occasion and shipped it on board Lord Byron’s schooner. There had been—during the whole ceremony—a solitary sea bird crossing and recrossing the fire—which was the only intruder our guards had not kept away—yet it was with much difficulty being so near a Town they kept off the people! We then returned slowly in the carriage drawn by buffaloes to the Inn L. B. proceeding to Pisa—and weighed anchor for Leghorn.

Byron to Mary Shelley, from Pisa, September 10th 1822:
(Source: Ms. not found; text from Lady Jane Shelley, Shelley and Mary, 1882, III pp.869-70; BLJ IX 205)

Byron helps Mary with Shelley’s will and prospects.

September 10, 1822
Dear Mary S. – Enclosed is Murray’s letter, which partly confirms Mrs. Godwin’s. With regard to the will, if it is valid, as presumed, why should you make a traffic of your Boy’s prospects for a temporary convenience? You best know if Mr Shelley took any steps to render it nugatory, or made any alteration.

Upon the subject of your journey, I do not like to give any positive opinion; but I cannot see the immediate advantage, or even future, from such a step, just now. The will is known to exist; it cannot be altered, or made away with; but you can consult Mrs. Mason, and regulate yourself by the mechanism of “Clare’s Minerva”. As to sharing Mrs. Godwin’s small estate, I rather suspect that ‘tis your own which she means. At any rate, write to Godwin to take a copy of the will to my solicitors, John and Charles Hanson, Esquires, Chancery Lane, and the Stamp Office, or Bloomsbury Square, for they reside or have offices in all three.

Yours ever,

BYRON
To Mrs. Shelley, Pisa.

Byron to Mary Shelley, from Pisa, October 4th 1822:
(Source: text from Bodleian, as yet uncatalogued; QII 707-8; BLJ X 11)

Octr. 4th. 1822.
The Sopha which I request is not of your furniture – it was purchased by me at Pisa since you left it. –

It is convenient for my room though of little value (about 12 pauls) and I offered to send another (now sent) in it’s stead. – I <preff> preferred retaining the purchased furniture – but always intended that you should have as good or better in it’s place. – I have a particular dislike to any thing of S.’s being within the same walls with M’. Hunt’s children. – They are dirtier and more mischievous than Yahoos what they can destroy with their filth they will with their fingers. – I presume that you received ninety and odd crowns from the wreck of the D. J. and also the price of the boat purchased by Cap’. R. – if not you will have both – Hunt has

1:2

these in hand. – – –
With regard to any difficulties about money I can only repeat that I will be your banker till this state of things is cleared up — and you can see what is to be done — so — there is little to trouble you on that score. -- --

I was confined four days to my bed at Lerici. -- --
Poor Hunt with his six little blackguards — are coming slowly up — as usual — he turned back <twice> (once) — was there ever such a kraal out

1:4

of the Hottentot Country before? -- --

Byron moves to Genoa via Lerici, September 27th 1822, arriving at Casa Saluzzo, Albaro, on or about October 3rd.


Mary Shelley to Byron, from Albaro, Genoa, October 21st 1822:
(Source: text from NLS Ms.43506; Bennett I 283-4)

Mary’s first reference to her job fair-copying *Don Juan*. She has already copied Cantos VI, VII and VIII.

My dear Lord Byron

The letters that I received today were from Jane, Clare, & Mrs Gisborne, <none> nothing about business in any of them; indeed I do not expect to hear from my father before the expiration of a week. Mrs Gisborne saw him; she says -- “I saw him alone, we spoke of you & <the> of the ever to be lamented catastrophe without any expression or outward sign of sorrow. I thought that he had erred in his memorable assertion & that we human beings really were ‘stocks & stones.” When Peacock called upon me, a tear did force itself into my eye in spite of all my struggles.”

But I do not write to your Lordship to tell you this, but to mention <one thing> another subject in her letter. She says -- “When Mrs Gisborne went to Harrow, to accompany a son of Mr Clementi’s who is placed

1:2

in the Harrow school, he saw the grave of poor Allegra. This was precisely the day your father called on me, the funeral had taken place the day preceding. There was a great outcry among the Ultra priests on the occasion, and at the same time they seemed resolved that the inscription intended by her father, should not be placed in the church. These Gentlemen would willingly cast an eternal veil over King David’s infirmities & their own, but the world will peep through, even though poor Allegra should be without the honours of her inscription.”

