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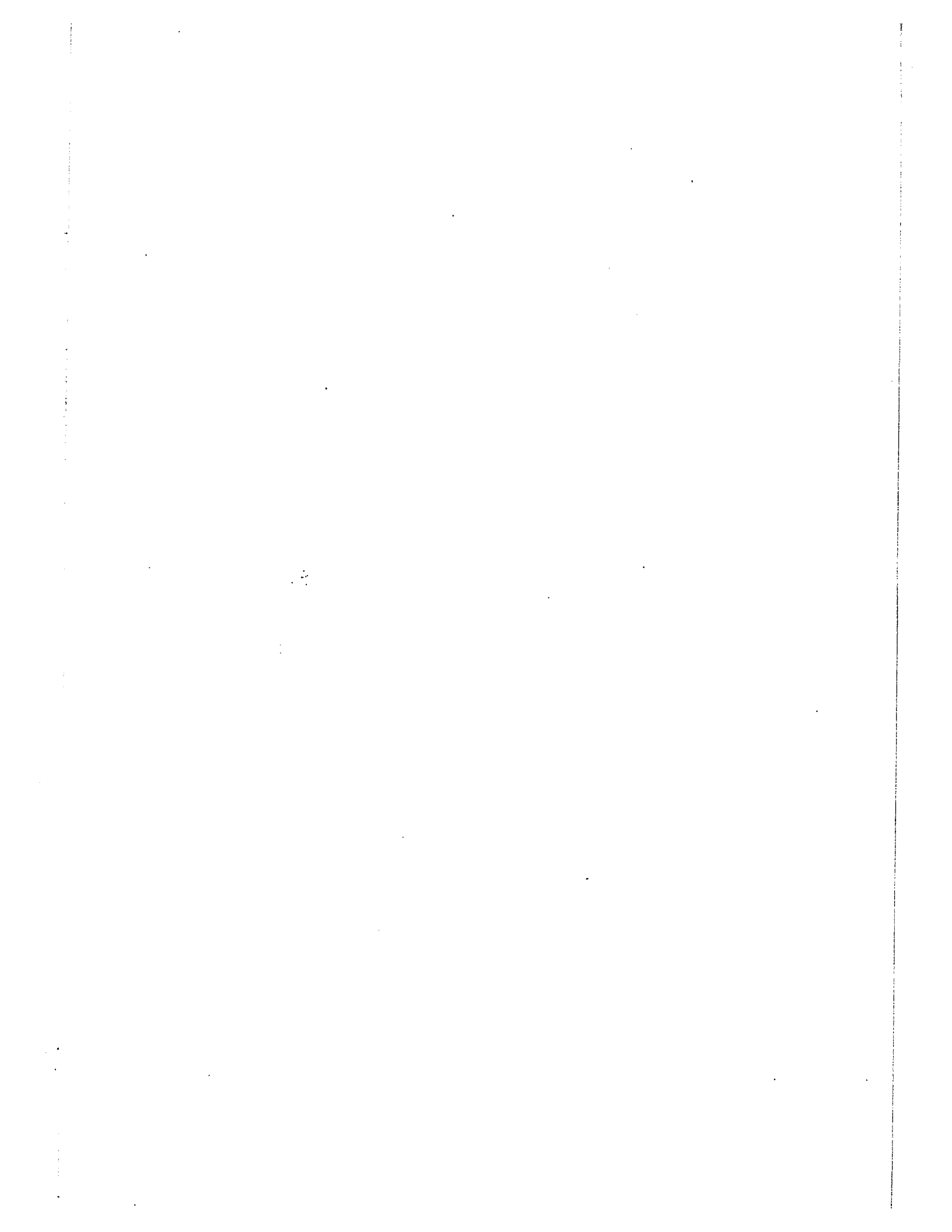
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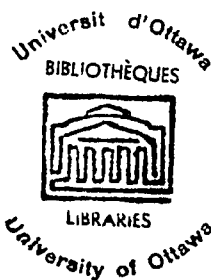
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BYRON IN EXILE



A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts.

CLARENCE O'GORMAN, B.A.

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Byron in Exile

That the title of this thesis may not be misinterpreted, I feel that a word of explanation is at least advisable, if not necessary. Many titles could have been formulated which would have partly but not wholly suited the material contained in the following pages. Since I feel that Byron's poetry is so closely connected with his life, and since I wish to deal only with that part of his work which was composed while he was in exile, I feel justified in giving it the title - "Byron in Exile."

In the few pages allotted me, it is my aim first, to show that Byron's poetry is really a picture of the author's life and character; secondly, to show the circumstances and influences which more or less forced him to lead such a life, and as a result such poetry - for as he lived so he wrote. To develop these two points it has been necessary for me to refer to his private life, which as far as possible I have tried to keep as the mere background of this thesis.

It would seem that taking only a part of a man's career and dealing with it would be unfair to the man himself, and would also be a piece of work devoid of unity, for a man's life and career is like a chain and in order to reach the middle link, we must start by the first. On the strength of the first link often depends the strength of the whole

chain,- as the old saying goes,- " a chain is no stronger than its weakest link." Thus in chapter one I have made a brief summary of the poet's life from his birth to the time of his exile, and in later chapters have often referred to this period of his life as an influence on his work.

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Chapter 1

Byron's Life up to 1816.

George Gordon Byron was born in Holles Street, London, on the 22nd of January, 1788. His father, Captain Byron, was a baron, and his mother an heiress, which appears to have been her only attraction in the eyes of his father. Their marriage was a most unhappy one, embittered and embroiled by debts and extravagance of the husband, and the violent, passionate disposition of the wife. Sometimes living together, sometimes apart, Byron's parents never afforded him the remembrance of a happy, peaceful home; and the death of his father, when he was only in his third year, left him under the control of a mother as little qualified to bring up a boy of a wayward and spirited disposition as she possibly could be.

In 1790 he was taken to Aberdeen by his mother where he was brought up amidst quarrels, beatings, the flight of all sorts of missiles and most coarse and intemperate language. Owing to the temper of his mother, he received an injury at his birth, by which one of his feet became deformed, and rendered him lame for life. In 1798 in his eleventh year he inherited the title of Lord, which necessitated his moving from Aberdeen to live in Newstead Abbey.

As to his education he was sent to Harrow and then to Cambridge where he spent most of his time reading and writing and his leisure hours, "in rowing, rebelling, breaking

bounds, and mischief of every kind." In his twentieth year, he, however, published the collection entitled "Hours of Idleness", began an epic poem, called "Bosworth Field," and wrote part of a novel; and this amidst dissipation of the wildest and least refined nature. With scanty means, and uncountenanced by any leaders of rank and fashion, he did not now enjoy the welcome into families of distinction, which his fame afterwards procured him; so that his pleasures were of a gross, unsocial nature. But this was part of his poetical education; his wildest excesses furnished materials for his great poems, both as to facts and reflections! "Almost all Don Juan," he said, "is real life, either my own or other people's."

Because Byron; a lord, launched himself in the field of literature, all eyes were turned on him, and he was severely criticized in the Edingburgh Review. This only put fire to his passionate blood, and he immediately began the composition of "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers."

On the 22nd of January, 1809, he came of age; on the 13th of March he took his seat in the House of Lords, and on the 16th of the same month published his celebrated reply to the Edingburgh Review, in "English

Bards and Scotch Reviewers." This reply angered a great part of the literary world, but it, at the same time, proved the ability of the young poet, and that he was too good a master of the art of satire to be again attacked without any consideration as to his ability. His appearance in the assembly did not rouse much attention, and this had a decided effect on his character. For Byron being a man of strong and wild passions, great pride of birth, a full sense of his abilities, and little but debts and destitution before him, he was so depressed in spirits that a profound cynicism took possession of his mind, and from that hour was the prevailing trait of his character.

In this tone of mind Byron left England to travel, rather with the idea of getting rid of home, than acquiring knowledge. But such an observer could not but amass a store of ideas wherever he went. No poetry of high quality was more completely filled with facts than Byron's; it is true that his vivid, and fanciful imagination, placed these facts in new aspects, or gave them a more beautiful decoration, but all were drawn from himself, his friends, or the scenes he had actually beheld, or the books he had read. This makes his work more intelligible.

Consistently with his self-painting, the poem

with which his mind was busy during his first travels, is entirely self-reflective, that is to say, his own actual adventures, wanderings, thoughts, and passions. The poem is filled with the idea of revolution, which was a trait of his character, even at an early age:

<sup>c</sup> Fair Greece! Sad relic of departed worth!  
Immortal, though no more; though fallen, great!  
Who now shall lead thy scatter'd children forth,  
and long accustom'd bondage uncreate?  
Not such thy sons who whilome did await,  
The hopeless warriors of a willing doom;  
In Bleak Thermopylae's sepulchral strait —  
Oh! who that gallant spirit shall resume,  
Leap from Eurotas' banks, and call thee from the tomb?.

Not only did it contain something of the revolutionary, but also the vices, the follies, the fallacies, the eccentricities of mankind were rendered subject to the muse as well as the poetical elements, and all tinged by the cynical spirit of the writer.

In his first wanderings he seems to have been in search of the beautiful and the classic. His first stop was Lisbon, whose beautiful bay must have been strongly provocative of a love of travel, whilst the degradation of the inhabitants of the country furnished ample

matter for the indulgence of a cynical mood. From Lisbon he went to Seville and Cadiz, still observing, all, and never forgetting to throw woman, the principal object of his thoughts through life, into the foreground of every picture he took. He then visited Malta, Preveza, Salarno, Arta, Joannini, Zolto, and Tepaleen, where he was introduced to Ali Pasha.

I do not wish to follow him through his wanderings amongst the classics, although he enjoyed himself plenty. But having remained six weeks at Athens, he then went to Smyrna, where he wrote the second canto of "Childe Harold." He next explored the ruins of Ephesus, and from there proceeded to Constantinople. Being close to Homer's scene of action, he visited Trood. But he was not satisfied with believing in Homer, he wished to prove one of the poetically - registered wonders of antiquity practicable, he rivalled Leander by swimming from Sestos to Abydos. He made another short sojourn at Constantinople, during which he enjoyed an excursion through the Bosphorus to the Black Sea and Cyanean Symplegades; he then returned to Athens, where, after a trip to Corinth, and a tour of the Morea to visit Veloy Pasha, he seemed to linger as loath to depart, and took up his residence at the Franciscan convent. While

here he wrote many of the beautiful smaller pieces rendered interesting by local circumstances and personal associations, by which they are to be traced, among which may be particularly noted "the Curse of Minerva," — a severe castigation of Lord Elgin.

After an absence of two years he, in July 1811, returned to England. He proposed settling at Newstead and sent down some furniture to render it more comfortable. He had established his mother there before his departure. His coming home proved the signal for her death; for, when the upholsterer appeared with the furniture, she, from some little mistake on his part, flew into one of those fits of rage that had been so frequent in Byron's youth, but which, in this instance, produced a fit, and the fit death. As the mother of a Byron, he of course, paid her a decent respect, but did not affect grief.

