In that day, God, who will judge the secrets of all men, will judge between this man and this woman. Then, if never before, the full truth shall be told both of the depraved and dissolute man who made it his life's object to defame the innocent, and the silent, the self-denying woman who made it her life's object to give space for repentance to the guilty.

PART III. MISCELLANEOUS DOCUMENTS.

THE TRUE STORY OF LADY BYRON'S LIFE,
AS ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN 'THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY.'

The reading world of America has lately been presented with a book which is said to sell rapidly, and which appears to meet with universal favour.

The subject of the book may be thus briefly stated: The mistress of Lord Byron comes before the world for the sake of vindicating his fame from slanders and aspersions cast on him by his wife. The story of the mistress versus wife may be summed up as follows:--

Lord Byron, the hero of the story, is represented as a human being endowed with every natural charm, gift, and grace, who, by the one false step of an unsuitable marriage, wrecked his whole life. A narrow-minded, cold-hearted precisian, without sufficient intellect to comprehend his genius, or heart to feel for his temptations, formed with him one of those mere worldly marriages common in high life; and, finding that she could not reduce him to the mathematical proprieties and conventional rules of her own mode of life, suddenly, and without warning, abandoned him in the most cruel and inexplicable manner.

It is alleged that she parted from him in apparent affection and good-humour, wrote him a playful, confiding letter upon the way, but, after reaching her father's house, suddenly, and without explanation, announced to him that she would never see him again; that this sudden abandonment drew down upon him a perfect storm of scandalous stories, which his wife never contradicted; that she never in any way or shape stated what the exact reasons for her departure had been, and thus silently gave scope to all the malice of thousands of enemies. The sensitive victim was actually driven from England, his home broken up, and he doomed to be a lonely wanderer on foreign shores.

In Italy, under bluer skies, and among a gentler people, with more tolerant modes of judgment, the authoress intimates that he found peace and consolation. A lovely young Italian countess falls in love with him, and, breaking her family ties for his sake, devotes herself to him; and, in blissful retirement with her, he finds at last that domestic life for

which he was so fitted.

Soothed, calmed, and refreshed, he writes 'Don Juan,' which the world is at this late hour informed was a poem with a high moral purpose, designed to be a practical illustration of the doctrine of total depravity among young gentlemen in high life.

Under the elevating influence of love, he rises at last to higher realms of moral excellence, and resolves to devote the rest of his life to some noble and heroic purpose; becomes the saviour of Greece; and dies untimely, leaving a nation to mourn his loss.

The authoress dwells with a peculiar bitterness on Lady Byron's entire silence during all these years, as the most aggravated form of persecution and injury. She informs the world that Lord Byron wrote his Autobiography with the purpose of giving a fair statement of the exact truth in the whole matter; and that Lady Byron bought up the manuscript of the publisher, and insisted on its being destroyed, unread; thus inflexibly depriving her husband of his last chance of a hearing before the tribunal of the public.

As a result of this silent persistent cruelty on the part of a cold, correct, narrow-minded woman, the character of Lord Byron has been misunderstood, and his name transmitted to after-ages clouded with aspersions and accusations which it is the object of this book to remove.

* * * * *

Such is the story of Lord Byron's mistress,--a story which is going the length of this American continent, and rousing up new sympathy with the poet, and doing its best to bring the youth of America once more under the power of that brilliant, seductive genius, from which it was hoped they had escaped. Already we are seeing it revamped in magazine-articles, which take up the slanders of the paramour and enlarge on them, and wax eloquent in denunciation of the marble-hearted insensible wife.

All this while, it does not appear to occur to the thousands of unreflecting readers that they are listening merely to the story of Lord Byron's mistress, and of Lord Byron; and that, even by their own showing, their heaviest accusation against Lady Byron is that she has not spoken at all. Her story has never been told.

For many years after the rupture between Lord Byron and his wife, that poet's personality, fate, and happiness had an interest for the whole civilized world, which, we will venture to say, was unparalleled. It is within the writer's recollection, how, in the obscure mountain-town where she spent her early days, Lord Byron's separation from his wife was, for a season, the all-engrossing topic.

She remembers hearing her father recount at the breakfast-table the facts as they were given in the public papers, together with his own suppositions and theories of the causes.

Lord Byron's 'Fare thee well,' addressed to Lady Byron, was set to music, and sung with tears by young school-girls, even in this distant America.

Madame de Stael said of this appeal, that she was sure it would have drawn her at once to his heart and his arms; she could have forgiven everything: and so said all the young ladies all over the world, not only in England but in France and Germany, wherever Byron's poetry appeared in translation.

Lady Byron's obdurate cold-heartedness in refusing even to listen to his prayers, or to have any intercourse with him which might lead to reconciliation, was the one point conceded on all sides.

The stricter moralists defended her; but gentler hearts throughout all the world regarded her as a marble-hearted monster of correctness and morality, a personification of the law unmitigated by the gospel.

Literature in its highest walks busied itself with Lady Byron. Hogg, in the character of the Ettrick Shepherd, devotes several eloquent passages to expatiating on the conjugal fidelity of a poor Highland shepherd's wife, who, by patience and prayer and forgiveness, succeeds in reclaiming her drunken husband, and making a good man of him; and then points his moral by contrasting with this touching picture the cold-hearted pharisaical correctness of Lady Byron.

Moore, in his 'Life of Lord Byron,' when beginning the recital of the series of disgraceful amours which formed the staple of his life in

Venice, has this passage:--

'Highly censurable in point of morality and decorum as was his course of life while under the roof of Madame ----, it was (with pain I am forced to confess) venial in comparison with the strange, headlong career of licence to which, when weaned from that connection, he so unrestrainedly, and, it may be added, defyingly abandoned himself. Of the state of his mind on leaving England, I have already endeavoured to convey some idea; and among the feelings that went to make up that self-centred spirit of resistance which he then opposed to his fate was an indignant scorn for his own countrymen for the wrongs he thought they had done him. For a time, the kindly sentiments which he still harboured toward Lady Byron, and a sort of vague hope, perhaps, that all would yet come right again, kept his mind in a mood somewhat more softened and docile, as well as sufficiently under the influence of English opinions to prevent his breaking out into open rebellion against it, as he unluckily did afterward.

'By the failure of the attempted mediation with Lady Byron, his last link with home was severed: while, notwithstanding the quiet and unobtrusive life which he led at Geneva, there was as yet, he found, no cessation of the slanderous warfare against his character; the same busy and misrepresenting spirit which had tracked his every step at home, having, with no less malicious watchfulness, dogged him into exile.'

We should like to know what the misrepresentations and slanders must have been, when this sort of thing is admitted in Mr. Moore's justification.

It seems to us rather wonderful how anybody, unless it were a person like the Countess Guiccioli, could misrepresent a life such as even Byron's friend admits he was leading.

During all these years, when he was setting at defiance every principle of morality and decorum, the interest of the female mind all over Europe in the conversion of this brilliant prodigal son was unceasing, and reflects the greatest credit upon the faith of the sex.

Madame de Stael commenced the first effort at evangelization immediately after he left England, and found her catechumen in a most edifying state of humility. He was, metaphorically, on his knees in penitence, and confessed himself a miserable sinner in the loveliest manner possible. Such sweetness and humility took all hearts. His conversations with Madame de Stael were printed, and circulated all over the world; making it to appear that only the inflexibility of Lady Byron stood in the way of his entire conversion.

Lady Blessington, among many others, took him in hand five or six years afterwards, and was greatly delighted with his docility, and edified by his frank and free confessions of his miserable offences. Nothing now seemed wanting to bring the wanderer home to the fold but a kind word from Lady Byron. But, when the fair countess offered to mediate, the poet only shook his head in tragic despair; 'he had so many times tried in vain; Lady Byron's course had been from the first that of obdurate silence.'

Any one who would wish to see a specimen of the skill of the honourable poet in mystification will do well to read a letter to Lady Byron, which Lord Byron, on parting from Lady Blessington, enclosed for her to read just before he went to Greece. He says,--

'The letter which I enclose I was prevented from sending by my despair of its doing any good. I was perfectly sincere when I wrote it, and am so still. But it is difficult for me to withstand the thousand provocations on that subject which both friends and foes have for seven years been throwing in the way of a man whose feelings were once quick, and whose temper was never patient.'

* * * * *

'TO LADY BYRON, CARE OF THE HON. MRS. LEIGH, LONDON.

'PISA, Nov. 17, 1821.

'I have to acknowledge the receipt of "Ada's hair," which is very soft and pretty, and nearly as dark already as mine was at twelve years old, if I may judge from what I recollect of some in Augusta's possession, taken at that age. But it don't curl--perhaps from its being let grow.

'I also thank you for the inscription of the date and name; and I will tell you why: I believe that they are the only two or three words of your handwriting in my possession. For your letters I returned; and except the two words, or rather the one word, "Household," written twice in an

old account book, I have no other. I burnt your last note, for two reasons: firstly, it was written in a style not very agreeable; and, secondly, I wished to take your word without documents, which are the worldly resources of suspicious people.

'I suppose that this note will reach you somewhere about Ada's birthday--the 10th of December, I believe. She will then be six: so that, in about twelve more, I shall have some chance of meeting her; perhaps sooner, if I am obliged to go to England by business or otherwise. Recollect, however, one thing, either in distance or nearness--every day which keeps us asunder should, after so long a period, rather soften our mutual feelings; which must always have one rallying point as long as our child exists, which, I presume, we both hope will be long after either of her parents.

'The time which has elapsed since the separation has been considerably more than the whole brief period of our union, and the not much longer one of our prior acquaintance. We both made a bitter mistake; but now it is over, and irrevocably so. For at thirty-three on my part, and few years less on yours, though it is no very extended period of life, still it is one when the habits and thought are generally so formed as to admit of no modification; and, as we could not agree when younger, we should with difficulty do so now.

'I say all this, because I own to you, that notwithstanding everything, I considered our reunion as not impossible for more than a year after the separation; but then I gave up the hope entirely and for ever. But this

very impossibility of reunion seems to me at least a reason why, on all the few points of discussion which can arise between us, we should preserve the courtesies of life, and as much of its kindness as people who are never to meet may preserve,--perhaps more easily than nearer connections. For my own part, I am violent, but not malignant; for only fresh provocations can awaken my resentments. To you, who are colder and more concentrated, I would just hint, that you may sometimes mistake the depth of a cold anger for dignity, and a worse feeling for duty. I assure you that I bear you now (whatever I may have done) no resentment whatever. Remember, that, if you have injured me in aught, this forgiveness is something; and that, if I have injured you, it is something more still, if it be true, as the moralists say, that the most offending are the least forgiving.

