

**Mathilda**

**By**

**Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley**

## PREFACE

This volume prints for the first time the full text of Mary Shelley's novelette *Mathilda* together with the opening pages of its rough draft, *The Fields of Fancy*. They are transcribed from the microfilm of the notebooks belonging to Lord Abinger which is in the library of Duke University.

The text follows Mary Shelley's manuscript exactly except for the omission of mere corrections by the author, most of which are negligible; those that are significant are included and explained in the notes. Footnotes indicated by an asterisk are Mrs. Shelley's own notes. She was in general a fairly good speller, but certain words, especially those in which there was a question of doubling or not doubling a letter, gave her trouble: untill (though occasionally she deleted the final l or wrote the word correctly), agreable, occured, confering, buble, meanness, receded, as well as hopless, lonely, seperate, extactic, sacrificse, desart, and words ending in -ance or -ence. These and other misspellings (even those of proper names) are reproduced without change or comment. The use of sic and of square brackets is reserved to indicate evident slips of the pen, obviously incorrect, unclear, or incomplete phrasing and punctuation, and my conjectures in emending them.

I am very grateful to the library of Duke University and to its

librarian, Dr. Benjamin E. Powell, not only for permission to transcribe and publish this work by Mary Shelley but also for the many courtesies shown to me when they welcomed me as a visiting scholar in 1956. To Lord Abinger also my thanks are due for adding his approval of my undertaking, and to the Curators of the Bodleian Library for permitting me to use and to quote from the papers in the reserved Shelley Collection. Other libraries and individuals helped me while I was editing *Mathilda*: the Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore, whose Literature and Reference Departments went to endless trouble for me; the Julia Rogers Library of Goucher College and its staff; the library of the University of Pennsylvania; Miss R. Glynn Grylls (Lady Mander); Professor Lewis Patton of Duke University; Professor Frederick L. Jones of the University of Pennsylvania; and many other persons who did me favors that seemed to them small but that to me were very great.

I owe much also to previous books by and about the Shelleys. Those to which I have referred more than once in the introduction and notes are here given with the abbreviated form which I have used:

Frederick L. Jones, ed. *The Letters of Mary W. Shelley*, 2 vols.  
Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1944 (Letters)

---- *Mary Shelley's Journal*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press,  
1947 (Journal)

Roger Ingpen and W.E. Peck, eds. The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, Julian Edition, 10 vols. London, 1926-1930 (Julian Works)

Newman Ivey White. Shelley, 2 vols. New York: Knopf, 1940 (White, Shelley)

Elizabeth Nitchie. Mary Shelley, Author of "Frankenstein." New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953 (Nitchie, Mary Shelley)

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