Once more in London, he fell willingly into the vortex of pleasure, to which very shortly great inducements were added. On the 27th of February, he made his first speech in the House of Lords; it was respectable, but yet did not hold out a promise of much oratorical excellence, and he seldom spoke afterwards. But as "English Bards" had been closely connected with his taking his seat, so his first speech was as quickly followed by

the great event of his life, the publication of "Childe Harold." He preferred other comparatively worthless works to this his best, and was with great difficulty prevailed upon to publish it. He however, was persuaded by Mr. Dallas, the author of some novels, to whom he gave the copyright. He was soon made aware of his error; for the sensation created by the poem was immense; as he expresses it, "I awoke one morning, and found myself famous!" To him who three years before could not gain entrance to good society, not only was every door of the great and the rich thrown open, but all the fascinations of beauty and pleasure were put into force to allure the titled genius into their circle. The very persons he had so freely vituperated in his satire, felt their anger melt away beneath his genius, and eagerly sought his friendship.

Numerous poems now flowed from this genius like a flood. Byron proved that no poet since Shakespeare had so deep an insight into so many and various objects of poetry: the deepest passions, the most airy trifles, - the deepest feeling, - the most heartless cynicisms - all flowed from his pen. Through the whole of his writings, from English Bards to the last Canto of Don Juan,

there is one prominent character in the picture — himself. Byron was inseparably connected with his heroes, and a man with "one virtue and a thousand crimes," was not likely to make a good husband, particularly when that single virtue itself looked very like a vice.

Nevertheless, increasing difficulties, forced him to look for a wealthy marriage, or more travel. He proposed making a voyage to Abyssinia, but in the meantime, he sought the hand of Annabella Milbanke, Lady Melbourne's niece. She rejected his proposal, and another period of dejection followed in Byron's life. His pride had been hurt, and for a time it prevented him from deriving any pecuniary advantage from his writings. However having overcome his scruples, he made quite a few good bargains which helped him financially. But in the meantime his debts had been accumulating and a more pressing need for a wealthy marriage was more apparent. His friends advised him to do so; but whom should he choose. He had many that were eligible, but Annabella Milbanke seemed to be his choice at the moment.

Ever since Byron's first proposal Annabella Milbanke had taken an attitude of sympathy towards Byron.

She had heard rumours of his misconduct, and of his troubles, and from then on had taken a more friendly attitude towards her hero. She had by now, undertaken the task of reforming him.

When Byron proposed a second time, Miss Milbanke accepted. She of the reflective, metaphysical, and mathematical nature, was good, pious, learned, and highly intellectual, whereas Byron was dissipated, a sceptic, a man of fiery genius, and boasting in his wilfulness — such a match was like the bringing together of fire and water. After an absence from each other of ten months, during which time Byron attempted to discourage his fiancée from entering into the marital union, they were married.

Byron seemed to consider his marriage as a means of revenge. At the time of his first proposal he had hoped for happiness through a wife that would dominate him, and such he thought was in the power of Annabella to be the heroine of his own drama, but she had refused to become his wife, and now he gave her the role of victim rather than heroine. Byron seemed to be saying to himself — How you have been the dupe of your own imagination! How is it possible that a woman of your common sense could have formed the absurd hope of reforming,

me? There was a time when you would have been able to save me; now it is too late. It suffices that you be my wife that I should hate you, now. When I offered myself, the first time, you could have done everything with me. Now you will see that you have married a demon — And all this time Annabella was trying to reform Byron.

Annabella, with her traditional principles of psychology, ignored or at least pretended not to be affected by her husband's fits of madness, his personal reflections, and his religious and moral principles, and went about trying to reform her spoilt child. She, no doubt, understood his type of character but used the wrong means to attain the end: rather than be light - hearted, she always managed to make the subject of conversation a serious one — often talking of his lameness and trying to make him forget it, by continually talking about it. When the subject of religion was approached, he would dare her to convert him. Because she was virtuous, Byron wished her to become wicked, and everything he did aimed at the mark.

Such, a marital life, in which two people of directly opposed characters were continually trying to force the one to submit to the other became insupportable

for both, and especially for Byron. For a man accustomed, as Byron was, to a complete independence, and then suddenly to be confined with this same person, under the same roof, was more than he could possibly endure. This added to his financial difficulties and his super - charged temperament, led Byron into fits of madness. His wife thinking him really mad, had doctors examine him, and thereby augmented his anger. The evident finally happened — Lady Byron found out that he was in his right mind, and she left him, returned to her father and refused ever to see him again.

Chapter 2

Byron in Geneva 1816

Meeting of Shelley

Byron, now separated from his wife, was free to devote himself more to himself. He now made a second separation, and that from the land of his birth, which had been more or less unfavourable to him both in his public and private life, and sought a place suitable for his type of character and work. He chose the continent. After visiting the scenes of battle in which his idol, Napoleon, had taken part, he finally settled in Geneva.

Geneva was to give Byron more than lofty mountains, flowing streams, green valleys, and separation from England; it gave him Shelley whom he had never seen before, but he had read his poem Queen Mab and admired it.

Shelley and Byron became very intimate friends. Both loved the world of ideas, both had liberal opinions on politics and considered Waterloo the beginning of an era of reaction. They also shared more simple tastes which often are the cause of long friendships. They liked to live on water, and many were the hours spent in Shelley's boat, in which the two poets compared and discussed their different doctrines.

Shelley was an atheist and an idealist. He believed that God and the Devil were projections of human

tendencies. Evil for him was not as it was for Byron, an element necessary for human nature — for the pure heart all things are pure. Jupiter, creator of hatred, owed his existence to that which remains of hatred in the heart of Prometheus. The Devil of the Christians owed his existence to the wickedness of certain souls. Evil existed but not in nature; it was this artificial deformity, that creates and assemble in society, and that one finds in marriages, in soldiers, in judges, and in monarchs. The only natural reality for Shelley, was that Beauty that avows of harmony, and which is found in placid lakes, in singing birds, and in twinkling stars.

Byron's doctrine was not as light as that of Shelley, his was more the doctrine of the Methodist, the Calvinist, the Augustinian. Things were not as simple as Shelley believed. Evil existed, it was sin. He knew that man was not good — especially when he judged others by himself. In politics he agreed with Shelley in hoping for the liberty of those who were oppressed, but he did not believe that these could be delivered or freed by means of vague and generous words. He wanted action, a definite action. His horror of society was altogether different from that of Shelley. Shelley, idealist even in his dislikes, disliked a world imagined by himself and

did not understand the unspiritual world. Byron, realist, fled from a society which he had hoped to conquer. For Shelley, life was a simple problem; a struggle between the forces of goodness which, he thought reigned within himself, and a world exterior to himself. He was not divided within himself; he knew but one Shelley. Byron knew several Byrons, and for him the conflict was exterior. It was the conflict between the sentimental and the cynic, between pride and tenderness, between the conformist and the revolutionist, between one of the most generous and one of the most cruel of beings. That unbending destiny that had compelled him to actions so much regretted, was not a creation of his mind. He did not believe, like Shelley, that it was in the power of man to recreate the universe, he recognized about him, the existence of divine and devilish forces. Shelley pronounced himself an atheist. For Byron, the Creator existed, but creation was bad. Cain had reason to complain of the God of the Jews, Prometheus to damn Jupiter, and he, Byron innocent victim of his own blood, he too belonged to the class of revolutionists.

Thus two men of such diverging principles and poetic tendencies travelled into the land of Rousseau.

While Shelley explored, Byron read. In reading Rousseau's "La Nouvelle Heloise," Byron was influenced to write The Prisoner of Chillon. Unlike Scott who wrote most of his romantic verse tales after being inspired through books and historical documents, Byron visited the Chateau de Chillon before beginning to write about it. He saw it, and touched it, and was thus in a better position to write about it. The main character in The Prisoner of Chillon is chained up with his two younger brothers. Their father and three others had perished. He sees his two brothers die, and is unable to attend to them. Finally he breaks his chain and is free. When reading the poem one cannot possibly deny the presence of Byron in every stanza. We see that anguish of spirit, that ever present aspect of torture and death, which is so typical of Byron. When the second of the younger brothers had died and the elder recovered his senses and sees a bird perched in a crevice and says:

"It seem'd like me to want a mate,  
But was not half so desolate,  
And it was come to love me when  
None lived to love me so again."

Is not this a picture of Byron himself in his desolation of spirit? And again speaking of the bird:

"And then t'was mortal well I knew,  
For he would never thus have flown,  
And left me twice so doubly lone,  
Lone as the corse within its shroud,  
Lone as a solitary cloud, -  
A single cloud on a sunny day,  
While all the rest of heaven is clear,  
A frown upon the atmosphere,  
That hath no business to appear,  
When skies are blue, and earth is gay."

Is not this typical of the Byronic character - when he seems to think that even the birds turn against him. The whole poem is saturated with Byronic suffering at the hands of others.

Shelley had a still greater influence on Byron, which was to encourage him to read Wordsworth. Byron had always refused to read Wordsworth. But in these beautiful surroundings, inspired and calmed by Lake Lemana, he began to like a poetry in which he found the love of pantheism, which was Shelley's religion. Under this double influence new and softer notes appeared in his work. With the beautiful mountains behind him and the flowing waters of the lake in front of him, Byron seemed to find peace. Nature and solitude was perhaps the secret of happiness which he had

until now thought impossible.

"I live not in myself, but I become  
Portion of that around me; and to me  
High mountains are a feeling, but the hum  
Of human cities torture: I can see  
Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be  
A link reluctant in a fleshly chain,  
Class'd among creatures, when the soul can flee,  
And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain  
Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in vain.  
And thus I am absorb'd and this is life:  
I look upon the peopled desert past,  
As on a place of agony and strife,  
Where, for some sin, to sorrow I was cast,  
To act and suffer, but remount at last  
With a fresh pinion; which I feel to spring,  
Though young, yet waxing vigorous as the blast  
Which it would cope with, on delighted wing,  
Spurning the clay-cold bonds which round our being cling.

And when at length the mind shall be all free  
From what it hates in this degraded form,  
Reft of its carnal life, save what shall be  
Esistent happier in the fly and worm —  
When elements to elements conform,

And dust is as it should be, shall I not  
Feel all I see, less dazzling, but more warm?  
The bodiless thought? the Spirit of each spot?  
Of which, even now, I share at times the immortal lot?

Are not the mountains, waves, skies a part  
Of me and of my soul, as I of them?  
Is not the love of these deep in my heart  
With a pure passion? should I not contemn  
All objects, if compared with these? and stem  
A tide of suffering, rather than forego  
Such feelings for the hard and worldly phlegm  
Of those whose eyes are only turned below,  
Gazing upon the ground, with thoughts which dare not glow?"