'Whether the offence has been solely on my side, or reciprocal, or on yours chiefly, I have ceased to reflect upon any but two things; viz., that you are the mother of my child, and that we shall never meet again. I think, if you also consider the two corresponding points with reference to myself, it will be better for all three.

'Yours ever,

'NOEL BYRON.'

The artless Thomas Moore introduces this letter in the 'Life,' with the remark,--

'There are few, I should think, of my readers, who will not agree with me in pronouncing, that, if the author of the following letter had not right on his side, he had at least most of those good feelings which are found in general to accompany it.'

The reader is requested to take notice of the important admission; that the letter was never sent to Lady Byron at all. It was, in fact, never intended for her, but was a nice little dramatic performance, composed simply with the view of acting on the sympathies of Lady Blessington and Byron's numerous female admirers; and the reader will agree with us, we think, that, in this point of view, it was very neatly done, and deserves immortality as a work of high art. For six years he had been plunged into every kind of vice and excess, pleading his shattered domestic joys, and his wife's obdurate heart, as the apology and the impelling cause; filling the air with his shrieks and complaints concerning the slander which pursued him, while he filled letters to his confidential correspondents with records of new mistresses. During all these years, the silence of Lady Byron was unbroken; though Lord Byron not only drew in private on the sympathies of his female admirers, but employed his talents and position as an author in holding her up to contempt and ridicule before thousands of readers. We shall quote at length his side of the story, which he published in the First Canto of 'Don Juan,' that the reader may see how much reason he had for assuming the injured tone which he did in the letter to Lady Byron quoted above. That letter never was sent to her; and the unmanly and indecent caricature of her, and the indelicate exposure of the whole story on his own side, which we are about to quote, were the only communications that could have reached her

solitude.

In the following verses, Lady Byron is represented as Donna Inez, and Lord Byron as Don Jose; but the incidents and allusions were so very pointed, that nobody for a moment doubted whose history the poet was narrating.

'His mother was a learned lady, famed
For every branch of every science known
In every Christian language ever named,
With virtues equalled by her wit alone:
She made the cleverest people quite ashamed;
And even the good with inward envy groaned,
Finding themselves so very much exceeded
In their own way by all the things that she did.
. . . .
Save that her duty both to man and God
Required this conduct; which seemed very odd.

She kept a journal where his faults were noted,
And opened certain trunks of books and letters,
(All which might, if occasion served, be quoted);
And then she had all Seville for abettors,
Besides her good old grandmother (who doted):
The hearers of her case become repeaters,
Then advocates, inquisitors, and judges,--
Some for amusement, others for old grudges.

And then this best and meekest woman bore
  With such serenity her husband's woes!
Just as the Spartan ladies did of yore,
  Who saw their spouses killed, and nobly chose
Never to say a word about them more.
  Calmly she heard each calumny that rose,
And saw his agonies with such sublimity,
That all the world exclaimed, "What magnanimity!"'

This is the longest and most elaborate version of his own story that Byron ever published; but he busied himself with many others, projecting at one time a Spanish romance, in which the same story is related in the same transparent manner: but this he was dissuaded from printing. The booksellers, however, made a good speculation in publishing what they called his domestic poems; that is, poems bearing more or less relation to this subject.

Every person with whom he became acquainted with any degree of intimacy was made familiar with his side of the story. Moore's Biography is from first to last, in its representations, founded upon Byron's communicativeness, and Lady Byron's silence; and the world at last settled down to believing that the account so often repeated, and never contradicted, must be substantially a true one.

The true history of Lord and Lady Byron has long been perfectly understood in many circles in England; but the facts were of a nature

that could not be made public. While there was a young daughter living whose future might be prejudiced by its recital, and while there were other persons on whom the disclosure of the real truth would have been crushing as an avalanche, Lady Byron's only course was the perfect silence in which she took refuge, and those sublime works of charity and mercy to which she consecrated her blighted early life.

But the time is now come when the truth may be told. All the actors in the scene have disappeared from the stage of mortal existence, and passed, let us have faith to hope, into a world where they would desire to expiate their faults by a late publication of the truth.

No person in England, we think, would as yet take the responsibility of relating the true history which is to clear Lady Byron's memory; but, by a singular concurrence of circumstances, all the facts of the case, in the most undeniable and authentic form, were at one time placed in the hands of the writer of this sketch, with authority to make such use of them as she should judge best. Had this melancholy history been allowed to sleep, no public use would have been made of them; but the appearance of a popular attack on the character of Lady Byron calls for a vindication, and the true story of her married life will therefore now be related.

Lord Byron has described in one of his letters the impression left upon his mind by a young person whom he met one evening in society, and who attracted his attention by the simplicity of her dress, and a certain air of singular purity and calmness with which she surveyed the scene around

her.

On inquiry, he was told that this young person was Miss Milbanke, an only child, and one of the largest heiresses in England.

Lord Byron was fond of idealising his experiences in poetry; and the friends of Lady Byron had no difficulty in recognising the portrait of Lady Byron, as she appeared at this time of her life, in his exquisite description of Aurora Raby:--

'There was
Indeed a certain fair and fairy one,
  Of the best class, and better than her class,--
Aurora Raby, a young star who shone
  O'er life, too sweet an image for such glass;
A lovely being scarcely formed or moulded;
A rose with all its sweetest leaves yet folded.

. . . .

Early in years, and yet more infantine
  In figure, she had something of sublime
In eyes which sadly shone as seraphs' shine;
  All youth, but with an aspect beyond time;
Radiant and grave, as pitying man's decline;
Mournful, but mournful of another's crime,
She looked as if she sat by Eden's door,

And grieved for those who could return no more.

. . . .

She gazed upon a world she scarcely knew,
As seeking not to know it; silent, lone,
As grows a flower, thus quietly she grew,
And kept her heart serene within its zone.
There was awe in the homage which she drew;
Her spirit seemed as seated on a throne,
Apart from the surrounding world, and strong
In its own strength,--most strange in one so young!'

Some idea of the course which their acquaintance took, and of the manner in which he was piqued into thinking of her, is given in a stanza or two:--

'The dashing and proud air of Adeline
Imposed not upon her: she saw her blaze
Much as she would have seen a glow-worm shine;
Then turned unto the stars for loftier rays.
Juan was something she could not divine,
Being no sibyl in the new world's ways;
Yet she was nothing dazzled by the meteor,
Because she did not pin her faith on feature.

His fame too (for he had that kind of fame

Which sometimes plays the deuce with womankind,--
A heterogeneous mass of glorious blame,
Half virtues and whole vices being combined;
Faults which attract because they are not tame;
Follies tricked out so brightly that they blind),--
These seals upon her wax made no impression,
Such was her coldness or her self-possession.

Aurora sat with that indifference
Which piques a preux chevalier,--as it ought.
Of all offences, that's the worst offence
Which seems to hint you are not worth a thought.

. . . .

To his gay nothings, nothing was replied,
Or something which was nothing, as urbanity
Required. Aurora scarcely looked aside,
Nor even smiled enough for any vanity.
The Devil was in the girl! Could it be pride,
Or modesty, or absence, or inanity?

. . . .

Juan was drawn thus into some attentions,
Slight but select, and just enough to express,
To females of perspicuous comprehensions,

That he would rather make them more than less.
Aurora at the last (so history mentions,
Though probably much less a fact than guess)
So far relaxed her thoughts from their sweet prison
As once or twice to smile, if not to listen.

. . . .

But Juan had a sort of winning way,
A proud humility, if such there be,
Which showed such deference to what females say,
As if each charming word were a decree.
His tact, too, tempered him from grave to gay,
And taught him when to be reserved or free.
He had the art of drawing people out,
Without their seeing what he was about.

Aurora, who in her indifference,
Confounded him in common with the crowd
Of flatterers, though she deemed he had more sense
Than whispering foplings or than witlings loud,
Commenced (from such slight things will great commence)
To feel that flattery which attracts the proud,
Rather by deference than compliment,
And wins even by a delicate dissent.

And then he had good looks: that point was carried

Nem. con. amongst the women.

. . . .

Now, though we know of old that looks deceive,
And always have done, somehow these good looks,
Make more impression than the best of books.

Aurora, who looked more on books than faces,
Was very young, although so very sage:
Admiring more Minerva than the Graces,
Especially upon a printed page.
But Virtue's self, with all her tightest laces,
Has not the natural stays of strict old age;
And Socrates, that model of all duty,
Owned to a penchant, though discreet for beauty.'

The presence of this high-minded, thoughtful, unworldly woman is described through two cantos of the wild, rattling 'Don Juan,' in a manner that shows how deeply the poet was capable of being affected by such an appeal to his higher nature.

For instance, when Don Juan sits silent and thoughtful amid a circle of persons who are talking scandal, the poet says,--

''Tis true, he saw Aurora look as though
She approved his silence: she perhaps mistook

Its motive for that charity we owe,
  But seldom pay, the absent.

. . . .

He gained esteem where it was worth the most;
  And certainly Aurora had renewed
In him some feelings he had lately lost
  Or hardened,--feelings which, perhaps ideal,
Are so divine that I must deem them real:--

The love of higher things and better days;
  The unbounded hope and heavenly ignorance
Of what is called the world and the world's ways;
  The moments when we gather from a glance
More joy than from all future pride or praise,
  Which kindled manhood, but can ne'er entrance
The heart in an existence of its own
Of which another's bosom is the zone.

And full of sentiments sublime as billows
  Heaving between this world and worlds beyond,
Don Juan, when the midnight hour of pillows
  Arrived, retired to his.' . . .