Would you tell me the Book, Chapter & verse of this <inscription> quotation for the Epitaph.

I send you Lordship two letters from Hunt -- he says that -- “there appears some mistake about the Preface to the "Vision," but he hopes the realizations on the 7,000 will

1:3

compensate for all defects.” —

Jane writes from Paris -- She has been very ill, but intends proceeding to England without delay. She desires to be remembered to you & begs me to remind you of your promise of bidding Murray send her your works.

This then is all my news. -- Teresa’s visit caused me to be out yesterday when you called, otherwise I am always at home at that hour & when you feel inclined to prolong your ride to this house you will be sure to find me.

I have nearly finished copying your *savage Canto* -- You will cause Milman to hang himself -- “non c’è altro rimedio” -- I was much pleased with your notice of

---

140: *TVOJ* had been set up by John Hunt from an uncorrected proof, with small errors, and no prose prefence.
141: M.S. has just copied *Don Juan XI*.
142: See *Don Juan XI*, st. 58.
Keats – your fashionable World is delightful – & your dove – you mention eight years – exactly the eight years that comprizes my years of happiness – Where also is he, who gone has made this quite, quite another earth from that which it was? – There might be something sunny about me now then, now I am truly cold moonshine.

Adieu, Truly yours,
Mary Shelley

Monday

Byron to Mary Shelley, from Genoa, October 1822:
(Source: Pisa University Library; printed with kind permission; published Mario Curreli, Una certa Signora Mason, Romantici inglesi a Pisa ai tempi di Leopardi, Pisa, Edizioni ETS, 1997, p.99. Not in BLJ)

Dear Mrs. Shelley,

I have received the enclosed notice through Murray from London – which I can’t help thinking a little too premature as well as public. It was not my intention to make my name stand forth quite so dramatically; will you ask Hunt whether he has any news from England on the subject? – I have a long letter from Murray, complaining bitterly about Mr. John Hunt, whose behaviour he says was very rude to him. Have you anything on your affairs?

Mary Shelley to Byron, from Albaro, Genoa, October 30th 1822:
(Source: text from NLS Ms.43506; Bennett I 285)

A note, 10 x 12cm.

I asked Hunt to shew your Lordship Peacock’s letter that you might see that in complying so kindly with my request the other day, you did that which appears to every one the best thing that can be done in the present state of my affairs.

You could not have sent me a more agreeable task than to copy your drama, but I hope you intend to continue it, it is a great favourite of mine.

Truly yours
Mary Shelley

[1:2 and 3 blank.]

Byron to Mary Shelley, from Genoa, November 14th 1822:
(Source: this text from BLJ X 33)

9bre. 14th. 1822

143: See Don Juan XI, st. 60.
144: “where?” See Don Juan XI, stts, 76-85
145: See Don Juan XI, 76, 3.
146: B. had written to Hanson, asking him to put in a good word for M.S. with Sir Timothy Shelley.
147: M.S. is now copying The Deformed Transformed.
Dear M. –

The letter is all very well – but I wish that he would press upon his brother (what is of more importance at least to the quantity of the publication) the expediency of seeing Mr. Kd. the moment he is well enough to receive visitors – else he may never get the M.S.S. at all from Murray – who seems to stick at nothing in all that relates to Hunt’s family. As to any expressions in private letters about Hunt or others – I am not a cautious letter-writer and generally say what comes uppermost at the moment, but I remember in my more deliberate Memoirs (which Murray bought of Moore) having done his character justice – why didn’t M. allude to them? – it were less a breach of confidence than the other? – – The whole thing has been a piece of officious Malice on the part of M. & not very discreet zeal on the part of Hunt’s friends. –

yrs. ever
N. B.

P.S.
I send you the completion of the first part – of the drama – as I think it may be as well to divide it. – although intended to be irregular in all it’s branches.

Mary Shelley to Byron, from Albaro, Genoa, November 16th 1822:
(Source: text from NLS Ms.43506; Bennett I 288-9)

Mary plucks up her courage to accuse Byron of unkindness in sneering at Hunt in his London correspondence, and thus jeopardising The Liberal.

[To the Right Honble. / Lord Byron.]