The form remained that of Byron; the outline retained Byron's preciseness. But, in the liquid form of Wordsworth, it was really his vision of the world.

If Byron had little influence on Shelley, Shelley certainly had a good influence on Byron. Through his magnetism Shelley succeeded in implanting in Byron a few pantheistic germs which Byron had almost, and I might say, totally abhorred before. This, pantheism, seemed to put a silver lining to Byron's mockery, and hence made his mockery more digestable.

Chapter 3

Manfred

While living in Switzerland, Byron had met Mathew Monk Lewis, who had translated for him (viva voce) most of Goethe's Faust, a topic which seemed especially created to attract Byron. The questions put to the world, the contract with the Devil, the loss of Marguerite, this was Byron's own story. But if he, Byron, had been the creator of Faust, he would have made him more courageous and more gloomy. Why tremble before spirits? A real man defies them and defies death.

A piece of work is nearly always the result of a shock which fertilizes a favourable ground. The ground was ready; it was this burning mass of inexpressible sentiments, horror, love, desire, regrets, lava which again threatened to swallow everything. From the shock produced by the reading of Faust, and the presence of the beautiful scenes of the Alps, resulted a great dramatic poem, Manfred. The scenes that he described in prose in his diary to his sister Augusta became, by a slight transformation, fragments of the new drama, and were mixed with confessions of distress.

Every real scene of his travels in Switzerland, the meeting of a hunter, that of a shepherd singing Swiss songs, entered immediately into the poem whose subject was vague enough to bring in practically any scene or character.

Manfred, lord of a feudal burg in the Alps, has

cultivated the art of magic; he is rich, wise, but his soul seems to be continually haunted by the remembrance of a great crime. In the first scene, which quite resembles scenes from Goethe's Faust, he summons the spirits of the earth, ocean, mountains, night, winds and star:

"By the strong curse which is upon my soul,  
The thought which is within me and around me,  
I do compel ye to my will - Appear!"

The seven spirits appear:-

"Earth, ocean, air, night, mountains, winds, thy star,  
Are at thy beck and bidding, Child of clay!  
Before thee at thy quest their spirits are -  
What wouldst thou with us, son of mortals - say!"

"- Forgiveness - of what - of whom - and why? - Of  
that which is within me; read it there --ye know it, and  
I cannot utter it."

Byron does not wish to reveal what is within himself; he leaves it to our imagination and judgement - the regret of a woman, Astarte whom he has lost and with whom he would like to be reunited; the desire for revenge on another woman that is not named. Against this latter woman a terrible incantation is pronounced by a mysterious voice, and because Byron is incapable of withdrawing himself from himself and to

forget his identity, because the allusions are clear and symbols transparent, we know that Manfred is Byron, that Astarte is Augusta, and that the object of the incantation is Annabella.

"Though thy slumber may be deep,  
Yet thy spirit shall not sleep;  
There are shades which will not vanish,  
There are thoughts thou canst not banish;  
By a power to thee unknown,  
Thou canst never be alone;  
Thou art wrapt as with a shroud,  
Thou art gather'd in a cloud - - - -  
By thy shut soul's hypocrisy;  
By the perfection of thine art  
which pass'd for human thine own heart;  
By thy delight in other's pain,  
And by thy brotherhood of Cain,  
I call upon thee! and compel  
Thyself to be thy proper Hell!"

When Manfred supplicates a witch to summon Astarte for him, he described her, and it is Augusta:

"She was like me in lineaments - her eyes,  
Her hair, her features, all to the very tone  
Even of her voice, they said were like to mine;

But soften'd all, and temper'd into beauty:  
She had the same lone thoughts and wanderings,  
The quest of hidden knowledge, and a mind  
To comprehend the universe: nor these  
Alone, but with them gentler powers than mine  
Pity, and smiles, and tears - which I had not;  
And tenderness - but that I had for her;  
Humility - and that I never had.  
Her faults were mine - her virtues were her own,  
I loved her, and destroy'd her!"

"I loved her, and destroy'd her!" is the secret of  
Manfred's despair, just as it is the secret of Byron's.  
He uses Manfred as a masque to give vent to his own  
feeling and passions.

It is in vain that the infernal powers conjure  
Astarte, for Manfred; She appears, but remains silent, just  
as Augusta was becoming more and more silent in her letters  
to Byron.

"Thou lovedst me  
Too much, as I loved thee: we were not made  
To torture thus each other, though it were  
The deadliest sin to love as we have loved.  
Say that thou loath'st me not - that I do bear  
This punishment for both - that thou wilt be

One of the blessed - and that I shall die - - - -  
And I would hear yet once before I perish  
The voice which was my music - Speak to me!"

She vanishes without replying, and the spirits  
contemplate with a sort of terror Manfred's despair.

"Had he been one of us, he would have made an awful spirit."

The flow of lava had been wonderful. There was to be  
a third act to Manfred, but Byron delayed in writing it.  
The enchantments of the mountain had already left him.  
Was it only the loss of enchantment of the mountain that  
put a stop to Byron's Manfred, or was there something  
more to it than that. Yes there was more to it than that,  
and Byron gave us a clue in the play itself, when Astarte  
remained silent to Manfred's pleas to speak to him. On  
looking into Byron's life about the same time as he was  
writing Manfred, we notice that Augusta's letters were  
very impersonal, although Byron's were pleading for  
something of the old familiarity. The reason for this  
sudden coldness on the part of Augusta was that Lady  
Byron had undertaken to save her sister-in-law's  
soul, if she couldn't save Byron's. For this reason  
Augusta had promised Lady Byron to show her all letters  
that she would write to Byron, and also to answer his  
letters with great indifference. Thus Byron discontinued

the writing of Manfred, to resume work on it when he reached Venice.

Chapter 4

Byron in Vienna.

Byron had left Geneva because he was getting tired and bored of the few English people that always seemed to haunt him, and who were continually trying to meddle in his affairs. In Venice he was to find a complete change. Everything seemed to please him — the Venetian dialect, the beautiful marble of the palaces, and even the sombre beauty of the black barges attracted him. In the city of merchants, Moors, and of Portia, he thought he saw the ghost of Shakespeare at every corner. His infirmity he felt less, in a place where walking was replaced by the slow gliding of gondolas. These added to the presence of one, Marianna Segati, with whom Byron was very friendly, were responsible for his enjoyment of Venice and his extended visit.

The Alps, the composition of Manfred and the novelty of Italy, had calmed his revolutionary spirit for a time. Every day Byron would spend a few hours riding his favourite horse through the calm, picturesque and dreamy countryside; or in his gondola would visit the Armenian fathers whom he was helping compose an English and Armenian grammar. His evenings were spent promenading under the starlit sky with Marianna Segoti. All was marvellous for a few days, but his nocturnal life tired him.

His health was giving way. Was it the fever of stagnant waters? An attack of malaria like the one he had once overcome? Or was it old age creeping on him? He had just passed his twenty-ninth year. He addressed Marianna Segati with the following verse:

"So we'll go no more a roving,  
So late into the night,  
Though the heart be still as loving,  
And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath,  
And the soul wears out the breast,  
And the heart must pause to breathe,  
And love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving  
And the day returns too soon,  
Yet we'll go no more a roving,  
By the light of the moon."

This sudden change from morbidness to unbounded pleasures could not last long. It was not natural for Byron to forget himself for so long. He was now beginning to think that it was worthwhile living, and that there was happiness to be found in that cruel world of his. Surely Byron must be sick or mad again. He had a germ of both diseases. He became sick in body and this brought on his sickness in spirit,

for in his feverish dreams the images of the past began to take on a dangerous form again. What was his sister doing? Why was she keeping away from him? These were the questions he continually asked himself, though he really suspected that Lady Byron was the cause of his sister's change in affection.

His illness had two effects: it brought Byron back to his normal way of thinking, or I should say, to the Byronic character which in turn placed him in a position to write the third and last act of Manfred.

This third act is the weakest of the three, for Byron was inferior to Goethe when it came to handle the supernatural, yet it is interesting as far as doctrine is concerned. His witch, his spirits, his Arimanes, are but stage gods. He does not really believe in them. Goethe studied them not only externally but also intrinsically. He knew them as he knew himself. Byron's English mind was too practical, too restrained, to give us real live witches and spirits. It was not the Byronic character to give us beings indifferent to nature, and of vague existences. His metaphysical character vanished before the utilitarian. It was simply a time when Byron stopped in his pilgrimage to gather the facts of an unbalanced life, and a troubled mind, and

to put these facts on a stage so that he could suffer anew the pains he had once suffered.

The spotlight is continually thrown upon Byron. The spirits are unimportant characters used to reply to him. It is Byron in his eternal monologue. We see Byron face to face with death. The abbot of a neighbouring monastery attempts to reconcile him with himself, and perhaps this scene was the echo of conversations between Byron and the Armenian fathers whom Byron often visited. To the sinner the priest offers penance and pardon:

"My son!

I did not speak of punishment,

But penitence and pardon"- - - -

"Vengeance is mine alone

So, saith the Lord - - - - -

Our institutions and our strong belief

Have given me power to smooth the path of sin

To higher hope and better thoughts:- -"

Manfred replies that is too late, that nothing "can exorcise" the devil when the devil himself is the soul of the sinner. No priest can absolve a man when hell itself is in his whole interior. It is not with God that Manfred is unable to reconcile himself, it is with his ego.



But is absorb'd in sufferance or in joy,  
Born from the knowledge of its own desert."

Thus for the first time, Byron moved by Shelley to metaphysical reflection, attempted to reconcile his unconquerable sentiment of sin with skeptic philosophy that prevented him from accepting orthodox beliefs of Hell and its punishment. In his own inimitable way, Byron managed to make himself the centre of attraction for the whole play. Byron himself had tempted Byron. Byron himself would chastise Byron. Byron himself destroyer of Byron would be the Byron of eternity. Hell existed, but it is in us, and the living hurl themselves of their own accord.

"Old man! t'is not so difficult to die."

This was the last sentence of Manfred to the Abbot; it was also the whole moral of the poem. All men are not afraid of death. Some fear death because they cherish life, others fear death because they fear their fate in the next world. Life is a hard struggle, and there are men that are very sensitive and feel an inner conflict, to these death seems a welcome rest. Byron belonged to the last class. Too courageous to free himself from life, and yet too tired to fear death.

In Spring when Byron's health turned for the better, his doctors advised him to change climate. Hobhouse who was then in Rome invited Byron to visit him. At first Byron hesitated; he could not make up his mind to leave Marianna Segati who had taken such good care of him during his illness. He had become attached to her. This was exactly like Byron; for when he loved a woman an absurd hope of finding an ideal soul in her swept him.