In all these descriptions of a spiritual unworldly nature acting on the spiritual and unworldly part of his own nature, every one who ever knew

Lady Byron intimately must have recognised the model from which he drew, and the experience from which he spoke, even though nothing was further from his mind than to pay this tribute to the woman he had injured, and though before these lines, which showed how truly he knew her real character, had come one stanza of ribald, vulgar caricature, designed as a slight to her:--

'There was Miss Millpond, smooth as summer's sea,
That usual paragon, an only daughter,
Who seemed the cream of equanimity
'Till skimmed; and then there was some milk and water;
With a slight shade of blue, too, it might be,
Beneath the surface: but what did it matter?
Love's riotous; but marriage should have quiet,
And, being consumptive, live on a milk diet.'

The result of Byron's intimacy with Miss Milbanke and the enkindling of his nobler feelings was an offer of marriage, which she, though at the time deeply interested in him, declined with many expressions of friendship and interest. In fact, she already loved him, but had that doubt of her power to be to him all that a wife should be, which would be likely to arise in a mind so sensitively constituted and so unworldly. They, however, continued a correspondence as friends; on her part, the interest continually increased; on his, the transient rise of better feelings was choked and overgrown by the thorns of base unworthy passions.

From the height at which he might have been happy as the husband of a noble woman, he fell into the depths of a secret adulterous intrigue with a blood relation, so near in consanguinity, that discovery must have been utter ruin and expulsion from civilised society.

From henceforth, this damning guilty secret became the ruling force in his life; holding him with a morbid fascination, yet filling him with remorse and anguish, and insane dread of detection. Two years after his refusal by Miss Milbanke, his various friends, seeing that for some cause he was wretched, pressed marriage upon him.

Marriage has often been represented as the proper goal and terminus of a wild and dissipated career; and it has been supposed to be the appointed mission of good women to receive wandering prodigals, with all the rags and disgraces of their old life upon them, and put rings on their hands, and shoes on their feet, and introduce them, clothed and in their right minds, to an honourable career in society.

Marriage was, therefore, universally recommended to Lord Byron by his numerous friends and well-wishers; and so he determined to marry, and, in an hour of reckless desperation, sat down and wrote proposals to two ladies. One was declined: the other, which was accepted, was to Miss Milbanke. The world knows well that he had the gift of expression, and will not be surprised that he wrote a very beautiful letter, and that the woman who had already learned to love him fell at once into the snare.

Her answer was a frank, outspoken avowal of her love for him, giving

herself to him heart and hand. The good in Lord Byron was not so utterly obliterated that he could receive such a letter without emotion, or practise such unfairness on a loving, trusting heart without pangs of remorse. He had sent the letter in mere recklessness; he had not seriously expected to be accepted; and the discovery of the treasure of affection which he had secured was like a vision of lost heaven to a soul in hell.

But, nevertheless, in his letters written about the engagement, there are sufficient evidences that his self-love was flattered at the preference accorded him by so superior a woman, and one who had been so much sought. He mentions with an air of complacency that she has employed the last two years in refusing five or six of his acquaintance; that he had no idea she loved him, admitting that it was an old attachment on his part. He dwells on her virtues with a sort of pride of ownership. There is a sort of childish levity about the frankness of these letters, very characteristic of the man who skimmed over the deepest abysses with the lightest jests. Before the world, and to his intimates, he was acting the part of the successful fiance, conscious all the while of the deadly secret that lay cold at the bottom of his heart.

When he went to visit Miss Milbanke's parents as her accepted lover, she was struck with his manner and appearance: she saw him moody and gloomy, evidently wrestling with dark and desperate thoughts, and anything but what a happy and accepted lover should be. She sought an interview with him alone, and told him that she had observed that he was not happy in the engagement; and magnanimously added, that, if on review, he found he

had been mistaken in the nature of his feelings, she would immediately release him, and they should remain only friends.

Overcome with the conflict of his feelings, Lord Byron fainted away. Miss Milbanke was convinced that his heart must really be deeply involved in an attachment with reference to which he showed such strength of emotion, and she spoke no more of a dissolution of the engagement.

There is no reason to doubt that Byron was, as he relates in his 'Dream,' profoundly agonized and agitated when he stood before God's altar with the trusting young creature whom he was leading to a fate so awfully tragic; yet it was not the memory of Mary Chaworth, but another guiltier and more damning memory, that overshadowed that hour.

The moment the carriage-doors were shut upon the bridegroom and the bride, the paroxysm of remorse and despair--unrepentant remorse and angry despair--broke forth upon her gentle head:--

'You might have saved me from this, madam! You had all in your own power when I offered myself to you first. Then you might have made me what you pleased; but now you will find that you have married a devil!'

In Miss Martineau's Sketches, recently published, is an account of the termination of this wedding-journey, which brought them to one of Lady Byron's ancestral country seats, where they were to spend the honeymoon.

Miss Martineau says,--

'At the altar she did not know that she was a sacrifice; but before sunset of that winter day she knew it, if a judgment may be formed from her face, and attitude of despair, when she alighted from the carriage on the afternoon of her marriage-day. It was not the traces of tears which won the sympathy of the old butler who stood at the open door. The bridegroom jumped out of the carriage and walked away. The bride alighted, and came up the steps alone, with a countenance and frame agonized and listless with evident horror and despair. The old servant longed to offer his arm to the young, lonely creature, as an assurance of sympathy and protection. From this shock she certainly rallied, and soon. The pecuniary difficulties of her new home were exactly what a devoted spirit like hers was fitted to encounter. Her husband bore testimony, after the catastrophe, that a brighter being, a more sympathising and agreeable companion, never blessed any man's home. When he afterwards called her cold and mathematical, and over-pious, and so forth, it was when public opinion had gone against him, and when he had discovered that her fidelity and mercy, her silence and magnanimity, might be relied on, so that he was at full liberty to make his part good, as far as she was concerned.

'Silent she was even to her own parents, whose feelings she magnanimously spared. She did not act rashly in leaving him, though she had been most rash in marrying him.'

Not all at once did the full knowledge of the dreadful reality into which she had entered come upon the young wife. She knew vaguely, from the

wild avowals of the first hours of their marriage, that there was a dreadful secret of guilt; that Byron's soul was torn with agonies of remorse, and that he had no love to give to her in return for a love which was ready to do and dare all for him. Yet bravely she addressed herself to the task of soothing and pleasing and calming the man whom she had taken 'for better or for worse.'

Young and gifted; with a peculiar air of refined and spiritual beauty; graceful in every movement; possessed of exquisite taste; a perfect companion to his mind in all the higher walks of literary culture; and with that infinite pliability to all his varying, capricious moods which true love alone can give; bearing in her hand a princely fortune, which, with a woman's uncalculating generosity, was thrown at his feet,--there is no wonder that she might feel for a while as if she could enter the lists with the very Devil himself, and fight with a woman's weapons for the heart of her husband.

There are indications scattered through the letters of Lord Byron, which, though brief indeed, showed that his young wife was making every effort to accommodate herself to him, and to give him a cheerful home. One of the poems that he sends to his publisher about this time, he speaks of as being copied by her. He had always the highest regard for her literary judgments and opinions; and this little incident shows that she was already associating herself in a wifely fashion with his aims as an author.

The poem copied by her, however, has a sad meaning, which she afterwards

learned to understand only too well:--

'There's not a joy the world can give like that it takes away
When the glow of early thought declines in feeling's dull decay:
'Tis not on youth's smooth cheek the blush alone that fades so fast;
But the tender bloom of heart is gone e'er youth itself be past.
Then the few whose spirits float above the wreck of happiness
Are driven o'er the shoals of guilt, or ocean of excess:
The magnet of their course is gone, or only points in vain
The shore to which their shivered sail shall never stretch again.'

Only a few days before she left him for ever, Lord Byron sent Murray manuscripts, in Lady Byron's handwriting, of the 'Siege of Corinth,' and 'Parisina,' and wrote,--

'I am very glad that the handwriting was a favourable omen of the morale of the piece: but you must not trust to that; for my copyist would write out anything I desired, in all the ignorance of innocence.'

There were lucid intervals in which Lord Byron felt the charm of his wife's mind, and the strength of her powers. 'Bell, you could be a poet too, if you only thought so,' he would say. There were summer-hours in her stormy life, the memory of which never left her, when Byron was as gentle and tender as he was beautiful; when he seemed to be possessed by a good angel: and then for a little time all the ideal possibilities of his nature stood revealed.

The most dreadful men to live with are those who thus alternate between angel and devil. The buds of hope and love called out by a day or two of sunshine are frozen again and again, till the tree is killed.

But there came an hour of revelation,--an hour when, in a manner which left no kind of room for doubt, Lady Byron saw the full depth of the abyss of infamy which her marriage was expected to cover, and understood that she was expected to be the cloak and the accomplice of this infamy.

Many women would have been utterly crushed by such a disclosure; some would have fled from him immediately, and exposed and denounced the crime. Lady Byron did neither. When all the hope of womanhood died out of her heart, there arose within her, stronger, purer, and brighter, that immortal kind of love such as God feels for the sinner,--the love of which Jesus spoke, and which holds the one wanderer of more account than the ninety and nine that went not astray. She would neither leave her husband nor betray him, nor yet would she for one moment justify his sin; and hence came two years of convulsive struggle, in which sometimes, for a while, the good angel seemed to gain ground, and then the evil one returned with sevenfold vehemence.

Lord Byron argued his case with himself and with her with all the sophistries of his powerful mind. He repudiated Christianity as authority; asserted the right of every human being to follow out what he called 'the impulses of nature.' Subsequently he introduced into one of his dramas the reasoning by which he justified himself in incest.

In the drama of 'Cain,' Adah, the sister and the wife of Cain, thus addresses him:--

'Cain, walk not with this spirit.
Bear with what we have borne, and love me: I
Love thee.

Lucifer. 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. O 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? Was not he, their father,
Born of the same sole womb, in the same hour
With me? Did we not love each other, and,
In multiplying our being, multiply
Things which will love each other as we love

Them? And as I love thee, my Cain, go not
Forth with this spirit: he is not of ours.

Lucifer. The sin I speak of is not of my making
And cannot be a sin in you, whate'er
It seems in those who will replace ye in
Mortality.

Adah. What is the sin which is not
Sin in itself? Can circumstance make sin
Of virtue? If it doth, we are the slaves
Of--

Lady Byron, though slight and almost infantine in her bodily presence, had the soul, not only of an angelic woman, but of a strong reasoning man. It was the writer's lot to know her at a period when she formed the personal acquaintance of many of the very first minds of England; but, among all with whom this experience brought her in connection, there was none who impressed her so strongly as Lady Byron. There was an almost supernatural power of moral divination, a grasp of the very highest and most comprehensive things, that made her lightest opinions singularly impressive. No doubt, this result was wrought out in a great degree from the anguish and conflict of these two years, when, with no one to help or counsel her but Almighty God, she wrestled and struggled with fiends of darkness for the redemption of her husband's soul.