I am induced to say a few words to your Lordship on this affair of Hunt’s. I wish indeed that I could say them, as these things are always better said; but I will not venture on a second intrusion & dare not inflict upon you the pain of paying me a visit. Hunt did not send those letters to his nephew that he sent for you to read, and this delay has made him reflect. Indeed my dear Lord Byron, he thinks much of this & takes it much to heart. When he reflects that his head {bread} depends upon the success of this journal, & that you depreciate it in those circles where much harm can be done to it; that you depreciate him as a coadjutor, <mak> making it his appear (pardon the quotation) that his poverty & not your will consents – all this dispirits him greatly. He thinks that an explanation would come ungracefully from him, but that it would come gracefully from you. He is very much vexed that his Nephew noticed these reports, but they are noticed, Murray may publish, or give free circulation to your letter, and that places him in a kind of degrading point of view. For “his sick {children} wife & six children” are alleged – not your friendship for him. He said <that he w> this evening that he thought of writing to you about this, but I offered to write instead, to spare him a painful task. He does not see my letter.

Consider that however Moore may laugh at Rimini-pimini, that Hunt is a very good man. Shelley was greatly attached to him

1:2

on account of his integrity, & that really your letter does place him in an awkward situation. The journal is now a work of charity – a kind of subscription for Hunt’s family – this must hurt the work. do not you then think that a few words from you in explanation or excuse such as could appear, {are} due to your [literary] companionship with him? It would be a goodnatured thing – & a <friend> {prudent} thing – since you would stop effectually the impertinence of Murray, by shewing him that he has no power to make you quarrel with your friend, & that you do not fear his treason.

It is a painful thing to me to put forward my own opinion. I have been so long accustomed to have another act for me; but my years of apprenticeship must begin. If I am awkward at first, forgive me. I would, like a dormouse, <sh> roll myself in cotton at the bottom of my cage, & never peep out. But I see Hunt annoyed in every way. Let us pass over his vanity. What if that has been pampered – little else about him has – & qualms have visited {him} even upon that tender point. But here even the independance of his character is in some measure staked – Besides the success of his Journal – &

148: Leigh Hunt.
149: John Hunt.
150: The Deformed Transformed.
151: B. had written slightly of Hunt to Murray, and Murray had circulated his words, to Hunt’s humiliation.
152: “bread” is written in small letters over what appears to be “head”: it could be a correction, not an alternative.
153: Romeo and Juliet, V i 75.
154: The Liberal.
consequently his very existence. So I <n> would fain do a little to make him easy again. <If> You <said to> {asked} me the other evening, why I had not sent you a note about it; I do

1:3

so now. So do not think me impertinent; if you do<n> not know that I am timid, yet I am so: – it is a great effort to me to intrude with my writing upon you. But if I can make Hunt have less painful feelings by inducing you to soften the effect that your letter must have had in London, why for that I will even risk being impertinent.

I have copied your MSS. The “Eternal Scoffer” seems a favourite of yours. The Critics, as they sued to make you a Childe Harold, Giaour, & Lara all in one, will now make a compound of Satan & Cæsar to [Ms. tear: either “form” or “serve as’] your prototype, & your 600 firebrands in Murray’s hands will [Ms. tear: “be in”] costume. I delight in your new style more than in your former glorious one, & shall me [“be” pencilled over] much pleased when your fertile brain gives my fingers more work.

Any news of Douglas Kinnaird? May I ask you to answer this letter soon as Hunt’s letters for England will not be written until it arrives, & really another post ought not to be lost.

Again I beg your Lordship to excuse my <to> annoying you –

Truly Yours
Mary Shelley

Saturday Morning.

Byron to Mary Shelley, from Genoa, November 16th 1822:
(Source: Ms. not found; text from Moore’s Life II 629-30; LJ VI 174-5; BLJ X 34)

Byron, writing on the same day, defends himself as best he may.

I presume that you, at least, know enough of me to be sure that I could have no intention to insult Hunt’s poverty. On the contrary, I honour him for it; for I know what it is, having been as much embarrassed as ever he was, without perceiving aught in it to diminish an honourable man’s self-respect. If you mean to say that, had he been a wealthy man, I would have joined in this Journal, I answer in the negative. * * * I engaged in the Journal from good-will towards him, added to respect for his character, literary and personal; and no less for his political courage, as well as regret for his present circumstances: I did this in the hope that he might, with the same aid from literary friends of literary contributions (which is requisite for all journals of a mixed nature), render himself independent.