But a trip to Rome would be an occasion to write a fourth canto of Childe Harold, for judging by the other three cantos they were no more no less than a diary of travel. He said in it what he had seen and thought. He made every word express an emotion of eye or heart. All beauty found in the first three cantos he had enjoyed or experienced in some way or other. Whatever he had touched he made it palpitate. Just as in Manfred he had used the spirits, the witches, and all things supernatural to answer him, so in Childe Harold he did not leave objects speak for and of themselves, but made them answer him. The fourth canto was only a continuation of his travels as expressed in cantos one, two and three, with new places, new objects, and new meditations.

Byron decided to obey his doctors' orders and left for Rome. On reading the fourth canto we observe that Byron

started from Venice, passed through Arqua, Ferrara, Florence, visited Lake Thrasimene, the river Cliturnus, and the Apennine, and finally Rome. In each place he spends a little time comparing its former position in history, with its present, and gives us its historical importance.

In Rome, as ever, he lived according to two plans; the Byronic and the Childe Harold plan. According to the Byronic plan he rode on horseback, practiced shooting, and corrected the third act of Manfred. As to the Childe Harold plan it can be better exposed by an incident with Thorwaldsen the sculptor to whom Byron had been sent for a pose. Byron seating himself in the artist's studio, put on an expression quite different from the habitual one. Would you not rather be seated more comfortably? said Thorwaldsen. You do not have to put on that expression. — It is mine, repeated Byron — Truly? said Thorwaldsen. He represented Byron as the latter wished to be represented. When the bust was completed, Byron said! "That does not resemble me. I seem more miserable." (Elzev

For Childe Harold, Rome was the most perfect spot for meditation. The world could not hold a greater store of Byronic themes. Grandeur and decadence, ruin and beauty, common - places sublimely elevated at each cross-road, all fitted into the meditations of Byron.

In the land of ruins, beauty and music,  
Byron wrote his fourth canto of Childe Harold while  
his friend Hobhouse edited historical notes for the poem.  
On January 2nd, the anniversary of his marriage (he  
seemed to attach a great deal of importance to this date)  
he dedicated the fourth canto of Childe Harold to John  
Hobhouse Esquire:

" - - to one who has beheld the birth and  
death of the other, and to whom I am far more indebted  
for the social advantages of an enlightened friendship,  
than - though not ungrateful - I can, or could be, to  
Childe Harold, for any public favour reflected through  
the poem on the poet, - to one, whom I have known long  
and accompanied far, whom I have found wakeful over my  
sickness and kind in my sorrow, glad in my prosperity and  
firm in my adversity, true in counsel and trusty in peril -  
to a friend often tried and never found wanting; - to  
yourself." (Letter of Byron to Hobhouse from Venice, January  
2, 1818).

Byron dedicated this poem to Hobhouse for Hobhouse  
had accompanied him on many of his voyages, and the fourth  
canto which deals with places between Venice and Rome as  
well as the two places mentioned, had been traversed by Byron  
in the company of Hobhouse. Because of the well-known places

visited together; because of the great help rendered Byron by Hobhouse in compiling historical notes on the places visited, and because of the inseparable friendship that existed between the two of them, it was a fitting tribute for Byron to pay to Hobhouse.

In the first three cantos Byron treats of different countries — Spain, Greece, the Rhine, and Switzerland. In the fourth canto Italy is dealt with. Just as each canto treats of different countries, so each canto is marked by a difference of sentiment — the first melodramatic, the second, pathetic, the third romantic in nature, and the fourth romantic in history and art.

The fourth canto has been acclaimed by many students of English Literature as the best of the four cantos of Childe Harold because it reflects Byron's mature genius, and because of its greater sincerity. This, however does not alter the fact that it is only another step in the development of Byron's own life-history. In this canto Byron gives us his wanderings from Venice to Rome, calling our attention to historical spots which he has seen, and meditating on their past, present, and future. At the same time he uses such spots to give vent to his own feelings and emotions. Byron is again occupying the spotlight. Byron is again making use of works of art, and relics of history to

bring out his egotism. Byron is again adding to his eternal monologue. Yet, there is beauty to be found, for the common places are often treated in a way which often reaches the sublime. We find an enchanting description of Venice, an emotional recollection of England, profound and melancholy stanza on Byron's favorite topic — love and its subjectivity:

"Oh Love! no habitant of earth thou art —  
An unseen seraph, we believe in thee —  
A faith whose martyrs are the broken heart,—  
But never yet hath seen, nor e'er shall see  
The naked eye, thy form, as it should be;  
The mind had made thee, as it peopled heaven,  
Even with its own desiring phantasy,  
And to a thought such shape and image given,  
As haunts the unquench'd soul-parch'd, wearied, wrung and riven.  
  
Of its own beauty is the mind diseased,  
And fevers into false creation:— where,  
Where are the forms the sculptor's soul hath seized?  
In him alone. Can nature show so fair?  
Where are the charms and virtues which we dare  
Conceive in boyhood and pursue as men,  
The unreach'd Paradise of our despair,  
Which o'er — informs the pencil and the pen,  
And overpowers the page where it would bloom again?"

What was true of love, was also true of ambition. Human hopes, desires and cravings do not always agree with the nature of things. We dream of doing great things, and yet we are victims of cowardice in small things. Byron had himself experienced the power of perfidiousness in spoiling a life which he would have desired to be impeccable:

"But I have lived, and have not lived in vain:  
My mind may lose its force, my blood its fire,  
And my frame perish even in conquering pain;  
But there is that within me which shall tire  
Torture and Time, and breathe when I expire;  
Something unearthly, which they deem not of,  
Like the remember'd tone of a mute lyre,  
Shall on their soften'd spirits sink, and move  
In hearts all rocky now the late remorse of love.

This stanza is typical of Byron's boastfulness, pride and power to prophecy.

Let us look into the poem more closely, and see Byron himself, and the things which helped to make him as he was. On looking into the fourth canto line seventy (70) we read:

- - - - "and should I leave behind  
The inviolate island of the sage and free,  
and seek me out a home by a remoter sea,

Perhaps I loved it well."- - - -

Here we have Byron in a pensive mood thinking of his native island and hoping some day of returning to it. On examining Byron's life we find that he really wished to return to England but circumstances - namely his reputation for licentiousness and the bad impression created in his marital life, which was the topic of conversation in England, - prevented him from returning.

While Byron was living in Italy there was a current movement to free Italy from the Austrians. Influenced by the French Revolution, Byron always sided with the oppressed nation and was an exponent of liberty. In the midst of a revolutionary movement, although a foreigner and well guarded, nevertheless Byron took an active part in trying to bring about the freedom of Italy. His letters merely mention his part in the movement for liberty as most of them were intercepted by the authorities, but his poetry shows the influence of the revolutionary movement. Let us consider stanza twelve:

"The Suabian sued and now the Austrian reigns -  
An Emperor tramples where an Emperor knelt,"

With this stanza he begins to relate a few historic deeds of Venice, and compares the deeds of the past with the present conditions. He does this very cleverly by using historical contrast. Byron is not creating anything in this stanza, nor

is he relating these facts only for their historical importance. We know that conditions he gives us of Venice were really so. In 1177 the German emperor, Frederic Barbarossa, of the House of Suabia made submission to the pope by prostrating himself at his feet in front of the church St. Mark. Thus; "The Suabian sued," - - - - Venice, which had been held by Austria from 1797 to 1805, when it became part of Bonaparte's kingdom of Italy, was again ceded to that power in 1814 and remained subject to it until 1866. Thus Byron writes:

- - - - - "and now the Austrian reigns."

In the third and fourth lines, his reference is again to Venetia which once an independent state had become a province of the Austrian dominions, and was now in slavery rather than commanding. In the last two lines he calls upon Dandolo, the old Doge, who headed the Venetian attack on Byzantium during the Fourth Crusade, to return to this world and free Venice. All these historical facts are merely mentioned to rouse the people of Italy against their foreign oppressors — the Austrians. Thus Byron the supporter of liberty is active even in his poetry.

The next four stanzas are a continuation of the historic deeds of Venice contrasted with its present gloomy and slavish conditions. But when he reaches the fifth stanza

he addresses Venice directly and makes his appeal directly:

"Thus, Venice, if no stronger claim were thine,  
Were all thy proud historic deeds forgot,  
Thy choral memory of the Bard divine,  
Thy love of Tasso, should have cut the knot  
Which ties thee to thy tyrants;" - - -

In stanzas twenty to twenty-four inclusive we find Byron meditating. The five stanzas are permeated with the gloom and depressed character of Byron. In stanza twenty he says that suffering develops a powerful mind. Was it otherwise with Byron? Did he not suffer at home in his early childhood and all through his life? This sufferance may have been his own fault, yet it was sufferance. Did not Byron have a powerful mind? I think <sup>it will</sup> discredit this opinion. Was not Byron then simply giving us his own reflections drawn from his own experience?

In stanza twenty-one he tells us that though grief may be deeply rooted in us, yet life should be endured and not despaired of. Byron in his own life had many moments of despondency and often death would have been a consolation to him, but he persisted in living.

Stanza twenty-three tells us that suffering must end some day; it either destroys the sufferer or the sufferer destroys suffering. This reacts differently on different

people. Its effect depends on the nature of the character. Byron was certainly one of those who lived to destroy the cause of his own suffering - namely his wife.

In stanzas twenty-three and twenty-four he tells us that often the griefs which we think subdued reappear. Such was in Byron's life - for a while he was calm and then suddenly he had fits of hatred for practically anything and everything that he had ever been associated with, especially politics.

Continuing his pilgrimage Byron acts as our guide and leads us to the historical places in Arqua, where he calls our attention to Petrarch's tomb, and eulogizes him. Then we are transported to Ferrara where he composed his Lament of Tasso. He surveys Tasso's cell and then laments on the treatment given Tasso. Here the character of Byron is typically portrayed -- his passionate and excessive disposition which was hard to restrain, is held in check for a while, but as he goes on describing the part that Alfonso played in Tormenting Tasso, his hatred of oppression drives him into a frenzy and he suddenly lets himself go and addresses Alfonso with his lashing tongue!

"Thou! form'd to eat, and be despised, and die  
Even as the beasts that perish, save that thou  
Hadst a more splendid trough and wider sty."

(stanza 38).