She followed him through all his sophistical reasonings with a keener

reason. She besought and implored, in the name of his better nature, and by all the glorious things that he was capable of being and doing; and she had just power enough to convulse and shake and agonise, but not power enough to subdue.

One of the first of living writers, in the novel of 'Romola,' has given, in her masterly sketch of the character of Tito, the whole history of the conflict of a woman like Lady Byron with a nature like that of her husband. She has described a being full of fascinations and sweetnesses, full of generosities and of good-natured impulses; a nature that could not bear to give pain, or to see it in others, but entirely destitute of any firm moral principle; she shows how such a being, merely by yielding step by step to the impulses of passion, and disregarding the claims of truth and right, becomes involved in a fatality of evil, in which deceit, crime, and cruelty are a necessity, forcing him to persist in the basest ingratitude to the father who has done all for him, and hard-hearted treachery to the high-minded wife who has given herself to him wholly.

There are few scenes in literature more fearfully tragic than the one between Romola and Tito, when he finally discovers that she knows him fully, and can be deceived by him no more. Some such hour always must come for strong decided natures irrevocably pledged--one to the service of good, and the other to the slavery of evil. The demoniac cried out, 'What have I to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to torment me before the time?' The presence of all-pitying purity and love was a torture to the soul possessed by the demon of evil.

These two years in which Lady Byron was with all her soul struggling to bring her husband back to his better self were a series of passionate convulsions.

During this time, such was the disordered and desperate state of his worldly affairs, that there were ten executions for debt levied on their family establishment; and it was Lady Byron's fortune each time which settled the account.

Toward the last, she and her husband saw less and less of each other; and he came more and more decidedly under evil influences, and seemed to acquire a sort of hatred of her.

Lady Byron once said significantly to a friend who spoke of some causeless dislike in another, 'My dear, I have known people to be hated for no other reason than because they impersonated conscience.'

The biographers of Lord Byron, and all his apologists, are careful to narrate how sweet and amiable and obliging he was to everybody who approached him; and the saying of Fletcher, his man-servant, that 'anybody could do anything with my Lord, except my Lady,' has often been quoted.

The reason of all this will now be evident. 'My Lady' was the only one, fully understanding the deep and dreadful secrets of his life, who had the courage resolutely and persistently and inflexibly to plant herself in his way, and insist upon it, that, if he went to destruction, it

should be in spite of her best efforts.

He had tried his strength with her fully. The first attempt had been to make her an accomplice by sophistry; by destroying her faith in Christianity, and confusing her sense of right and wrong, to bring her into the ranks of those convenient women who regard the marriage-tie only as a friendly alliance to cover licence on both sides.

When her husband described to her the Continental latitude (the good-humoured marriage, in which complaisant couples mutually agreed to form the cloak for each other's infidelities), and gave her to understand that in this way alone she could have a peaceful and friendly life with him, she answered him simply, 'I am too truly your friend to do this.'

When Lord Byron found that he had to do with one who would not yield, who knew him fully, who could not be blinded and could not be deceived, he determined to rid himself of her altogether.

It was when the state of affairs between herself and her husband seemed darkest and most hopeless, that the only child of this union was born. Lord Byron's treatment of his wife during the sensitive period that preceded the birth of this child, and during her confinement, was marked by paroxysms of unmanly brutality, for which the only possible charity on her part was the supposition of insanity. Moore sheds a significant light on this period, by telling us that, about this time, Byron was often drunk, day after day, with Sheridan. There had been insanity in the family; and this was the plea which Lady Byron's love put in for him.

She regarded him as, if not insane, at least so nearly approaching the boundaries of insanity as to be a subject of forbearance and tender pity; and she loved him with that love resembling a mother's, which good wives often feel when they have lost all faith in their husband's principles, and all hopes of their affections. Still, she was in heart and soul his best friend; true to him with a truth which he himself could not shake.

In the verses addressed to his daughter, Lord Byron speaks of her as

'The child of love, though born in bitterness,
And nurtured in convulsion.'

A day or two after the birth of this child, Lord Byron came suddenly into Lady Byron's room, and told her that her mother was dead. It was an utter falsehood; but it was only one of the many nameless injuries and cruelties by which he expressed his hatred of her. A short time after her confinement, she was informed by him, in a note, that, as soon as she was able to travel, she must go; that he could not and would not longer have her about him; and, when her child was only five weeks old, he carried this threat of expulsion into effect.

Here we will insert briefly Lady Byron's own account (the only one she ever gave to the public) of this separation. The circumstances under which this brief story was written are affecting.

Lord Byron was dead. The whole account between him and her was closed for ever in this world. Moore's 'Life' had been prepared, containing

simply and solely Lord Byron's own version of their story. Moore sent this version to Lady Byron, and requested to know if she had any remarks to make upon it. In reply, she sent a brief statement to him,--the first and only one that had come from her during all the years of the separation, and which appears to have mainly for its object the exculpation of her father and mother from the charge, made by the poet, of being the instigators of the separation.

In this letter, she says, with regard to their separation,--

'The facts are, I left London for Kirkby Mallory, the residence of my father and mother, on the 15th of January, 1816. LORD BYRON HAD SIGNIFIED TO ME IN WRITING, JAN. 6, HIS ABSOLUTE DESIRE THAT I SHOULD LEAVE LONDON ON THE EARLIEST DAY THAT I COULD CONVENIENTLY FIX. It was not safe for me to undertake the fatigue of a journey sooner than the 15th. Previously to my departure, it had been strongly impressed upon my mind that Lord Byron was under the influence of insanity. This opinion was derived, in a great measure, from the communications made me by his nearest relatives and personal attendant, who had more opportunity than myself for observing him during the latter part of my stay in town. It was even represented to me that he was in danger of destroying himself.

'With the concurrence of his family, I had consulted Dr. Baillie as a friend (Jan. 8) respecting the supposed malady. On acquainting him with the state of the case, and with Lord Byron's desire that I should leave

London, Dr. Baillie thought that my absence might be advisable as an experiment, assuming the fact of mental derangement; for Dr. Baillie, not having had access to Lord Byron, could not pronounce a positive opinion on that point. He enjoined that, in correspondence with Lord Byron, I should avoid all but light and soothing topics. Under these impressions, I left London, determined to follow the advice given by Dr. Baillie. Whatever might have been the conduct of Lord Byron toward me from the time of my marriage, yet, supposing him to be in a state of mental alienation, it was not for me, nor for any person of common humanity, to manifest at that moment a sense of injury.'

Nothing more than this letter from Lady Byron is necessary to substantiate the fact, that she did not leave her husband, but was driven from him,--driven from him that he might give himself up to the guilty infatuation that was consuming him, without being tortured by her imploring face, and by the silent power of her presence and her prayers.

For a long time before this, she had seen little of him. On the day of her departure, she passed by the door of his room, and stopped to caress his favourite spaniel, which was lying there; and she confessed to a friend the weakness of feeling a willingness even to be something as humble as that poor little creature, might she only be allowed to remain and watch over him. She went into the room where he and the partner of his sins were sitting together, and said, 'Byron, I come to say goodbye,' offering, at the same time, her hand.

Lord Byron put his hands behind him, retreated to the mantel-piece, and,

looking on the two that stood there, with a sarcastic smile said, 'When shall we three meet again?' Lady Byron answered, 'In heaven, I trust'. And those were her last words to him on earth.

Now, if the reader wishes to understand the real talents of Lord Byron for deception and dissimulation, let him read, with this story in his mind, the 'Fare thee well,' which he addressed to Lady Byron through the printer:--

'Fare thee well; and if for ever,
Still for ever fare thee well!
Even though unforgiving, never
'Gainst thee shall my heart rebel.

Would that breast were bared before thee
Where thy head so oft hath lain,
While that placid sleep came o'er thee
Thou canst never know again!

Though my many faults defaced me,
Could no other arm be found
Than the one which once embraced me
To inflict a careless wound?'

The re-action of society against him at the time of the separation from his wife was something which he had not expected, and for which, it appears, he was entirely unprepared. It broke up the guilty intrigue and

drove him from England. He had not courage to meet or endure it. The world, to be sure, was very far from suspecting what the truth was: but the tide was setting against him with such vehemence as to make him tremble every hour lest the whole should be known; and henceforth, it became a warfare of desperation to make his story good, no matter at whose expense.

He had tact enough to perceive at first that the assumption of the pathetic and the magnanimous, and general confessions of faults, accompanied with admissions of his wife's goodness, would be the best policy in his case. In this mood, he thus writes to Moore:--

'The fault was not in my choice (unless in choosing at all); for I do not believe (and I must say it in the very dregs of all this bitter business) that there ever was a better, or even a brighter, a kinder, or a more amiable, agreeable being than Lady Byron. I never had, nor can have, any reproach to make her while with me. Where there is blame, it belongs to myself.'

As there must be somewhere a scapegoat to bear the sin of the affair, Lord Byron wrote a poem called 'A Sketch,' in which he lays the blame of stirring up strife on a friend and former governess of Lady Byron's; but in this sketch he introduces the following just eulogy on Lady Byron:--

'Foiled was perversion by that youthful mind
Which flattery fooled not, baseness could not blind,
Deceit infect not, near contagion soil,

Indulgence weaken, nor example spoil,
Nor mastered science tempt her to look down
On humbler talents with a pitying frown,
Nor genius swell, nor beauty render vain,
Nor envy ruffle to retaliate pain,
Nor fortune change, pride raise, nor passion bow,
Nor virtue teach austerity,--till now;
Serenely purest of her sex that live,
But wanting one sweet weakness,--to forgive;
Too shocked at faults her soul can never know,
She deemed that all could be like her below:
Foe to all vice, yet hardly Virtue's friend;
For Virtue pardons those she would amend.'

In leaving England, Lord Byron first went to Switzerland, where he conceived and in part wrote out the tragedy of 'Manfred.' Moore speaks of his domestic misfortunes, and the sufferings which he underwent at this time, as having influence in stimulating his genius, so that he was enabled to write with a greater power.