I have always treated him, in our personal intercourse, with such scrupulous delicacy, that I have forborne intruding advice which I thought might be disagreeable, lest he should impute it to what is called “taking advantage of a man’s situation”.

As to friendship, it is a propensity in which my genius is very limited. I do not know the male human being, except Lord Clare, the friend of my fancy, for whom I feel any thing that deserves the name. All my others are men-of-the-world friendships. I did not even feel it for Shelley, however much I admired and esteemed him, so that you see not even vanity could bribe me into it, for, of all men, Shelley thought highest of my talents,—and, perhaps, of my disposition.

I will do my duty by my intimates, upon the principle of doing as you would be done by. I have done so, I trust, in most instances. I may be pleased with their conversation—rejoice in their success—be glad to do them service, or to receive their counsel and assistance in return. But as for friends and friendship, I have (as I already said) named the only remaining male for whom I feel any thing of the kind, excepting, perhaps, Thomas Moore. I have had, and may have still, a thousand friends, as they are called, in life, who are like one’s partners in the waltz of this world—not much remembered when the ball is over, though very pleasant for the time. Habit, business, and companionship in pleasure or in pain, are links of a similar kind, and the same faith in politics is another. * * *

Mary Shelley to Byron, from Albaro, Genoa, November 16th 1822:
(Source: text from NLS Ms.43506; Bennett I 289-90)

To the Right Honble / Lord Byron

Mary answers, again on the same day.

Hunt does not feel so lightly as your Lordship does as to what the world will say, & he has a deeper stake than you in it. I have read to him the principal part of your letter & will write word for word his answer. I will add nothing – for really I have nothing to say – except that Murray is a troublesome
fellow & his first firebrand would have been more agreeable if like the Widow’s it, had been hid under a bushell. — Hunt says — “That he thinks something better might have been done, but that these are matters of taste, which it is not to be supposed that any body can alter at a moment’s notice, even if they ought. And that with regard to friendship, he feels that his friendship, in

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the sense in which you speak of it, is in the other world.” —

Certainly if you did not feel any for one of such transcendant merit, & whose merit you so freely acknowledged & praised, as Shelley, he cannot complain. For your pursuits & tastes were far more congenial — & then none of that delicasy you mention, which is the death of all sentiment, had existence between you. I do not think that his poverty in any degree enters upon your consideration, unless to make you hold your hand — for I believe that talents & genius would at any time

1:3

in your mind outweigh the [Ms. tear] Pens. He sees this somewhat differently & talks about your being a Lord, he is quite in the wrong — it is Rimini-pimini & foliage & all that, which makes you dislike entering into the journal, although his talents of another kind have caused you to enter into it.

You cannot tell how I have been pained in entering into this subject [Ms. tear: “with”] you. — But I shall annoy you no more —

Ever your’s obliged,

Mary Shelley

Saturday

Mary Shelley to Byron, from Albaro, Genoa, November 27th 1822:
(Source: text from NLS Ms.43506; Bennett I 293-4)

My Dear Lord Byron

I have received a letter this morning from my father. — He says: “— I saw young Hanson today. His father has not yet seen Whitton. He is over head & ears in an unlucky business of his own respecting his daughter the Countess of Portsmouth. This business is now almost every day before the L. Chancellor. The young man however has promised me an interview with his father in a day or two. I told him I was writing this day to Italy. You shall hear from me the moment I know any thing material on the subject.” — I have plenty of patience in all this, and yet one way or another I shall be very glad when I come to a certainty on my affairs. However thanks to your Lordship’s having prevented my journey to England, I can wait without any inconvenience for some time longer.

I have had also a letter from Jane. She

is arrived, is in good health & is at present residing with her Mother. She desires to be kindly remembered to you.

This is all my news. Except that both my father & Jane say that Peacock does not appear lukewarm but assiduous in my affairs. This is indeed of much consequence as he is on the spot. Besides that it is always a pleasant thing to receive kindness; and I need not say how truly I thank you for those that you have shewn me. I am quite of the old school with regard to gratitude & I feel it very deeply whenever my friends are good enough to shew affection for me

1:3

and I am not afraid of being misinterpreted when I express it —

Truly yours

Mary Shelley

Wednesday

Casa Negroto

155: The Story of Rimini and Foliage were two of Hunt’s books of poetry.
156: Hanson’s daughter had married the Earl of Portsmouth in 1814, and B. had given the bride away. The Earl now had an affidavit against him alleging insanity. He was declared insane despite B.’s disposition to the contrary.
Mary Shelley to Byron, from Albaro, Genoa, December 14th (?) 1822:
(Source: text from NLS Ms.43506; Bennett I 299)
[To the Rt. Hon. / Lord Byron]
A small note, 10x12cm.