Ever influenced by Italy's oppressed position and working towards its freedom, Byron addresses Italy and wishes that she would be less lovely and more powerful, then, perhaps she would be less molested:

"Oh God! that thou wert in thy nakedness  
Less lovely or more powerful, and couldst claim  
Thy right, and awe the robbers back, who press  
To shed thy blood, and drink the tears of thy distress:

- - - - -  
Then might'st thou more appal - - - -

- - - - - then, still untired,  
Would not be seen the armed torrents pour'd  
Down the Alps:"

(stanzas 42 and 43)

Earlier in this essay it has been mentioned that Byron unlike Scott, confined his writing to topics of current events. In Childe Harold, Byron is still true to form in that although he is describing his pilgrimage, yet he is in close touch with things that are of importance to the world at large. In 1817, Princess Charlotte of England died and Byron finds a place to mention her in his Childe Harold:

"Hark! forth from the abyss a voice proceeds,  
Along low distant murmur of dread sound,  
Such as arises when a nation bleeds  
With some deep and immedicable wound:

Through storm and darkness yawns the rending ground,  
The gulf is thick with phantoms, but the chief  
Seems royal still, though with her head discrown'd,  
And pale, but lovely, with maternal grief  
She clasps a babe, to whom her breast yields no relief.  
(stanza 167)

Let us now consider Byron in his meditations as found in Childe Harold. On visiting Cecilia Metella's tomb, Byron is touched by its appearance. Who was she, this great lady that slept in a palace? Had she been chaste and fair? Had she been one of those who love their lords, or one who loves somebody else's lord? Had she died in the prime of youth, or in old age with her long silver tresses? Byron always had a great taste for death, and he lavished it on this unknown dead.

(stanzas 100-103)

Roused from his meditation on Cecilia Metella's tomb, Byron hears the night birds answering each other on the Palatine, the sight of the palace of emperors, and relapses into another dream - the eternal moral of all human history : Liberty generates Glory, then Glory generates Wealth, then Tyranny which recalls Barbarism, and the cycle begins anew. What is this, if not Byronic rhetoric?

Byron still meditating and ever thinking of revenge, on those who had made him suffer, on those who by their calumniating tongues had forced him into exile, calls upon

his favourite goddess, Nemesis, and Time, the avenger:

"Time, the avenger! unto thee I lift  
My hands, and eyes, and heart, and crave of thee a gift.  
- - - - -  
And thou, who never yet of human wrong Lines 1169-1170  
Left the unbalanced scale, great Nemesis!  
- - - - - I call thee from the dust!  
Dost thou not hear my heart? - awake! thou shalt and must.  
- - - - - thou shalt take  
The vengeance, which shall yet be sought and found,  
Which if I have not taken for the sake —  
But let that pass - I sleep, but thou shalt yet awake"  
(Stanza 132 and 133).

Not only do we see Byron in his address to Nemesis  
and Time the avenger, but Byron gives us his life in his  
address to Earth and Heaven:

"Hear me, my mother. Earth! behold it, Heaven!  
Have I not had to wrestle with my lot?  
Have I not suffered things to be forgiven?  
Have I not had my brain sear'd, my heart riven,  
Hopes sapp'd, name blighted, Life's life lied away?  
And only not to desperation driven  
Because not altogether of such clay  
As rots into the souls of those whom I survey."  
(stanza 135)

Byron the vain, disappointed and cynical man, unable to find happiness in society turns to nature for his consolation and happiness. He terminates the canto by a description of the sea, his only faithful friend:

"And I have loved thee Ocean! and my joy  
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be  
Borne, like thy bubbles, onward: from a bay  
I wanton'd with thy breakers - they to me  
Were a delight; and if the freshening sea  
Made them a terror - t'was a pleasing fear,  
For I was as it were a child of thee,  
and trusted to thy billows far and near,  
And laid my hand upon thy mane- as I do here."  
(stanza 184).

Thus ends the fourth and last canto of Childe Harold - a poem filled with vivid, concrete, and lifelike descriptions seething with personal emotions and the sententious rhetoric of Byron.

Childe Harold was not the only fruit of Byron's pen during this period in Italy. Lord Kinnaird a friend of Byron had come to Venice and had brought Byron a new poem recently published in England. It was a light satire that imitated the Italian poets in general, and Pulci in particular. Byron immediately liked it and wrote one in the same style, A Venetian Story, which he called, Beppo.

The tone of the poem agreed with his new mood. It was a tone of humour and of cynicalness even in reference to his own poetry; each time that a strophe flew towards lyricism, the hand of the ironical bird-catcher caught again:

(XLVII)

"England! with all thy faults I love thee still,"  
I said at Calais, and have not forgot it,  
I like to speak and lucubrate my fill;  
I like the government (but that is not it);  
I like the freedom of the press and quilt,  
I like the Habeas Corpus (when we've got it);  
I like a parliamentary debate,  
Particularly when t'is not too late;

(XLVIII)

I like the taxes, when they're not too many;  
I like a sea-coal fire, when not too dear;  
I like a beef-steak, too, as well as any,  
Have no objection to a pot of beer;  
I like the weather, when it is not rainy,  
That is, I like two months of every year."

The same tone and mood was to be used later in Don Juan. This style that Byron had learned from the Italians, was later learned from Byron by a young Frenchman — Alfred de Musset.

Chapter 5

Byron and "Don Juan"

Influence of Voltaire.

Although the poetry of Byron was widely read, in England it was severely criticized, especially by the poet laureate - Southey, who considered Byron a public sinner. In England the press was doing the work of the police, and it never did it more violently than at that time. Opinion backed the press. Several times in Italy, Lord Byron, saw gentlemen leave a drawing room with their wives, when he was announced. Owing to his title and fame the scandal which he caused, was more conspicuous than any other: he was a public sinner. Conservative and Protestant England continually waging war on morals, carried its severity and rigour to extremes, and Puritan intolerance put those who refused to conform to her beliefs, out of the pale of the law. The rejection of voluptuous life, the narrow observance of order and decency, the necessary bows at the mere mention of the king and the established church, the affected dignity of the people of higher rank with all their conventionalities, such were the customs in England at that time. England held herself stiff and uncomfortable in all her decorum. Thus two vices were prevalent amongst the English - constraint and hypocrisy, and it was these that Byron, irritated by the remarks of the people, of the press and especially Southey, attacked.

While such were the conditions in England in Italy they were totally different. In England the severity of the climate, the warlike energy of the race, and the liberty of the institutions prescribed an active life, severe manners, Puritanic religion, the marriage tie strictly kept, a feeling of duty and self-command. In Italy the beauty of the climate, the innate sense of the beautiful and the despotism of the government induced an idle life, loose manners, imaginative religion, the culture of the arts and the search of happiness. In order to set in relief the disadvantages of one, Byron simply had to set in relief the advantages of the other.

Byron transplanted into this Italian life which was looked upon as an everlasting carnival, when pleasure displayed itself openly, not timidly and hypocritically, but loosely arrayed and commended, amused himself. He resolved never to fall again under the pedantic inquisition which in his country had condemned him past forgiveness.

Since his exile Byron's philosophy of life had changed considerably. Manfred had been the last explosion of revolt, the last painful cry of the individual overwhelmed by the world. For the last few months he had taken great interest in reading the works of Voltaire. In him he found his own pessimism, but under a different aspect — humour. Candide could have been Childe Harold, if Voltaire had not dominated

Candide, if Voltaire had not judged Voltaire. Byron who had always been a great humourist in his letters, had refrained until now to allow that quality of his mind from appearing in his poetry. But now, roused by the existing conditions in England when compared with those of Italy, his combative spirit fired by the criticism of Southey and the English press, Byron launched himself in his famous poem Don Juan. In this poem, which is no more no less than a satire on the abuses of the state of society, Byron found a means of freely pouring out this mixture of Voltaire and of his own cynical self.

Don Juan was to be a new kind of epic-poem. His plan was that it should contain twelve cantos, each canto to deal with love, a battle, a storm at sea, a group of ships, of captains, of kings, and new characters. There would be a glimpse of hades- in the style of Virgil and Homer.

Byron had never possessed a clearer mind, a more vigorous and flowing style. The tone was that of Beppo, a poetry that mocked itself, and which concealed a strong and bitter philosophy under the form of light mirth and rhymes that are at times absurd. He had, for a long while abandoned himself without restraint to the impulses of his own feelings. But now with the calm of distance, judgement regained its rights. The cries and wails had gone by. Naturally Byron

remained more complex and more sensitive than Voltaire. His theoretical philosophy was, like that of Voltaire, a deistic rationalism, but Voltaire was not tormented either by recollection of Calvinism in childhood, or by the conflict of a sensual constitution and a soul religious of its own nature. His field of thought was narrow and clear. In Byron, vast unknown fields, peopled with monsters, surrounded his luminous zone. Voltaire was perfectly satisfied with himself when he had crushed a mystery under the weight of a few truths. Byron, because he had known the meaning, kept the meaning of mystery. But mystery had now changed place; it was now less the mystery of George Gordon Byron's destiny, than human destiny, and thereby he became universal, classic.

The first to be attacked was Southey. We can well imagine Byron dedicating this poem to his pet enemy. One can almost see Byron chuckling while he is pouring out his lines to Bob Southey:

"Bob Southey! You're a poet - Poet laureate,  
And representative of all the race:  
Although 't is true that you turn'd out a Tory at  
Last, - yours has lately been a common case;  
And now, my Epic Renegade! What are ye at?"  
(stanza 1, Dedication).

"Meantime Sir Laureate, I proceed to dedicate  
In honest simple verse, this song to you,

And if in flattering strains I do not predicate,  
'T is that I still retain my "buff and blue,"  
My politics as yet are all to educate;  
Apostasy's so fashionable, too,  
To keep one creed's a task grown quite Herculean:  
Is it not so, my Tory, Ultra - Julian?"  
(stanza 17, Dedication).

The first canto of Don Juan, like Childe Harold-  
remained biographic, but without the bitterness of old.  
From the beginning of the poem, Annabella appeared. The  
mother of Don Juan was painted after her.

"Her favorite science was the mathematical,  
Her noblest virtue was her magnanimity,  
Her wit (she sometimes tried at wit) was attic all;  
Her serious saying darkened to sublimity."  
(stanza XII).

"Her thoughts were theorems, her words a problem".  
( stanza XII line 7).

"Oh! she was perfect past all parallel —  
Of any modern female saint's comparison;  
So far above the cunning powers of hell,  
Her guardian angel had given up his garrison:"  
(stanza XVII).

But, quickly the poem took on a wider scope and  
became more serene. Why get rail at the world? The earth  
must turn on its axis, and humanity must follow the world.  
We must live, die, love, and pay taxes. All that is amusing,  
dangerous, melancholy and inevitable.

"No more - no more -- Oh! never more on me  
The freshness of the heart can fall like dew,  
Which out of all the lovely things we see  
Extracts emotions beautiful and new,"  
(stanza 214).

"No more - no more - Oh! never more my heart,  
Canst thou be my sole world, my universe!  
Once all in all, but now a thing apart,  
Thou canst not be my blessing or my curse;  
The illusion is gone for ever, and thou art  
Insensible, I trust, but none the worse,  
And in thy stead I've got a deal of judgement,  
Though heaven knows how it ever found a lodgement."

"My days of love are over; me no more  
The charms of maid, wife, and still less of widow,  
Can make the fool of which they made before --  
(canto 1, stanza 214-215).