Anybody who reads the tragedy of 'Manfred' with this story in his mind will see that it is true.

The hero is represented as a gloomy misanthrope, dwelling with impenitent remorse on the memory of an incestuous passion which has been the destruction of his sister for this life and the life to come, but which, to the very last gasp, he despairingly refuses to repent of, even while

he sees the fiends of darkness rising to take possession of his departing soul. That Byron knew his own guilt well, and judged himself severely, may be gathered from passages in this poem, which are as powerful as human language can be made; for instance this part of the 'incantation,' which Moore says was written at this time:--

'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 gathered in a cloud;
And for ever shalt thou dwell
In the spirit of this spell.

. . . .

From thy false tears I did distil
An essence which had strength to kill;
From thy own heart I then did wring
The black blood in its blackest spring;
From thy own smile I snatched the snake,
For there it coiled as in a brake;
From thy own lips I drew the charm
Which gave all these their chiefest harm:

In proving every poison known,
I found the strongest was thine own.

By thy cold breast and serpent smile,
By thy unfathomed gulfs of guile,
By that most seeming virtuous eye,
By thy shut soul's hypocrisy,
By the perfection of thine art
Which passed 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!'

Again: he represents Manfred as saying to the old abbot, who seeks to bring him to repentance,--

'Old man, there is no power in holy men,
Nor charm in prayer, nor purifying form
Of penitence, nor outward look, nor fast,
Nor agony, nor greater than all these,
The innate tortures of that deep despair,
Which is remorse without the fear of hell,
But, all in all sufficient to itself,
Would make a hell of heaven, can exorcise
From out the unbounded spirit the quick sense
Of its own sins, wrongs, sufferance, and revenge

Upon itself: there is no future pang
Can deal that justice on the self-condemned
He deals on his own soul.'

And when the abbot tells him,

'All this is well;
For this will pass away, and be succeeded
By an auspicious hope, which shall look up
With calm assurance to that blessed place
Which all who seek may win, whatever be
Their earthly errors,'

he answers,

'It is too late.'

Then the old abbot soliloquises:--

'This should have been a noble creature: he
Hath all the energy which would have made
A goodly frame of glorious elements,
Had they been wisely mingled; as it is,
It is an awful chaos,--light and darkness,
And mind and dust, and passions and pure thoughts,
Mixed, and contending without end or order.'

The world can easily see, in Moore's Biography, what, after this, was the course of Lord Byron's life; how he went from shame to shame, and dishonour to dishonour, and used the fortune which his wife brought him in the manner described in those private letters which his biographer was left to print. Moore, indeed, says Byron had made the resolution not to touch his lady's fortune; but adds, that it required more self-command than he possessed to carry out so honourable a purpose.

Lady Byron made but one condition with him. She had him in her power; and she exacted that the unhappy partner of his sins should not follow him out of England, and that the ruinous intrigue should be given up. Her inflexibility on this point kept up that enmity which was constantly expressing itself in some publication or other, and which drew her and her private relations with him before the public.

The story of what Lady Byron did with the portion of her fortune which was reserved to her is a record of noble and skilfully administered charities. Pitiful and wise and strong, there was no form of human suffering or sorrow that did not find with her refuge and help. She gave not only systematically, but also impulsively.

Miss Martineau claims for her the honour of having first invented practical schools, in which the children of the poor were turned into agriculturists, artizans, seamstresses, and good wives for poor men. While she managed with admirable skill and economy permanent institutions of this sort, she was always ready to relieve suffering in any form. The fugitive slaves William and Ellen Crafts, escaping to England, were

fostered by her protecting care.

In many cases where there was distress or anxiety from poverty among those too self-respecting to make their sufferings known, the delicate hand of Lady Byron ministered to the want with a consideration which spared the most refined feelings.

As a mother, her course was embarrassed by peculiar trials. The daughter inherited from the father not only brilliant talents, but a restlessness and morbid sensibility which might be too surely traced to the storms and agitations of the period in which she was born. It was necessary to bring her up in ignorance of the true history of her mother's life; and the consequence was that she could not fully understand that mother.

During her early girlhood, her career was a source of more anxiety than of comfort. She married a man of fashion, ran a brilliant course as a gay woman of fashion, and died early of a lingering and painful disease.

In the silence and shaded retirement of the sick-room, the daughter came wholly back to her mother's arms and heart; and it was on that mother's bosom that she leaned as she went down into the dark valley. It was that mother who placed her weak and dying hand in that of her Almighty Saviour.

To the children left by her daughter, she ministered with the faithfulness of a guardian angel; and it is owing to her influence that those who yet remain are among the best and noblest of mankind.

The person whose relations with Byron had been so disastrous, also, in the latter years of her life, felt Lady Byron's loving and ennobling influences, and, in her last sickness and dying hours, looked to her for consolation and help.

There was an unfortunate child of sin, born with the curse upon her, over whose wayward nature Lady Byron watched with a mother's tenderness. She was the one who could have patience when the patience of every one else failed; and though her task was a difficult one, from the strange abnormal propensities to evil in the object of her cares, yet Lady Byron never faltered, and never gave over, till death took the responsibility from her hands.

During all this trial, strange to say, her belief that the good in Lord Byron would finally conquer was unshaken.

To a friend who said to her, 'Oh! how could you love him?' she answered briefly, 'My dear, there was the angel in him.' It is in us all.

It was in this angel that she had faith. It was for the deliverance of this angel from degradation and shame and sin that she unceasingly prayed. She read every work that Byron wrote--read it with a deeper knowledge than any human being but herself could possess. The ribaldry and the obscenity and the insults with which he strove to make her ridiculous in the world fell at her pitying feet unheeded.

When he broke away from all this unworthy life to devote himself to a manly enterprise for the redemption of Greece, she thought that she saw the beginning of an answer to her prayers. Even although one of his latest acts concerning her was to repeat to Lady Blessington the false accusation which made Lady Byron the author of all his errors, she still had hopes from the one step taken in the right direction.

In the midst of these hopes came the news of his sudden death. On his death-bed, it is well-known that he called his confidential English servant to him, and said to him, 'Go to my sister; tell her--Go to Lady Byron,--you will see her,--and say'--

Here followed twenty minutes of indistinct mutterings, in which the names of his wife, daughter, and sister, frequently occurred. He then said, 'Now I have told you all.'

'My lord,' replied Fletcher, 'I have not understood a word your lordship has been saying.'

'Not understand me!' exclaimed Lord Byron with a look of the utmost distress: 'what a pity! Then it is too late,--all is over!' He afterwards, says Moore, tried to utter a few words, of which none were intelligible except 'My sister--my child.'

When Fletcher returned to London, Lady Byron sent for him, and walked the room in convulsive struggles to repress her tears and sobs, while she over and over again strove to elicit something from him which should

enlighten her upon what that last message had been; but in vain: the gates of eternity were shut in her face, and not a word had passed to tell her if he had repented.

For all that, Lady Byron never doubted his salvation. Ever before her, during the few remaining years of her widowhood, was the image of her husband, purified and ennobled, with the shadows of earth for ever dissipated, the stains of sin for ever removed; 'the angel in him,' as she expressed it, 'made perfect, according to its divine ideal.'

Never has more divine strength of faith and love existed in woman. Out of the depths of her own loving and merciful nature, she gained such views of the divine love and mercy as made all hopes possible. There was no soul of whose future Lady Byron despaired,--such was her boundless faith in the redeeming power of love.

After Byron's death, the life of this delicate creature--so frail in body that she seemed always hovering on the brink of the eternal world, yet so strong in spirit, and so unceasing in her various ministries of mercy--was a miracle of mingled weakness and strength.

To talk with her seemed to the writer of this sketch the nearest possible approach to talking with one of the spirits of the just made perfect.

She was gentle, artless; approachable as a little child; with ready, outflowing sympathy for the cares and sorrows and interests of all who approached her; with a naive and gentle playfulness, that adorned,

without hiding, the breadth and strength of her mind; and, above all, with a clear, divining, moral discrimination; never mistaking wrong for right in the slightest shade, yet with a mercifulness that made allowance for every weakness, and pitied every sin.

There was so much of Christ in her, that to have seen her seemed to be to have drawn near to heaven. She was one of those few whom absence cannot estrange from friends; whose mere presence in this world seems always a help to every generous thought, a strength to every good purpose, a comfort in every sorrow.

Living so near the confines of the spiritual world, she seemed already to see into it: hence the words of comfort which she addressed to a friend who had lost a son:--

'Dear friend, remember, as long as our loved ones are in God's world, they are in ours.'

* * * * *

It has been thought by some friends who have read the proof-sheets of the foregoing that the author should give more specifically her authority for these statements.

The circumstances which led the writer to England at a certain time originated a friendship and correspondence with Lady Byron, which was always regarded as one of the greatest acquisitions of that visit.

On the occasion of a second visit to England, in 1856, the writer received a note from Lady Byron, indicating that she wished to have some private, confidential conversation upon important subjects, and inviting her, for that purpose, to spend a day with her at her country-seat near London,

The writer went and spent a day with Lady Byron alone; and the object of the invitation was explained to her. Lady Byron was in such a state of health, that her physicians had warned her that she had very little time to live. She was engaged in those duties and retrospections which every thoughtful person finds necessary, when coming deliberately, and with open eyes, to the boundaries of this mortal life.

At that time, there was a cheap edition of Byron's works in contemplation, intended to bring his writings into circulation among the masses; and the pathos arising from the story of his domestic misfortunes was one great means relied on for giving it currency.

Under these circumstances, some of Lady Byron's friends had proposed the question to her, whether she had not a responsibility to society for the truth; whether she did right to allow these writings to gain influence over the popular mind by giving a silent consent to what she knew to be utter falsehoods.

Lady Byron's whole life had been passed in the most heroic self-abnegation and self-sacrifice: and she had now to consider whether

one more act of self-denial was not required of her before leaving this world; namely, to declare the absolute truth, no matter at what expense to her own feelings.

For this reason, it was her desire to recount the whole history to a person of another country, and entirely out of the sphere of personal and local feelings which might be supposed to influence those in the country and station in life where the events really happened, in order that she might be helped by such a person's views in making up an opinion as to her own duty.