Your Lordships MS. was very difficult to decypher, so pardon blunders & omissions.
I like your Canto extremely; it has only touches of your highest style of poetry, but it is very amusing & delightful. It is a comfort to get anything to gild the dark clouds now my sun is set. – Sometimes when very melancholy I repeat your lyric in “The Deformed”, & that for a while enlivens me – But –

But I will not scrawl nonsense to you

Adieu Yours MaryS.

Saturday

from Byron to John Murray, from Genoa, December 25th 1822:
(Source: text from NLS Ms.434893; LJ VI 155-8; QII 715-18; BLJ X 67-70)
Part of the last letter Byron writes to Murray from Italy. He only writes one more, from Missolonghi.

Alas! poor Shelley – how he would have laughed – had he lived, and how we used to laugh now & then – at various things – which are grave in the Suburbs. – You are all mistaken about Shelley – – you do not know – how mild – how tolerant – how good he was in Society – and as perfect a Gentleman as ever crossed a drawing room; – when he liked & where he liked.

Byron to Sir Timothy Shelley, from Genoa, January 7th 1823:
(Source: Ms. not found; text from Roger Ingpen, Shelley in England, Kegan Paul 1917, pp.563-5; BLJ X 78-9)
Byron tries to persuade Shelley’s father to provide for Mary and her son.

GENOA,
Jan. 7, 1823.

Sir,—I trust that the only motive of this letter will be sufficient apology, even from a stranger—I had the honour of being the friend of the late Percy B. Shelley, and am still actuated by the same regard for his memory and the welfare of his family—to which I beg leave to add my respect for yourself and his connections. My Solicitor lately made an application to Mr. Whitton a gentleman in your confidence, in favour of Mr. Shelley’s Widow and child by his second marriage both being left by his untimely death entirely destitute.

My intimacy with your late son and the circumstances to me unknown ’till after his decease—of my being named one of the Executors in a will which he left but which is of no avail at present—and may perhaps be always unavailable—seemed to justify this intrusion through a third person. I am unwilling to trouble you personally, for the subject is very painful to my feelings and must be still more so to yours—I must now, however, respectfully submit to you, the totally destitute state of your daughter-in-law and her child, and I would venture to add—that neither are unworthy your protection. Their wishes are by no means extravagant, a simple provision to prevent them from absolute want now staring them in the face is all that they seek—and where can they look for it with propriety—or accept it without bitterness—except from yourself?

I am not sufficiently aware of Mr. Shelley’s family affairs to know on what terms he stood with his family, nor if I were so should I presume to address you on that subject. But he is in his grave—he was your Son—and whatever his errors and opinions may have been—they were redeemed by many good and noble qualities.

Might I hope, Sir, that by casting an eye of kindness on his relict and her boy it would be a comfort to them—it would one day be a comfort to yourself, for if ever he had been so unfortunate as to offend you, they are innocent; but I will not urge the topic further and am far more willing to trust to your own feelings and judgment, than to any appeal which may be made to them by others.

157: Don Juan XII.
Mrs. Shelley is for the present residing near Genoa—indeed she has not the means of taking a journey to England—nor of remaining where she is without some assistance. That this should be derived from other sources than your protection, would be humiliating to you and to her—but she has still hopes from your kindness—let me add from your justice to her and to your Grandchild.

I beg leave to renew my apology for intruding upon you, which nothing but the necessity of so doing would have induced, and have the honour to be,

Your most obedient,

Very humble Servant,

NOEL BYRON

TO SIR T. SHELLEY, Bart.,

etc., etc.

Mary Shelley to Byron, from Albaro, Genoa, January 7th 1823:
(Source: text from NLS Ms.43506; Bennett I 301)

[To the Rt. Honble / Lord Byron]

Mary has read the previous item.

Have you the Posthumous Works of Gibbon & could you lend me them?

My dear Lord Byron

Your letter is very good, & I cannot express to you how obliged I am by your kindness – You have been & are very kind to me now that I have so few friends that I feel it & want it most.