In certain ways, this new wisdom of Byron recalls somewhat the wisdom of Shakespeare. He also, Shakespeare, had discovered while living that all men's desires, love, ambition, are but illusions. The Prospero of the Tempest knows that life is but a dream. But he has a sense of respect for the loves of young people. Byron, although he considered himself passed the stage of living in illusions, still maintained that the illusions of youth are beautiful and necessary.

Byron now attacked human roguery. This was the general aim of his poem. His youthful dreams and illusions have vanished. He knows man now, and man is but an animal. He also knows life, and life is but a show, in which every man must play a part. Civilization, education, health and reason, cloak men in beautiful cases; tear them apart, each at a time, or all at a time and see the brute who is lying at the bottom. This was Byron's belief and that Byron wished to show. Juan was reading Julia's last letter and was swearing never to forget her beautiful eyes which he had caused to weep so much. But unfortunately Juan is at sea, and sickness sets in. He cries out.

"Sooner shall earth resolve itself to sea,

Than I resign thine image, oh my fair!

(Here the ship gave a lurch, and he grew sea-sick)-

Sooner shall heaven kiss earth-(here he fell sicker)

Oh Julia! what is every other woe?

(canto 11 st XLX - XX).

Then discussing, for most of Don Juan is a mere conversation in which Byron is the principal speaker, the things that cause the death of Love, he says:

"'T is melancholy, and a fearful sign

Of human frailty, folly, also, crime,

That love and marriage rarely can combine;

Although they both are born in the same clime;  
Marriage from love, like vinegar from wine.  
(canto 111 St V)

These are words of a sceptic and cynic, - truly  
Byronic. There is a sad and combative humour that impels him.  
Southern voluptuousness has not conquered him; he is only an  
epicurean through contradiction and only for a moment.

"Let us have wine and women, mirth and laughter  
Sermons and soda-water the day after.  
Man, being reasonable must get drunk;  
The best of life is but intoxication."  
(canto 11 St CLXXVlll)

We see clearly that he is always the same, going  
to extremes and unhappy, bent on destroying himself. His  
Don Juan, also, is a debauchery; in it he diverts himself  
outrageously at the expense of all respectable things. He  
is always violent and ferocious; a sombre imagination  
intersperses his love stories with horrors easily enjoyed,  
the despair and famine of shipwrecked men, and the emaciation  
of the raging skeletons feeding each other. He laughs at  
it, like Swift; he jests at it like Voltaire.

"And next they thought upon the master's mate,  
As fattest; but he saved himself, because,  
Besides being much averse from such a fate,  
There were some other reasons: the first was  
He had been disposed of late."  
(canto 11, St, LXXXI)

Byron follows all the stages of death, gorging, rage, madness, howling, stupor; he wishes to touch and exhibit the naked and ascertained truth; the last grotesque and hideousness of humanity.

Chapter 6

Don Juan was stopped at canto four by the Countess Guiccioli with whom he had of late become acquainted and who was destined to have a great influence on Byron. She was the daughter of Count Gamba and the wife of an elderly nobleman. She was only seventeen years of age. It was a piece of good fortune that Byron should meet this countess, as this connection, in a great degree, weaned him from the course of low libertinism into which he had fallen. The husband became jealous, the young wife extravagantly in love with her celebrated foreign lover, and her family slightly anxious about their honour. But matters were managed as they do these things in Italy; all parties, at length, seemed tolerably satisfied, except the poor husband, who was compelled to pay his wife a certain income although deprived of her, and quite conscious that she and the noble poet were happy in their loves. A great deal more has been said about Byron's attachment to this lady than I think it deserves. With the true "Don Juan" spirit, when he was struck with her beauty, difficulties only enhanced the pleasure of the pursuit; but when those difficulties were overcome, his conduct, his letters, and his associations prove, that his love was no more, or at least little more, than one of the hundredewanescent flames that had been kindled in his inflammable breast. He had been cooler in

his pursuit of pleasure, and the countess, as a lady, associated rather more with his mental occupations and gentlemanly feelings than the low women with whom he had of late been connected. But that was all. He appears, after the first, to be always ready to leave her, and it is her attachment to him that produces the appearance of constancy on his part. As the melancholy close approaches there is no mention of this lady, and if it be true that the ruling passion is strong in death, the evidence is conducive - for, in no account is there any proof her having engaged one of his last thoughts; the names of his sister and his daughter were murmured from his dying lips, but not that of the devoted Guiccioli.

We see the influence of Countess Guiccioli on Byron's Don Juan, in canto three. Byron and the Countess would often ride their horses in the forest at eventide. Madame Guiccioli was naive and pious. She taught Byron to stop and pray when the bells of the nearby churches announced the hour of the "Ave Maria".

"Ave Maria! Blessed be the hour  
The time, the clime, the spot, where I so oft  
Have felt that moment in its fullest power  
Sink o'er the earth so beautiful and soft  
While swung the bell in the distant tower,

Or the faint dying day-hymn stole aloft,  
And not a breath crept through the rosy air,  
And yet the forest leaves seem stirr'd with prayer."  
(canto III St. CII).

The second influence that Countess Guiccioli had on Byron, and which has already been mentioned, at least partly, was that she influenced him to stop writing Don Juan. She considered it detestable. She was faithful to the illusion of sentiment and she hated all things that made a comedy of passions. The inevitable result - Don Juan was stopped at canto five to be continued later.

Countess Guiccioli firm in her defence of the romantic, would not tolerate the least heresy against the religion of love. When, Byron told her one day, that love was not the most elevated theme for a real tragedy, she was indignant, and overwhelmed him with arguments. He had never been very brilliant in discussions, especially with women; he immediately ceded and made of Sardanapalus a lover.

Because of the failure of Don Juan, he worked on tragedies, the ones inspired by the history of Venice, Marino Faliero, The Two Foscari, the others by ancient history and the Bible. This idea of writing tragedies had come to him from his recent familiarity with the works of Alfieri.

With Byron a subject, even historic, and a tragedy, even classic, always became a pretext to liberate himself. If he thought of writing a Tiberius, it was simply in the hope of expressing some personal sentiments. He wrote in his diary that he thought of writing four tragedies: Sardanapalus, already started; Cain, metaphysical subject, in the style of Manfred; Francesca de Rimini in five acts; and he hoped to try Tiberius. He said he thought that in Tiberius he could bring out something of his own tragedy.

He composed Sardanapalus, which was simply a plea for himself. Sardanapalus led the same life that Byron was leading, and to the reproaches of his friends, replied with a eulogy on pleasure:

"Sardanapalus;

The king, and son of Anacyndaraxes,  
In one day built Anchialus and Tarsus,  
Eat, drink, and love."

—"O'er thus,—Sardanapalus on this spot  
Slew fifty thousand of his enemies.

There are their sepulchres, and this his trophy  
I leave such things to conquerors; enough  
For me, if I can make my subjects feel  
The weight of human misery less - - - -"  
(act 1 - scene 11).

But, of all his dramas, the one in which Byron reveals himself most, is Cain. Since early childhood, he had

been obsessed by this theme. Cain was an attempt to transpose under the medium of the drama his passionate protestation against the existence of wrong in a divine creation. In one of the first scenes, he painted Adam and his children after the fall. All adore Jehovah except Cain who remains silent. Cain has not pardoned God. What has been Adam's fault? he asked:

"The tree was planted, and why not for him?  
If not, why place him near it, where it grew,  
The fairest in the country? They have but  
One answer to all question, " 'T was his will  
And he is good." How know I that? Because  
He is all-powerful, must all-good, too, follow?  
I judge but by the fruits - and they are bitter."  
(act 1 - scene 1)

Then appears Lucifer, who pronounces himself God's equal. He offers to show Cain the real world, which is not what it seems to be at a first glance. Cain hesitates before leaving his sister Adah, who is as well his wife.

Lucifer to Adah.

"You love him more than thy mother, and thy sire?

Adah - I do. Is that a sin, too?

Lucifer - No, not yet,

It one day will be in your children.

Adah -

What!

Must not my daughter love her brother Enoch?

Lucifer- Not as thou lovest Cain.

Adah-

Oh, my God!

Shall they not love, and bring forth things that love,

Out of their love? have they not drawn their milk

Out of this bosom?

Lucifer- The sin I speak of is not my making,

And cannot be sin in you - whate'er

It seem in those who will replace ye in

Mortality.

Adah- What is the sin which is not

Sin in itself? Can circumstance make sin

Or virtue?"

(act 1 scene 1).

After the death of Abel an angel appears and marks  
Cain on the brow:

"Angel- To mark upon thy brow

Exemption from such deeds as thou hast done.

Cain- That which I am I am; I did not seek

For life, nor did I make myself; - - - - -"

(act 111 scene 1).

It was the lamentation of Byron himself, marked,  
as he believed, by the sign of Cain and condemned like Cain  
to wander o'er the earth. He also had killed a younger brother

who was the first Byron. Was he responsible? He was what he was, he had not made himself, he could not have acted otherwise, and he cried to an unjust God:

"why have you treated me so?"

## Chapter 7

### Byron at Pisa

#### The Deformed Transformed

Needless, to say, Cain was violently criticized from the point of view of religion. It was certainly not the work of an atheist, but it was most assuredly the work of a heretic. The scandal that it caused was not enough to make the play a success.

The scandal of this play caused England to break her attachment with the poet. Byron, now alone, sought action. The spirit of liberty which permeated his work, he now tried to put to action in the Italian Revolution. The revolution was a failure, but Byron had tried to put his ideas of liberty to work. He had shown that he was not only an idle dreamer, but a man of action.

One direct result of the revolution was the exile of Madame Guiccioli. As her place of exile Pisa was chosen, and naturally Byron followed her.

At Pisa Byron was never as happy as he had been at Ravenna. He was surrounded by a group of writers, and curious Englishmen, that always seemed to be pointing a finger at him. Byron felt very uncomfortable, he could not always command these people. Pisa when compared to Ravenna afforded very little amusement of the calibre Byron was getting at Ravenna. In fact there was hardly anything which Byron could do to satiate his appetite for pleasure. To make things worse his daughter Allegra died. This seemed to sink him still

deeper into the depth of sadness and boredom.

Because of the lack of action, the only remedy for ennui and sadness was work. Byron worked hard at Pisa. He wrote a drama in the style of Faust, *The Deformed Transformed*. It was an interesting document. The subject was very closely related to his own life: Arnold, born a hunchback, sells his soul to the Devil to be cured of his infirmity, in order to resemble other men and to be loved. In the first scene of act one his mother says: "Out, hunchback!" Arnold replies: "I was born so, mother!" This reply may have been uttered more than once by Byron to his own mother. Quoting from the *Quarterly Review*, we find this note which gives authenticity for this reply: "Lord Byron's mother, when in ill humor with him, used to make the deformity in his foot the subject of taunts and reproaches. She would pass from passionate caresses to the repulsion of actual disgust; then devour him with kisses again, and swear his eyes were as beautiful as his father's."