The interview had almost the solemnity of a death-bed avowal. Lady Byron stated the facts which have been embodied in this article, and gave to the writer a paper containing a brief memorandum of the whole, with the dates affixed.

We have already spoken of that singular sense of the reality of the spiritual world which seemed to encompass Lady Byron during the last part of her life, and which made her words and actions seem more like those of a blessed being detached from earth than of an ordinary mortal. All her modes of looking at things, all her motives of action, all her involuntary exhibitions of emotion, were so high above any common level, and so entirely regulated by the most unworldly causes, that it would seem difficult to make the ordinary world understand exactly how the thing seemed to lie before her mind. What impressed the writer more strongly than anything else was Lady Byron's perfect conviction that her husband was now a redeemed spirit; that he looked back with pain and

shame and regret on all that was unworthy in his past life; and that, if he could speak or could act in the case, he would desire to prevent the further circulation of base falsehoods, and of seductive poetry, which had been made the vehicle of morbid and unworthy passions.

Lady Byron's experience had led her to apply the powers of her strong philosophical mind to the study of mental pathology: and she had become satisfied that the solution of the painful problem which first occurred to her as a young wife, was, after all, the true one; namely, that Lord Byron had been one of those unfortunately constituted persons in whom the balance of nature is so critically hung, that it is always in danger of dipping towards insanity; and that, in certain periods of his life, he was so far under the influence of mental disorder as not to be fully responsible for his actions.

She went over with a brief and clear analysis the history of his whole life as she had thought it out during the lonely musings of her widowhood. She dwelt on the ancestral causes that gave him a nature of exceptional and dangerous susceptibility. She went through the mismanagements of his childhood, the history of his school-days, the influence of the ordinary school-course of classical reading on such a mind as his. She sketched boldly and clearly the internal life of the young men of the time, as she, with her purer eyes, had looked through it; and showed how habits, which, with less susceptible fibre, and coarser strength of nature, were tolerable for his companions, were deadly to him, unhinging his nervous system, and intensifying the dangers of ancestral proclivities. Lady Byron expressed the feeling too, that

the Calvinistic theology, as heard in Scotland, had proved in his case, as it often does in certain minds, a subtle poison. He never could either disbelieve or become reconciled to it; and the sore problems it proposes embittered his spirit against Christianity.

'The worst of it is, I do believe,' he would often say with violence, when he had been employing all his powers of reason, wit, and ridicule upon these subjects.

Through all this sorrowful history was to be seen, not the care of a slandered woman to make her story good, but the pathetic anxiety of a mother, who treasures every particle of hope, every intimation of good, in the son whom she cannot cease to love. With indescribable resignation, she dwelt on those last hours, those words addressed to her, never to be understood till repeated in eternity.

But all this she looked upon as for ever past; believing, that, with the dropping of the earthly life, these morbid impulses and influences ceased, and that higher nature which he often so beautifully expressed in his poems became the triumphant one.

While speaking on this subject, her pale ethereal face became luminous with a heavenly radiance; there was something so sublime in her belief in the victory of love over evil, that faith with her seemed to have become sight. She seemed so clearly to perceive the divine ideal of the man she had loved, and for whose salvation she had been called to suffer and labour and pray, that all memories of his past unworthiness fell away,

and were lost.

Her love was never the doting fondness of weak women; it was the appreciative and discriminating love by which a higher nature recognised god-like capabilities under all the dust and defilement of misuse and passion: and she never doubted that the love which in her was so strong, that no injury or insult could shake it, was yet stronger in the God who made her capable of such a devotion, and that in him it was accompanied by power to subdue all things to itself.

The writer was so impressed and excited by the whole scene and recital, that she begged for two or three days to deliberate before forming any opinion. She took the memorandum with her, returned to London, and gave a day or two to the consideration of the subject. The decision which she made was chiefly influenced by her reverence and affection for Lady Byron. She seemed so frail, she had suffered so much, she stood at such a height above the comprehension of the coarse and common world, that the author had a feeling that it would almost be like violating a shrine to ask her to come forth from the sanctuary of a silence where she had so long abode, and plead her cause. She wrote to Lady Byron, that while this act of justice did seem to be called for, and to be in some respects most desirable, yet, as it would involve so much that was painful to her, the writer considered that Lady Byron would be entirely justifiable in leaving the truth to be disclosed after her death; and recommended that all the facts necessary should be put in the hands of some person, to be so published.

Years passed on. Lady Byron lingered four years after this interview, to the wonder of her physicians and all her friends.

After Lady Byron's death, the writer looked anxiously, hoping to see a Memoir of the person whom she considered the most remarkable woman that England has produced in the century. No such Memoir has appeared on the part of her friends; and the mistress of Lord Byron has the ear of the public, and is sowing far and wide unworthy slanders, which are eagerly gathered up and read by an undiscriminating community.

There may be family reasons in England which prevent Lady Byron's friends from speaking. But Lady Byron has an American name and an American existence; and reverence for pure womanhood is, we think, a national characteristic of the American; and, so far as this country is concerned, we feel that the public should have this refutation of the slanders of the Countess Guiccioli's book.

LORD LINDSAY'S LETTER TO THE LONDON 'TIMES.'
TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE TIMES.'

SIR,--I have waited in expectation of a categorical denial of the horrible charge brought by Mrs. Beecher Stowe against Lord Byron and his sister on the alleged authority of the late Lady Byron. Such denial has been only indirectly given by the letter of Messrs. Wharton and Fords in

your impression of yesterday. That letter is sufficient to prove that Lady Byron never contemplated the use made of her name, and that her descendants and representatives disclaim any countenance of Mrs. B. Stowe's article; but it does not specifically meet Mrs. Stowe's allegation, that Lady Byron, in conversing with her thirteen years ago, affirmed the charge now before us. It remains open, therefore, to a scandal-loving world, to credit the calumny through the advantage of this flaw, involuntary, I believe, in the answer produced against it. My object in addressing you is to supply that deficiency by proving that what is now stated on Lady Byron's supposed authority is at variance, in all respects, with what she stated immediately after the separation, when everything was fresh in her memory in relation to the time during which, according to Mrs. B. Stowe, she believed that Byron and his sister were living together in guilt. I publish this evidence with reluctance, but in obedience to that higher obligation of justice to the voiceless and defenceless dead which bids me break through a reserve that otherwise I should have held sacred. The Lady Byron of 1818 would, I am certain, have sanctioned my doing so, had she foreseen the present unparalleled occasion, and the bar that the conditions of her will present (as I infer from Messrs Wharton and Fords' letter) against any fuller communication. Calumnies such as the present sink deep and with rapidity into the public mind, and are not easily eradicated. The fame of one of our greatest poets, and that of the kindest and truest and most constant friend that Byron ever had, is at stake; and it will not do to wait for revelations from the fountain-head, which are not promised, and possibly may never reach us.

The late Lady Anne Barnard, who died in 1825, a contemporary and friend of Burke, Windham, Dundas, and a host of the wise and good of that generation, and remembered in letters as the authoress of 'Auld Robin Gray,' had known the late Lady Byron from infancy, and took a warm interest in her; holding Lord Byron in corresponding repugnance, not to say prejudice, in consequence of what she believed to be his harsh and cruel treatment of her young friend. I transcribe the following passages, and a letter from Lady Byron herself (written in 1818) from ricordi, or private family memoirs, in Lady Anne's autograph, now before me. I include the letter, because, although treating only in general terms of the matter and causes of the separation, it affords collateral evidence bearing strictly upon the point of the credibility of the charge now in question:--

'The separation of Lord and Lady Byron astonished the world, which believed him a reformed man as to his habits, and a becalmed man as to his remorses. He had written nothing that appeared after his marriage till the famous "Fare thee well," which had the power of compelling those to pity the writer who were not well aware that he was not the unhappy person he affected to be. Lady Byron's misery was whispered soon after her marriage and his ill usage, but no word transpired, no sign escaped, from her. She gave birth, shortly, to a daughter; and when she went, as soon as she was recovered, on a visit to her father's, taking her little Ada with her, no one knew that it was to return to her lord no more. At that period, a severe fit of illness had confined me to bed for two months. I heard of Lady Byron's distress; of the pains he took to give a harsh impression of her character to the world. I wrote to her, and

entreated her to come and let me see and hear her, if she conceived my sympathy or counsel could be any comfort to her. She came; but what a tale was unfolded by this interesting young creature, who had so fondly hoped to have made a young man of genius and romance (as she supposed) happy! They had not been an hour in the carriage which conveyed them from the church, when, breaking into a malignant sneer, "Oh! what a dupe you have been to your imagination! How is it possible a woman of your sense could form the wild hope of reforming me? Many are the tears you will have to shed ere that plan is accomplished. It is enough for me that you are my wife for me to hate you! If you were the wife of any other man, I own you might have charms," etc. I who listened was astonished. "How could you go on after this," said I, "my dear? Why did you not return to your father's?" "Because I had not a conception he was in earnest; because I reckoned it a bad jest, and told him so,--that my opinions of him were very different from his of himself, otherwise he would not find me by his side. He laughed it over when he saw me appear hurt: and I forgot what had passed, till forced to remember it. I believe he was pleased with me, too, for a little while. I suppose it had escaped his memory that I was his wife." But she described the happiness they enjoyed to have been unequal and perturbed. Her situation, in a short time, might have entitled her to some tenderness; but she made no claim on him for any. He sometimes reproached her for the motives that had induced her to marry him: all was "vanity, the vanity of Miss Milbanke carrying the point of reforming Lord Byron! He always knew her inducements; her pride shut her eyes to his: he wished to build up his character and his fortunes; both were somewhat deranged: she had a high name, and would have a fortune worth his attention,--let her