You have not mentioned in your letter that you enclose by my desire the certificates my father mentioned – but as those must be got in England I think it is best as it is.

When you send to the post – will you have the kindness to send Lega to me for letters.

Most truly yours obliged

MaryShelley.

Tuesday.

[1:2 and 3 blank.]

Mary Shelley to Byron, from Albaro, Genoa, February 2nd (?) 1823:
(Source: text from NLS Ms.43506; Bennett I 311)

[To the Rt Honble / Lord Byron]

A note, 11 x 13cm.

Sunday

The more I read this Poem 158 that I send, the more I admire it. I pray that Your Lordship will finish it. – It must be your own inclination that will govern you in that, but from what you have said, I have some hopes that you will. You never wrote any thing more beautiful than one lyric in it – & the whole, I am tempted to say, surpasses “Your former glorious style” – <&> at least it fully equals the very best parts of your best productions.

Truly Yours – MWS.

[1:2 and 3 blank.]

Byron to Mary Shelley, from Genoa, February 24th 1823:
(Source: text from Morgan Library photocopy; BLJ X 108)

[To, / Mrs Shelley – . / &c. &c. / Albaro]

Fy. 24th. 1823.

Dear M.

I enclose Sir T. S.’s reply. – Would you have the goodness to request L. Hunter to return the two vols of Napoleon – (if finished) as Sir J. W. promised to lend them to the Countess D’Isson of Cannes. – I would also thank H. for “the Blues” as I have something to do at them. – I have no other news – but on business – and continual declamation against the Liberal from all parties – literary – amicable – and political – I never heard so persevering an outcry against any work – nor do I know the reason for not even dullness or demerit could authorize the extraordinary tone of reprobation. – – –

Mary Shelley to Byron, from Albaro, Genoa, February 25th 1823 (a):

158: B. has been sending M.S. The Deformed Transformed, passage by passage. He never finishes it.
My dear Lord Byron

I am indeed at a loss to conceive of what is at present to be done; there is no law to help me, & certainly no feeling that can be of service to me with a man who could make that insolent & hardhearted proposition about my poor boy.¹⁵⁹ – That did a little overcome my philosophy. If the persecuted Liberal¹⁶⁰ still continues that may in some degree prevent my burthening any one in my present evil fortune – if not some other means may be thought of. Perhaps if I were in England he might be shamed into doing something, but the difficulty of getting there, & the dearness of living when arrived, would I think destroy all good that could accrue from such a journey; though doubtless my being in Italy does my cause no good.

I sent a copy of the letter last night to

my father that I might as soon as possible have his opinion & advice upon it. Your Lordship’s also would of course be gratifying to me – but I fancy that you feel as I do, that the affair is hopeless.

I have been expecting Don Juan but I fear your Lordship’s illness has been the cause of its delay – perhaps this fine weather will cure you –

Very truly Yours

Mary Shelley

Albaro

Tuesday –

Mary Shelley to Byron, from Albaro, February 25th 1823 (b):

My dear Lord Byron

I cannot call on the C. G. today or I should be glad to do so, that I might have an opportunity to converse with your Lordship.

It appears to me that the mode in which Sir T. S. expresses himself about my child plainly shew [con] {by} what mean principles he would be actuated – he does not offer him an assylum in his own house, but a beggarly provision under the care of a stranger.

Setting aside that I would not part with him. Some thing is due to me – <Every> I should not live ten days seperated {from} him¹⁶¹ – If it were necessary for me to die for his benef it the sacrifice would be easy – but

his delicate <health> {frame} requires all a Mothers solicitude – nor shall he be deprived of my anxious love & assiduous attention to his happiness while I have it in my power to bestow it on him. Not to mention that his future respect for his excellent father & his moral well being greatly depend upon his being from the immediate influence of his relations –

This perhaps you will think nonsense & it is inconceivably painful to me to discuss a point which appears to

me as clear as noonday – besides I loose all – all honourable station & name when I admit that I am not a fitting person to take care of my infant – The insult is keen – the pretence for heapimg it upon me too gross – the advantage to them if the will came to be contested would be too immense ——

¹⁵⁹: Sir Timothy Shelley is demanding custody of Percy Florence as a condition of his maintaining him.
¹⁶⁰: John Hunt is being threatened with prosecution over TVOJ.
¹⁶¹: M.S. has seen how being parted from an only child affected C.C.
As a matter of feeling I would never consent to it — I am said to have a cold heart – there are feelings however so strongly implanted in my nature that to root them out life will go with it — I am delighted to hear that you are well – Don Juan will not annoy me – I am obliged to occupy myself closely to curb in some degree the agitation that in spite of all my efforts possesses me.