*The Deformed Transformed*, was then another in the series of Byron's works to express his own physical and mental state. He had moved from Ravenna where he had enjoyed himself, to Pisa where he became ennuye<sup>d</sup> and sad, this depression of mind caused him to think more of his deformed

self and his fate, and thus was composed, The Deformed  
Transformed - which could easily be entitled - The Lament  
of Byron.

Chapter-8

Byron at Geneva

His Crede and Continuation of Don Juan.

In our discussion of Don Juan in chapter six, we saw how Madame Guiccioli had influenced Byron to discontinue the writing of Don Juan at canto four. Byron had already resumed work on it while at Pisa, but only after having received permission from Madame Guiccioli. He was allowed to continue on condition that he would be more reserved and more sentimental than he had been in the first cantos.

The Gambas, because of their participation in the Italian Revolution were now forced to leave Pisa and seek another place of exile. This time they chose Geneva, and Byron followed — Madame Guiccioli would not leave him alone.

At Geneva he noticed that the life he was leading, his acquaintances, and the surroundings of the place were losing some of the attraction that he would have had in his younger days. His mind now turned to England.

He sent Don Juan to England and described with a sort of love the first look of his hero on the cliffs of Dover.

"At length they rose, like a white wall along  
The blue sea's border; and Don Juan felt -  
What even young strangers feel a little strong  
At the first sight of Albion's chalky belt -  
A kind of pride that he should be among

Those haughty shopkeepers, who sternly dealt  
Their goods and edicts out from pole to pole,  
And made the very billows pay them toll."  
(canto X stanza LXV)

Byron never withdrew himself from himself, which  
he declared to be the aim of his poetry. He was always  
conscious that he was writing, and in Don Juan he even  
mentioned the fact:

"I feel this tediousness will never do —  
'T is being too epic, and I must cut down  
(In copying) this long canto into two;"  
(canto lll, stanza CXL).

Then in canto four:

"All this must be reserved for further song;  
Also our hero's lot, howe'er unpleasant  
(Because this Canto has become too long)"  
(Stanza CXVII)

If Byron's aim in writing poetry was to withdraw  
himself from himself, he certainly had a good opportunity  
to do so in Don Juan, an epic poem; but we have seen from  
the beginning that Don Juan is no one else but Byron himself.  
Furthermore we read about the adventures of Don Juan, and  
then suddenly Byron steps onto the stage and has the  
spotlight focussed on him:

"I have a passion for the name "Mary"  
For once it was a magic sound to me;  
And still it half calls up the realms of fairy,

Where I beheld what never was to be,"  
(Canto V stanza 1V).

Is not this the Mary Chaworth of Byron's childhood days?-the Mary Chaworth on whom Byron had lavished so much affection. Byron was only sixteen when he had met this girl, and he was now in his thirties and he still mentions her in Don Juan. But why should Byron mention her in a poem such as Don Juan? The only answer is that his work was his life, and so Byron must remind us that he is always present, that his poetry is George Gordon Byron himself.

But let us search further still. In canto six Byron has written four whole stanzas without parading himself on the stage. Surely, it must be time for his appearance. He writes that Anthony is mostly remembered not from his conquests but for his loss of Action brought about by the attraction of Cleopatra's eyes. Now, Byron is getting into his element - love. He will certainly find a hole in the curtain and come through. Does Byron the lover, wish to compare himself to Anthony, or does he wish us to remember him, if not by his successful work, at least as a great lover? That might have been the point he was aiming at, but the real idea is this, that, Byron, in the very next stanza, finds a loophole, crawls through and addresses the reader in the first person:

" — I

Remember when, though I had no great plenty  
Of worlds to lose, yet still, to pay my court, I  
Gave what I had - a heart: As the world  
\_\_\_\_\_ went, I

Gave what was worth a world; for worlds could never  
Restore me those pure feelings, gone for-ever."  
(canto VI stanza V).

Is the poet withdrawing himself from himself?

Beginning with canto seven, the poem takes on a wider scope. Juan remains the hero, but his adventures are but a pretext. The real subject is that of Gulliver and Candide: A satire on the choice few of Europe. Byron had never loved the ruling class - perhaps because he could never use his title to sway others. Reared from childhood as a Puritan, that is in offering opposition, he had entered the House of Lords but to tell a few harsh words to his equals. In the world, even at the time when he seemed to be living as a great lord of the century, he had felt quite a stranger. The storm that had chased him had bruised him, but had not surprised him. Now, from a bird's eye-view, he looked at Europe such as these hard men had made it, and he took pleasure in pointing out to them the bloody outcome of their doctrines, and that life was a mere show:

"To laugh at all things - for I wish to know  
What after all, are all things - but a show?"  
(canto VII stanza 11)

But are we not going to see Byron in this canto  
in some form or other? Fear not for here he is.

"They accuse - Me - the present writer of  
The present poem - of - I know not what -  
A tendency to under-rate and scoff  
At human power and virtue, and all that;  
And this they say in language rather rough.  
Good God! I wonder what they would be at!  
I say no more than has been said in Dante's  
Verse, and by Solomon, and Cervantes;  
(stanza 1V).

By Swift by Machiavel, by Rochefoucault,  
By Fenelon, by Luther, and by Plato;  
By Tillotson, and Wesley, and Rousseau,  
Who knew this life was not worth a potato.  
'T is not their fault, nor mine if this be so -  
For my part, I pretend not to be Cato  
Nor even Diogenes. - We live and die  
But which is best, you know no more than I."  
(stanza 1V)

We are left without a doubt that it is Byron  
that is writing and speaking to us - he capitalizes the word  
-Me - and then tells us that they criticize him, the author  
of the poem. He makes doubly sure that he will not escape our  
notice.

Grant that Dante, Solomon, Cervantes, Swift, Luther, Tillotson, Wesley and Rousseau had said much in the way of under-rating and scoffing at human power and virtue, is that sufficient reason why Byron should prolong this attack? Here we have the keynote of practically all of Byron's work, especially his satirical work. The world had not treated him as he would have had it treat him, and he had suffered from it. Byron's character was not made of such material that it would endure everything without at least making some effort towards retaliation.

When fire was once set to his sharp temper, Byron's wrath knew no bounds. At first his plan of attack is cautious, but it gradually accumulates venom as it proceeds until there comes a moment when he is ready to strike, tear down, and trample anything that comes his way. We could practically use Byron's description of Sultana Gulbeyaz when she became angry, to describe Byron's physical change as anger came upon him. The only necessary change to be made, would be to use the pronoun "his" for "her"—

"Her cheek began to flush, her eyes to sparkle,  
And her proud brow's blue vein to swell and darkle."  
(canto VI stanza CI)

Now let us take a safe position and listen to Byron rave against men in general. This is nothing new for Byron for he had been taking these fits of rage since early

childhood. Nevertheless they are interesting at times.

"Dogs, or men! - for I flatter you in saying  
That ye are dogs - your betters for - ye may  
Read, or read not, what I am now essaying  
To show ye what you are in every way.  
(canto VII stanza 11)

But why does he so bitterly attack men in general?  
One would think that he would at least spare himself. But  
once Byron was provoked he spared no one, not even himself.  
A few men had criticized him; his guns were aimed on all  
men. Such was Byron in life as well as in poetry. We  
can truthfully say that Byron's mind worked inductively in  
almost all cases where reasoning was called upon. A few  
men in particular attacked Byron, Byron drew a general  
conclusion - "Dogs or men!"

We do not have to read much further to find another  
example of Byron's inductive reasoning. Before the Battle  
of Ismail he says:

"The whole camp rung with joy; you would have thought  
That they were going to a marriage feast  
(This metaphor, I think, holds good as aught  
Since there is discord after both at least)."  
(canto VII stanza XLIX)

What is Byron's authority for making such a statement  
or at least such a metaphor? Had he been married and was  
judging from personal experience? Why, certainly, he was

legally married once, and his marriage was unsuccessful because he had made it so. Therefore, Byron feels justified in pronouncing his personal opinion. Is Byron withdrawing himself from himself? But let us not pronounce sentence so soon for we would be almost guilty of imitating Byron in our own reasoning. Let us search farther.

Man often laughs to prevent himself from crying; man often condemns those who are rich because he himself is poor; man often attacks the parliament of his country because he himself cannot become one of its members; Byron attacked war, in order to show how little human life is regarded by those who lead men into war, because he could not become a leader, at least a successful one. He sends Juan to the siege of Ismail.

"A town which did a famous siege endure,  
And was beleaguered both by land and water  
By Souvaroff, or Anglice Suwarrow,  
Who loved blood as an alderman loves marrow."  
(canto VII stanza VIII).

Because he had been unsuccessful in gaining military glory, rank, and medals, especially during the Italian Revolution, he attacks those who strive for such things in order to satisfy his vengeful temper.

"Medals, rank, ribands, lace, embroidery, scarlet,  
Are things immortal to immortal man,

As purple to the Babylonian harlot:  
An uniform to boys is like a fan  
To women; there is scarce a crimson varlet  
But deems himself the first in Glory's van.  
But Glory's glory; and if you would find  
What that is - ask the pig who sees the wind."  
(canto VII stanza LXXXIV)

He hates wars that are fought merely to advance  
conquests. He finds he says:

"The drying up of a single tear has more  
Of honest fame, than shedding seas of gore."  
(canto VIII stanza 111)

And why? - he answers that question himself.

"And why?- because it brings self approbation,  
Whereas the other, after all its glare  
Shouts, bridges, arches, pensions from a nation,  
Which (it may be) has not much left to spare,  
A higher title, or a loftier station,  
Though they may make Corruption gape or stare,  
Yet, in the end, except in Freedom's battles,  
Are nothing but a child of Murder's rattles."  
(canto VII stanza 1V).

Does Byron detest all wars? Yes, Byron hates all  
wars except those in which he is interested in, namely,  
"Freedom's battles." But why does he hate the other kind?  
Because, there, he might be consciously or unconsciously  
helping someone else to gain glory, and he remain unglorified.

Hence he finds more honest fame in "drying up a tear, than shedding seas of gore," since it at least brings him self-approbation. Is this not Byron the egotist, who spent his life in striving to please himself at the expense of others? Is this not the ever trumpeting "I" of Byron?

From the moment we start reading Don Juan, we feel the presence of Byron. He is simply disguised by the name and mask of Juan. Often he unmask himself, stops the story and gives us his own opinion, and at times even makes fun of his own profession and work, counting the stanzas he has already written, and wondering whether it would not be time to close the canto. The only reasonable purpose for such interruptions is that he fears he might have escaped our attention, and he uses such strings to bring us back to him. Let us consider for a moment stanza CXXXVII, canto VIII,

"Reader! I have kept my word-at least so far  
As the first Canto promised. You have now  
Had sketches of love, tempest, travel, war --  
All very accurate, you must allow,  
And epic, if plain truth should prove no bar;  
For I have drawn much less with a long bow  
Then my forerunners. Carelessly I sing  
But Phoebus lends me now and then a string."