look to that for his motives!"--"O Byron, Byron!" she said, "how you desolate me!" He would then accuse himself of being mad, and throw himself on the ground in a frenzy, which she believed was affected to conceal the coldness and malignity of his heart,--an affectation which at that time never failed to meet with the tenderest commiseration. I could find by some implications, not followed up by me, lest she might have condemned herself afterwards for her involuntary disclosures, that he soon attempted to corrupt her principles, both with respect to her own conduct and her latitude for his. She saw the precipice on which she stood, and kept his sister with her as much as possible. He returned in the evenings from the haunts of vice, where he made her understand he had been, with manners so profligate! "O the wretch!" said I. "And had he no moments of remorse?" "Sometimes he appeared to have them. One night, coming home from one of his lawless parties, he saw me so indignantly collected, and bearing all with such a determined calmness, that a rush of remorse seemed to come over him. He called himself a monster, though his sister was present, and threw himself in agony at my feet. I could not--no--I could not forgive him such injuries. He had lost me for ever! Astonished at the return of virtue, my tears, I believe, flowed over his face, and I said, 'Byron, all is forgotten: never, never shall you hear of it more!' He started up, and, folding his arms while he looked at me, burst into laughter. 'What do you mean?' said I. 'Only a philosophical experiment; that's all,' said he. 'I wished to ascertain the value of your resolutions.'" I need not say more of this prince of duplicity, except that varied were his methods of rendering her wretched, even to the last. When her lovely little child was born, and it was laid beside its mother on the bed, and he was informed he might see his daughter,

after gazing at it with an exulting smile, this was the ejaculation that broke from him: "Oh, what an implement of torture have I acquired in you!" Such he rendered it by his eyes and manner, keeping her in a perpetual alarm for its safety when in his presence. All this reads madder than I believe he was: but she had not then made up her mind to disbelieve his pretended insanity, and conceived it best to intrust her secret with the excellent Dr. Baillie; telling him all that seemed to regard the state of her husband's mind, and letting his advice regulate her conduct. Baillie doubted of his derangement; but, as he did not reckon his own opinion infallible, he wished her to take precautions as if her husband were so. He recommended her going to the country, but to give him no suspicion of her intentions of remaining there, and, for a short time, to show no coldness in her letters, till she could better ascertain his state. She went, regretting, as she told me, to wear any semblance but the truth. A short time disclosed the story to the world. He acted the part of a man driven to despair by her inflexible resentment and by the arts of a governess (once a servant in the family) who hated him. "I will give you," proceeds Lady Anne, "a few paragraphs transcribed from one of Lady Byron's own letters to me. It is sorrowful to think, that, in a very little time, this young and amiable creature, wise, patient, and feeling, will have her character mistaken by every one who reads Byron's works. To rescue her from this, I preserved her letters; and, when she afterwards expressed a fear that any thing of her writings should ever fall into hands to injure him (I suppose she meant by publication), I safely assured her that it never should. But here this letter shall be placed, a sacred record in her favour, unknown to herself:--

'"I am a very incompetent judge of the impression which the last canto of 'Childe Harold' may produce on the minds of indifferent readers. It contains the usual trace of a conscience restlessly awake; though his object has been too long to aggravate its burden, as if it could thus be oppressed into eternal stupor. I will hope, as you do, that it survives for his ultimate good. It was the acuteness of his remorse, impenitent in its character, which so long seemed to demand from my compassion to spare every resemblance of reproach, every look of grief, which might have said to his conscience, 'You have made me wretched.' I am decidedly of opinion that he is responsible. He has wished to be thought partially deranged, or on the brink of it, to perplex observers, and prevent them from tracing effects to their real causes through all the intricacies of his conduct. I was, as I told you, at one time the dupe of his acted insanity, and clung to the former delusions in regard to the motives that concerned me personally, till the whole system was laid bare. He is the absolute monarch of words, and uses them, as Bonaparte did lives, for conquest, without more regard to their intrinsic value; considering them only as ciphers, which must derive all their import from the situation in which he places them, and the ends to which he adapts them with such consummate skill. Why, then, you will say, does he not employ them to give a better colour to his own character? Because he is too good an actor to over-act, or to assume a moral garb which it would be easy to strip off. In regard to his poetry, egotism is the vital principle of his imagination, which it is difficult for him to kindle on any subject with which his own character and interests are not identified: but by the introduction of fictitious incidents, by change of scene or time, he has

enveloped his poetical disclosures in a system impenetrable except to a very few; and his constant desire of creating a sensation makes him not averse to be the object of wonder and curiosity, even though accompanied by some dark and vague suspicions. Nothing has contributed more to the misunderstanding of his real character than the lonely grandeur in which he shrouds it, and his affectation of being above mankind, when he exists almost in their voice. The romance of his sentiments is another feature of this mask of state. I know no one more habitually destitute of that enthusiasm he so beautifully expresses, and to which he can work up his fancy chiefly by contagion. I had heard he was the best of brothers, the most generous of friends; and I thought such feelings only required to be warmed and cherished into more diffusive benevolence. Though these opinions are eradicated, and could never return but with the decay of my memory, you will not wonder if there are still moments when the association of feelings which arose from them soften and sadden my thoughts. But I have not thanked you, dearest Lady Anne, for your kindness in regard to a principal object,--that of rectifying false impressions. I trust you understand my wishes, which never were to injure Lord Byron in any way: for, though he would not suffer me to remain his wife, he cannot prevent me from continuing his friend; and it was from considering myself as such that I silenced the accusations by which my own conduct might have been more fully justified. It is not necessary to speak ill of his heart in general: it is sufficient that to me it was hard and impenetrable; that my own must have been broken before his could have been touched. I would rather represent this as my misfortune than as his guilt; but surely that misfortune is not to be made my crime! Such are my feelings: you will judge how to act. His

allusions to me in 'Childe Harold' are cruel and cold, but with such a semblance as to make me appear so, and to attract all sympathy to himself. It is said in this poem that hatred of him will be taught as a lesson to his child. I might appeal to all who have ever heard me speak of him, and still more to my own heart, to witness that there has been no moment when I have remembered injury otherwise than affectionately and sorrowfully. It is not my duty to give way to hopeless and wholly unrequited affection; but, so long as I live, my chief struggle will probably be not to remember him too kindly. I do not seek the sympathy of the world; but I wish to be known by those whose opinion is valuable, and whose kindness is clear to me. Among such, my dear Lady Anne, you will ever be remembered by your truly affectionate,

'"A. BYRON."'

It is the province of your readers, and of the world at large, to judge between the two testimonies now before them,--Lady Byron's in 1816 and 1818, and that put forward in 1869 by Mrs. B. Stowe, as communicated by Lady Byron thirteen years ago. In the face of the evidence now given, positive, negative, and circumstantial, there can be but two alternatives in the case: either Mrs. B. Stowe must have entirely misunderstood Lady Byron, and been thus led into error and misstatement; or we must conclude that, under the pressure of a lifelong and secret sorrow, Lady Byron's mind had become clouded with an hallucination in respect of the particular point in question.

The reader will admire the noble but severe character displayed in Lady

Byron's letter; but those who keep in view what her first impressions were, as above recorded, may probably place a more lenient interpretation than hers upon some of the incidents alleged to Byron's discredit. I shall conclude with some remarks upon his character, written shortly after his death by a wise, virtuous, and charitable judge, the late Sir Walter Scott, likewise in a letter to Lady Anne Barnard:--

'Fletcher's account of poor Byron is extremely interesting. I had always a strong attachment to that unfortunate though most richly-gifted man, because I thought I saw that his virtues (and he had many) were his own; and his eccentricities the result of an irritable temperament, which sometimes approached nearly to mental disease. Those who are gifted with strong nerves, a regular temper, and habitual self-command, are not, perhaps, aware how much of what they may think virtue they owe to constitution; and such are but too severe judges of men like Byron, whose mind, like a day of alternate storm and sunshine, is all dark shades and stray gleams of light, instead of the twilight gray which illuminates happier though less distinguished mortals. I always thought, that, when a moral proposition was placed plainly before Lord Byron, his mind yielded a pleased and willing assent to it; but, if there was any side view given in the way of raillery or otherwise, he was willing enough to evade conviction . . . . It augurs ill for the cause of Greece that this master-spirit should have been withdrawn from their assistance just as he was obtaining a complete ascendancy over their counsels. I have seen several letters from the Ionian Islands, all of which unite in speaking in the highest praise of the wisdom and temperance of his counsels, and the ascendancy he was obtaining over the turbulent and ferocious chiefs

of the insurgents. I have some verses written by him on his last birthday: they breathe a spirit of affection towards his wife, and a desire of dying in battle, which seems like an anticipation of his approaching fate.'

I remain, sir, your obedient servant,

LINDSAY.

DUNECHT, Sept. 3.

DR. FORBES WINSLOW'S LETTER TO THE LONDON 'TIMES.'

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,--Your paper of the 4th of September, containing an able and deeply interesting 'Vindication of Lord Byron,' has followed me to this place. With the general details of the 'True Story' (as it is termed) of Lady Byron's separation from her husband, as recorded in 'Macmillan's Magazine,' I have no desire or intention to grapple. It is only with the hypothesis of insanity, as suggested by the clever writer of the 'Vindication' to account for Lady Byron's sad revelations to Mrs. Beecher Stowe, with which I propose to deal. I do not believe that the mooted theory of mental aberration can, in this case, be for a moment

maintained. If Lady Byron's statement of facts to Mrs. B. Stowe is to be viewed as the creation of a distempered fancy, a delusion or hallucination of an insane mind, what part of the narrative are we to draw the boundary-line between fact and delusion, sanity and insanity? Where are we to fix the point d'appui of the lunacy? Again: is the alleged 'hallucination' to be considered as strictly confined to the idea that Lord Byron had committed the frightful sin of incest? or is the whole of the 'True Story' of her married life, as reproduced with such terrible minuteness by Mrs. Beecher Stowe, to be viewed as the delusion of a disordered fancy? If Lady Byron was the subject of an 'hallucination' with regard to her husband, I think it not unreasonable to conclude that the mental alienation existed on the day of her marriage. If this proposition be accepted, the natural inference will be, that the details of the conversation which Lady Byron represents to have occurred between herself and Lord Byron as soon as they entered the carriage never took place. Lord Byron is said to have remarked to Lady Byron, 'You might have prevented this (or words to this effect): you will now find that you have married a devil. Is this alleged conversation to be viewed as fact, or fiction? evidence of sanity, or insanity? Is the revelation which Lord Byron is said to have made to his wife of his 'incestuous passion' another delusion, having no foundation except in his wife's disordered imagination? Are his alleged attempts to justify to Lady Byron's mind the morale of the plea of 'Continental latitude--the good-humoured marriage, in which complaisant couples mutually agree to form the cloak for each other's infidelities,'--another morbid perversion of her imagination? Did this conversation ever take place? It will be difficult to separate one part of the 'True Story' from another, and