Most <try> truly yours
Mary Shelley

Tuesday
½ past 2 P.M.

I will come down to Casa Saluzzi tomorrow

Byron to Mary Shelley, from Genoa, March 1823:
(Source: photofacsimile, Литературное Наследство, 1952, p.992; BLJ X 112)

I have been very unwell – these last three days – with a swelled face – painful as if it were more perilous. – I do not know what to suggest at present in the subject of Sir T’s communication – but I will think over the affair – and let you know. – yours ever

Mary Shelley to Byron, from Albaro, Genoa, March 5th 1823:
(Source: text from NLS Ms.43506; Bennett I 320)
A small note, 10 x 12cm.

I have received a letter from my father today, & should be glad to see your Lordship, if possible before the Post goes out to England. If it be not inconvenient to you would you come up this evening at your usual hour? or <you> will you mention a convenient time when I can see you at your own house?

Pardon this annoyance, your own kindness has caused it – & I hope that that kindness is sufficient to render you not very impatient under the trouble it has drawn on you.

Salute Madam Guiccioli for me
Truly yours
Mary Shelley

Wednesday – Casa Negroto

Mary Shelley to Byron, from Albaro, Genoa, March 30th 1823:
(Source: text from NLS Ms.43506; Bennett I 324)
[To the Right Honble Lord Byron]

My dear Lord Byron
The 15th Canto was so long coming even after I had heard that it was finished, that I began to suspect that you thought that you were annoying me by send[ing] me employment. Be assured however on the contrary, that besides the pleasure it gives me to be in the slightest manner useful to your Lordship, the task itself is a delightful one to me.

Is Aurora162 a portrait? <She is> Poor Juan I long to know how he goes out or rather into the net. Are the other Cantos to be published soon?

I have had no letters. I wait with no pleasant expectation for the result of my father’s deliberations – it little matters which way he decides for either to go or stay are equally disagreeable

162: Aurora Raby, Catholic heroine of the Norman Abbey cantos of Don Juan.
to me in the situation I now am. But the present state of things cannot & shall not last, though I see but
dimly what is to come in lieu of it. I think it will be England after all – that will be best for my boys
health & perhaps the least unexceptionable part for me to take.

I hope this fine weather has cured all your incommodi.

Truly Your’s obliged

Mary Shelley

Albaro

Sunday

Will you lend me those verses on Lady B. that Hunt had a few weeks ago?

[1:3 blank.]

Mary Shelley to Byron, from Albaro, Genoa, March 31st 1823:
(Source: text from NLS Ms.43506; Bennett I 325)
[To the R't. Hon. / Lord Byron]

My dear Lord Byron

I am afraid I annoy you very much by intruding myself and my affairs on you. I had hopes at
one time not to have troubled any one; but fate is inimical to me.

I have received a letter from my father who thinks well of what I mentioned to your
Lordship when I last saw you, rather more than a month ago, of a letter to Lord Holland. I
cannot go to England until after M's. Hunt's confinement, & you seemed then to think that in the
interim it might be well if my father saw Lord Holland, introduced by a letter from you. Do you

1:2

still think so – and would you write?

I send you my father's letter that you may judge better – you will smile at the idea of Hunt's
wishing to keep me – I am no such Gods-send to any one – & he would find a better consoler –
though I have entire hope that it will not be needed & all will go well.

I am sufficiently out of spirits. The idea of maintaining myself in England I own frightens
me. I – who nine days out of ten am too agitated & miserable to write at all. – However I hope
my fortitude will re-awaken some of these days

1:3

and in the mean time I have sufficient for the present. That is to say if the 3rd No. of the Liberal
Comes out.63

Again I entreat your Lordship to excuse me – Your own kindness is indeed my only excuse –
retract that, & I shall have none – & without one I will not sin.

Yours Obliged

Mary Shelley

Monday

Albaro

I would come down – but I have found that there is small chance of seeing you when I do –

Mary Shelley to Byron, from Albaro, Genoa, April 2nd 1823 (?)
(Source: text from NLS Ms.43506; Bennett I 326)
[R't. Hon. / Lord Byron]

A small note, 9 x 12cm. Mary answers a letter from Byron which is missing.