Had any one accused him or did he anticipate any one to criticize him of not following out his plan for Don Juan? That seems to be troubling him somewhat, and he inserts a whole stanza in the canto to remind us that he has kept his promise. Now that his mind has been relieved to a certain extent, he puts on his mask again and continues the story by adding three more stanzas to the canto. Grant that he has carried out his promise of giving us - "sketches of love, tempest, travel, war" - and that it is very accurate, which I doubt, for Byron always exaggerated, and that plain truth proves no bar to an epic poem; has Byron carried out the statement that, "to withdraw myself from myself has ever been my sole, my entire, my sincere motive in scribbling at all - "by inserting the stanza just quoted into the canto? If he has, then Don Juan is not an epic poem.

In canto nine he rails at national heroes. Napoleon in his attempt to establish a republic in France, had been Byron's idol, but Napoleon had been defeated. The one who was responsible for his defeat must suffer, the slings and arrows of Byron's outrageous pen.

"Oh, Wellington! (or "Vilainton-" for Fame  
Sounds the heroic syllables both ways,  
France could not even conquer your great name,

But punned it down to this facetious phrase —  
Beating or beaten she will laugh the same.)  
You have obtained great pensions and much praise;  
Glory like yours should any dare gainsay,  
Humanity would rise, and thunder "Nay". "  
(Canto LX stanza 1)

"And I shall be delighted to learn who,  
Save you and yours, have gained at Waterloo?"  
(Canto LX stanza 1V)

"Called "Saviour of the Nations" - not yet saved,  
And "Europe's Liberator" - still enslaved."  
(Canto LX stanza V)

When we look back in history we recall that Napoleon began his warfare, according to Byron, for "Freedom's battles," and Wellington was fighting for the advancement of conquest. This accounts for Byron's attack on Wellington — not because Wellington received honour, glory and fame, but because he was responsible for the defeat of Byron's hero in whom were centered Byron's hopes of the liberty of France and the nations oppressed by tyrants.

In canto eleven Byron describes Juan's occupation while in England. Juan presents his proper credentials and is received into the circle of elites. We cannot but recall Byron's cold reception in the House of Lords when he was living in England. The members had paid very slight attention to him, and he still harboring the thought of this reception finds an opportunity to tell them how they had received him.

"And was received with all due grimace  
By those who govern in the mood potential,  
Who, seeing a handsome stripling with smooth face,  
Thought (what in state affairs is most essential)  
That they as easily might do the youngster,  
As hawks may pounce upon woodland songster."  
(Stanza XXXV)

It is not without profound reasons that Don Juan contains a long eulogy of Don Quixote. Byron did not lack common sense, but age, which to most men, teaches irony and doubt, seemed to withdraw some of his common sense. The miscarriage of Don Quixote now seemed to him more painful than amusing.

"Of all tales 't is the saddest - and more sad,  
Because it makes us smile: his hero's right,  
And still pursues the right;- to curb the bad  
His only object, and 'gainst odds to fight  
His guerdon: 't is his virtue makes him mad!  
But his adventures form a sorry sight;-  
A sorrier still is the great moral taught  
By that real epic unto all who have thought.  
(canto XLIII stanza LX)

Redressing injury, revenging wrong,  
To aid the damsel and destroy the caitiff;  
Opposing singly the united strong,  
From foreign yoke to free the helpless native:-

Alas! must noblest views, like an old song,  
Be for mere fancy's sport a theme creative  
A jest a riddle, Fame through thick and thin sought!"  
(canto XIII stanza X)

Thus, prisoner of sentimentalism, Byron dreamed of glorious adventures and of liberal chivalry. Was it not his duty to point out to John Bull something of the condition of these people? Then, his taste of the past returned to him. He revisits the halls where he had once been a favorite and his satire becomes a ballad on the elites of former days.

Let us leave canto thirteen and go on to number fourteen. At this time in Byron's life, age was slowly creeping up on him, at least he thought he was getting old. He was thirty-five then.

"Too old for youth, - too young, at thirty-five  
To herd with boys, or hoard with good three-score,-  
I wonder people should be left alive;  
But since they are, that epoch is a bore;"  
(canto XII stanza 11)

The probable reason for such an attitude might be because he had led a life of the wildest and selfish pleasures, had travelled and seen practically everything that could be seen or would be of interest, and his power of writing was fast wearing out - we notice that in his long drawn out digressions. Madame Guiccioli still influenced

Byron, and ever since his meeting with her, he had changed, in a moral sense. This moral solitude and want of action, often caused him to make mental retreats, and see what he had done with himself and what he had to do. These retreats and reflections have been somewhat alluded to previously, but most of them pictured Byron in his moments of anger and revenge, after all, we must be fair and give him justice, for at times Byron was cool, calm and somewhat timid. Let us now see him in a more quiet and subdued mood.

"THE world is all before me - or behind;  
For I have seen a portion of that same,  
And quite enough for me to keep in mind  
Of passions, too, I have proved enough to blame  
To that great pleasure of our friends, mankind,  
Who like to mix some slight alloy to fame;  
For I was rather famous in my time,  
Until I fairly knocked it up with rhyme."  
(canto XLV stanza 1X)

Byron is simply giving us facts about his own life. He was a lord, which in itself was enough to be called famous. He had tried his hand at poetry and had been severely criticized, to which criticism he had retaliated with his English Bards And Scotch Reviewers — a poem which warned the world that he was not to be trampled upon free of cost. Then he became more famous with his writing of Childe Harold.

Next followed his plays which received still more criticism and which were partly the cause of separation for many of his literary admirers - especially in England. Yes, Byron had been famous even before he wrote poetry, and still more famous when he began writing; but he lost much of his prestige acquired by his early writing, because the reading public began to be shocked by the opinions uttered by the hero of his poems, whom, by this time they knew to be Byron himself. Byron admits that he had many love affairs and he calls them alloys that are mixed with fame. If Byron's life could be compared to a piece of ore, and fame the mineral to be extracted, without doubt, the alloy would outweigh the fame.

And so, Don Juan comes to a close, and with the end of Juan comes the end of Byron as a poet. He had been too vigorous in his life, and since his poetry depicts his life, it too was vigorous. He had been vigorous against others and himself, had spent his life in defying the world, and had written poetry to depict revolt, and had finally found the fulfilment of his talent and satisfaction of his heart, in a poem waging war on all human lives in such a manner he must be great, but he becomes morbid. There is a malady of heart and in mind, in the style of Don Juan, as in Swift. When a man jests amidst his tears, it is because he

has a poisoned imagination. This kind of laughter lasts but a time, and we see in some people a hardening of the heart, or madness, in others excitement or disgust, Byron was exhausted, at least the poet was exhausted in him. The last cantos of Don Juan drag; the gaiety becomes forced, the escapades digressions, and the reader bored. Byron forsook poetry, and poetry forsook him, and he went to Greece in search of action.

Chapter-9  
Byron in Greece  
His Death

Byron's life as a poet was finished, but he had another life to live, and that was the life of action. It is considered a fact that the great events of our lives are often prepared by trivial facts to which we hardly pay any attention at the time; our actions and conversations gradually force us into a very narrow rut, and all other means of egression are closed to us; the moment arrives when we must spend our lives for our principals - in other words we become the slaves of our own formulated principals. Byron, influenced by the French Revolution, had upheld the principal of liberty and had advocated its attainment through revolt if necessary, not only in his conversation but also in his poetry. Now that he had enunciated his principals, he naturally had to put them in practice. Furthermore his last efforts at poetry had been the cause of losing practically all of the little prestige that was left him, and he now thought that something had to be done in order to get back into good standing with his public. Perhaps he thought that his real qualities would rather appear in active life than in mental life. Whatever the case may be, he had always considered himself a soldier, prevented by his deformity from taking part in the life for which he had been made.

It was not only redemption in the eyes of the public, that he was seeking in undertaking such a sacrifice as going to war in favour of Greek independence; it was most of all the salvation of Byron in the soul of Byron. He had shown in Manfred that, for him, Hell was interior conflict — something that existed in his soul. Thus, this conflict between the Byron he had been, and the Byron he could have been, which had been raging within him since his youth, could be done away with by means of a great sacrifice, and he would return to the Byron of his boyhood days, and then regain his former prestige.

Greece sought aid from England, and England replied by forming a committee to investigate and report on the conditions in Greece. Byron, through his friend Hobhouse who was then a member of parliament, was named on this committee. As a member of the committee, he showed much common-sense and keen judgement, although he had been a contriver of rhymes.

In Greece Byron found that his plans of liberating the country would not work out as easily as he had thought; the people he had to deal with were quite untractable, and he said in bitterness, "I was a fool to come here," they only wanted his money. As, however, he had embarked in the cause, he knew he was too conspicuous in the eyes of the world

which it had been his object to defy, to retreat without disgrace, and he was about to command an attack on Lepanto, when he was overtaken by disease and death took him on the 19th of February 1824 at the age of thirty-six.

In this short treatise we have seen that if we follow Byron's life as we read his poetry, that the one cannot be separated from the other, for Byron's poetry is his life in verse. Much as he may have aimed at withdrawing himself from himself in his work, the more we read of it, the more are we convinced that his motive in writing was not the effect produced. When reading poetry, other than Byron's, we feel ourselves carried away by the lines of the poet, and it is we who are witnessing the beauty or ruins of places, it is we who are taking part in the dramas that the poet has written, it is we who are making judgements, it is we who are giving advice, it is we who are happy or sad in that imaginary world; but with Byron it is different - if he succeeds in firing our imagination, we always feel the presence of another being. The places that we visit are shrouded by the cloak of some one else, in the dramas in which we should become the principal actors we are not expressing our own ideas but the ideas of another person; when judgements are pronounced they are often not in accord with our own, and we hear them

pronounced by a person that should not be present; when we see happiness or sadness expressed, oftentimes we do not feel that it is universal happiness or sadness, but that it is that of a particular individual - that ever-present individual is Byron. In fact, if every line of his poetry were linked together, we would then have a rope joining the milestones of Byron's life.

Not only have we seen in his work, the life he led, the impressions he had, and the changeful mood of his sensitive character, but also the circumstances, the times, the places, and his relation with men and women that influenced him in his work. Byron absorbed some of the idealism of Shelley but not enough to replace his own realism. His poetry is then his own diary.

Because of his realism, of his great courage, and precision, it would seem that he could have been a greater man in the world of action than in the world of reflection to which he had more or less been condemned by his own indcision. He had desired at one and the same time to become a defender of people, a great lord, a husband and a Don Juan, a Voltaire and a Puritan. He had waged war against English society and he had sought favours from it. Throughout his whole life and work he seems to have lacked that unity of thought and conduct which alone permits of great ideas.