My dear Lord Byron,

163: The Liberal No 3 came out on April 26th 1823. M.S. had a piece in it (Madame D'Houtetot).
I could not well wait for you yesterday, but I do not intend to write to my father until next week. In the interval perhaps you can come up here; or if not, if you will let me know when I can conveniently see you, I will come down to Casa Saluzzi.

I am very grateful to you for your kind offers yesterday. In part I must avail myself of them to get to England.

1:2
but I know too well how many claims you must have on you and have been myself to long in a situation where more limited in our means yet no one was satisfied with the little we did, not to have pity on the situation of one to whom all look up to as their prop, & be assured that I shall presume as little as possible on your kindness, & your demonstrations of good will, will not cause me to tire those feelings, although I own that the expression of them is highly gratifying to me.

I hear that you have begun Your 16th Canto. I trust that your Lordship will make use of me, in the only way I can be of service to you as long as my residence near you gives you the opportunity

Truly Y’. Obliged

MaryS.

Wednesday.

Mary Shelley to Byron, from Albaro, Genoa, June 14th 1823:
(Source: text from NLS Ms.43506; Bennett I 343)
[Rt. Hon. / Lord Byron]
Byron has decided to go to Greece.

My dear Lord Byron

I have had a letter from Trelawny today which I must answer by return of post – He expresses the greatest willingness to accompany your Lordship to Greece, and anxiety lest you should change your resolution, which resolution he says has excited great praise and admiration every where – Is your vessel hired – & is your going more certain than when I last saw you? Trelawny says that he is willing to stake his all in the Grecian cause –

Truly Y’ obliged

Mary Shelley

Albaro Saturday

Mary Shelley to Byron, from Albaro, Genoa, July 13th 1823:
(Source: text from Bodleian M.S.Shelley, Adds., d.5, f.86; Bennett I 348)
Mary Shelley’s last letter to Byron.

Albaro July 13

Dear LordByron

I did not wish to spare myself the pain of taking leave. We understood from Conte Pietro to-day that you did not embark till tomorrow evening or mid-day at {the} earliest. I intended therefore to settle this pecuniary matter first by letter, there being better subjects for discourse in this world; & then to come down & bid you farewell, which I will do {accordingly} if you please, tomorrow morning.

In the mean time as the message which Mad. Guiccioli has been kind enough to transmit to me, still leaves me an uneasy sense of vagueness in my mind, will you do me the favour to state in whose hands you have left this matter & what is it’s precise nature

Yours sincerely

[no signature, though space available]

164: M.S.’s intelligence is efficient. B. started Canto XVI on March 29th.
165: B. and his party tried to leave for Greece on this date, but were turned back by the weather and did not leave until the 17th.
Byron departed for Greece on July 16th. Having refused to see Mary, he requested that she go to the Casa Saluzzo as he left, in order to comfort Teresa. Mary had already written Teresa three letters, commiserating with her, and declining Teresa’s offer to reconcile her and Byron. Part of Teresa’s French translation of Mary’s Italian is thus translated into English:

Dear Contessina ... the feeling of hostility is so painful that it is a great consolation to me to find that the poison has not reached you. I thank you truly for your offers – but if I am to understand that you want to mediate between Lord Byron and myself, I fear that you will not succeed. I felt no repugnance from the idea of accepting obligations and kindnesses from a friend – and I imagined, or to put it better, I flattered myself that LB would be glad to bind me with ties not only of friendship but also of gratitude. But now all is over – and he who has no esteem for me cannot be my Benefactor.

Ld Byron having said that it would be disagreeable for him to see me, you realize that I cannot have the pleasure of calling on you, but I would be charmed to see you here. (Bennett I 346).

Mary’s letter to Jane Williams of July 23rd says the rest:

Lord Byron, Trelawney Pierino Gamba &c sailed for Greece on the 17th Ult. I did not see the former. His unconquerable avarice prevented him from supplying me with money, & a remnant of shame caused him to avoid me .... The Guiccioli has gone to Bologna—e poi cosa fara? Chi lo sa? Cosa vuol che la diso? He talks seriously of returning to her, and may if he finds none of equal rank to be got as cheaply—She cost him nothing & was thus invaluable (Bennett I 349)


April 19th 1824: death of Byron.