maintain that this portion indicates insanity, and that portion represents sanity. If we accept the hypothesis of hallucination, we are bound to view the whole of Lady Byron's conversations with Mrs. B. Stowe, and the written statement laid before her, as the wild and incoherent representations of a lunatic. On the day when Lady Byron parted from her husband, did she enter his private room, and find him with the 'object of his guilty passion?' and did he say, as they parted, 'When shall we three meet again?' Is this to be considered as an actual occurrence, or as another form of hallucination? It is quite inconsistent with the theory of Lady Byron's insanity to imagine that her delusion was restricted to the idea of his having committed 'incest.' In common fairness, we are bound to view the aggregate mental phenomena which she exhibited from the day of the marriage to their final separation and her death. No person practically acquainted with the true characteristics of insanity would affirm, that, had this idea of 'incest' been an insane hallucination, Lady Byron could, from the lengthened period which intervened between her unhappy marriage and death, have refrained from exhibiting her mental alienation, not only to her legal advisers and trustees, but to others, exacting no pledge of secrecy from them as to her disordered impressions. Lunatics do for a time, and for some special purpose, most cunningly conceal their delusions; but they have not the capacity to struggle for thirty-six years with a frightful hallucination, similar to the one Lady Byron is alleged to have had, without the insane state of mind becoming obvious to those with whom they are daily associating. Neither is it consistent with experience to suppose that, if Lady Byron had been a monomaniac, her state of disordered understanding would have been restricted to one hallucination. Her diseased brain, affecting the

normal action of thought, would, in all probability, have manifested other symptoms besides those referred to of aberration of intellect.

During the last thirty years, I have not met with a case of insanity (assuming the hypothesis of hallucination) at all parallel with that of Lady Byron's. In my experience, it is unique. I never saw a patient with such a delusion. If it should be established, by the statements of those who are the depositors of the secret (and they are now bound, in vindication of Lord Byron's memory, to deny, if they have the power of doing so, this most frightful accusation), that the idea of incest did unhappily cross Lady Byron's mind prior to her finally leaving him, it no doubt arose from a most inaccurate knowledge of facts and perfectly unjustifiable data, and was not, in the right psychological acceptation of the phrase, an insane hallucination.

Sir, I remain your obedient servant,

FORBES WINSLOW, M.D.

ZARINGERHOF, FREIBURG-EN-BREISGAU, Sept. 8, 1869.

EXTRACT FROM LORD BYRON'S EXPUNGED LETTER.

TO MR. MURRAY.

'BOLOGNA, June 7, 1819.

. . . 'Before I left Venice, I had returned to you your late, and Mr. Hobhouse's sheets of "Juan." Don't wait for further answers from me, but address yours to Venice as usual. I know nothing of my own movements. I may return there in a few days, or not for some time; all this depends on circumstances. I left Mr. Hoppner very well. My daughter Allegra is well too, and is growing pretty: her hair is growing darker, and her eyes are blue. Her temper and her ways, Mr. Hoppner says, are like mine, as well as her features: she will make, in that case, a manageable young lady.

'I have never seen anything of Ada, the little Electra of my Mycenae . . . . But there will come a day of reckoning, even if I should not live to see it. I have at least seen ---- shivered, who was one of my assassins. When that man was doing his worst to uproot my whole family,--tree, branch, and blossoms; when, after taking my retainer, he went over to them; when he was bringing desolation on my hearth, and destruction on my household gods,--did he think that, in less than three years, a natural event, a severe domestic, but an expected and common calamity, would lay his carcass in a cross-road, or stamp his name in a verdict of lunacy? Did he (who in his sexagenary . . .) reflect or consider what my feelings must have been when wife and child and sister, and name and fame and country, were to be my sacrifice on his legal altar?--and this at a

moment when my health was declining, my fortune embarrassed, and my mind had been shaken by many kinds of disappointment? while I was yet young, and might have reformed what might be wrong in my conduct, and retrieved what was perplexing in my affairs? But he is in his grave, and--What a long letter I have scribbled!' . . .

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In order that the reader may measure the change of moral tone with regard to Lord Byron, wrought by the constant efforts of himself and his party, we give the two following extracts from 'Blackwood:'

The first is 'Blackwood' in 1819, just after the publication of 'Don Juan:' the second is 'Blackwood' in 1825.

'In the composition of this work, there is, unquestionably, a more thorough and intense infusion of genius and vice, power and profligacy, than in any poem which had ever before been written in the English, or, indeed, in any other modern language. Had the wickedness been less inextricably mingled with the beauty and the grace and the strength of a most inimitable and incomprehensible Muse, our task would have been easy. 'Don Juan' is by far the most admirable specimen of the mixture of ease, strength, gaiety, and seriousness, extant in the whole body of English poetry: the author has devoted his powers to the worst of purposes and passions; and it increases his guilt and our sorrow that he has devoted them entire.

'The moral strain of the whole poem is pitched in the lowest key. Love, honour, patriotism, religion, are mentioned only to be scoffed at, as if their sole resting-place were, or ought to be, in the bosoms of fools. It appears, in short, as if this miserable man, having exhausted every species of sensual gratification, having drained the cup of sin even to its bitterest dregs, were resolved to show us that he is no longer a human being, even in his frailties, but a cool, unconcerned fiend, laughing with a detestable glee over the whole of the better and worse elements of which human life is composed; treating well-nigh with equal derision the most pure of virtues, and the most odious of vices; dead alike to the beauty of the one, and the deformity of the other; a mere heartless despiser of that frail but noble humanity, whose type was never exhibited in a shape of more deplorable degradation than in his own contemptuously distinct delineation of himself. To confess to his Maker, and weep over in secret agonies the wildest and most fantastic transgressions of heart and mind, is the part of a conscious sinner, in whom sin has not become the sole principle of life and action; but to lay bare to the eye of man and of woman all the hidden convulsions of a wicked spirit, and to do all this without one symptom of contrition, remorse, or hesitation, with a calm, careless ferociousness of contented and satisfied depravity,--this was an insult which no man of genius had ever before dared to put upon his Creator or his species. Impiously railing against his God, madly and meanly disloyal to his sovereign and his country, and brutally outraging all the best feelings of female honour, affection, and confidence, how small a part of chivalry is that which remains to the descendant of the Byrons!--a gloomy visor and a deadly weapon!

'Those who are acquainted (and who is not?) with the main incidents in the private life of Lord Byron, and who have not seen this production, will scarcely believe that malignity should have carried him so far as to make him commence a filthy and impious poem with an elaborate satire on the character and manners of his wife, from whom, even by his own confession, he has been separated only in consequence of his own cruel and heartless misconduct. It is in vain for Lord Byron to attempt in any way to justify his own behaviour in that affair; and, now that he has so openly and audaciously invited inquiry and reproach, we do not see any good reason why he should not be plainly told so by the general voice of his countrymen. It would not be an easy matter to persuade any man who has any knowledge of the nature of woman, that a female such as Lord Byron has himself described his wife to be would rashly or hastily or lightly separate herself from the love with which she had once been inspired for such a man as he is or was. Had he not heaped insult upon insult, and scorn upon scorn, had he not forced the iron of his contempt into her very soul, there is no woman of delicacy and virtue, as he admitted Lady Byron to be, who would not have hoped all things, and suffered all things, from one, her love of whom must have been inwoven with so many exalting elements of delicious pride, and more delicious humility. To offend the love of such a woman was wrong, but it might be forgiven; to desert her was unmanly, but he might have returned, and wiped for ever from her eyes the tears of her desertion: but to injure and to desert, and then to turn back and wound her widowed privacy with unhallowed strains of cold-blooded mockery, was brutally, fiendishly, inexpiably mean. For impurities there might be some possibility of

pardon, were they supposed to spring only from the reckless buoyancy of young blood and fiery passions; for impiety there might at least be pity, were it visible that the misery of the impious soul equalled its darkness: but for offences such as this, which cannot proceed either from the madness of sudden impulse or the bewildered agonies of doubt, but which speak the wilful and determined spite of an unrepenting, unsoftened, smiling, sarcastic, joyous sinner, there can be neither pity nor pardon. Our knowledge that it is committed by one of the most powerful intellects our island ever has produced lends intensity a thousand-fold to the bitterness of our indignation. Every high thought that was ever kindled in our breasts by the Muse of Byron, every pure and lofty feeling that ever responded from within us to the sweep of his majestic inspirations, every remembered moment of admiration and enthusiasm, is up in arms against him. We look back with a mixture of wrath and scorn to the delight with which we suffered ourselves to be filled by one, who, all the while he was furnishing us with delight, must, we cannot doubt it, have been mocking us with a cruel mockery; less cruel only, because less peculiar, than that with which he has now turned him from the lurking-place of his selfish and polluted exile to pour the pitiful chalice of his contumely on the surrendered devotion of a virgin bosom, and the holy hopes of the mother of his child. It is indeed a sad and a humiliating thing to know, that in the same year, there proceeded from the same pen two productions in all things so different as the fourth canto of "Childe Harold" and his loathsome "Don Juan."

'We have mentioned one, and, all will admit, the worst instance of the private malignity which has been embodied in so many passages of "Don

Juan;" and we are quite sure the lofty-minded and virtuous men whom Lord Byron has debased himself by insulting will close the volume which contains their own injuries, with no feelings save those of pity for him that has inflicted them, and for her who partakes so largely in the same injuries.'--August, 1819.

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'BLACKWOOD,'--iterum.

'We shall, like all others who say anything about Lord Byron, begin, sans apologie, with his personal character. This is the great object of attack, the constant theme of open vituperation to one set, and the established mark for all the petty but deadly artillery of sneers, shrugs, groans, to another. Two widely different matters, however, are generally, we might say universally, mixed up here,--the personal character of the man, as proved by his course of life; and his personal character, as revealed in or guessed from his books. Nothing can be more unfair than the style in which this mixture is made use of. Is there a noble sentiment, a lofty thought, a sublime conception, in the book? "Ah, yes!" is the answer. "But what of that? It is only the roue Byron that speaks!" Is a kind, a generous action of the man mentioned? "Yes, yes!" comments the sage; "but only remember the atrocities of 'Don Juan:' depend on it, this, if it be true, must have been a mere freak of caprice, or perhaps a bit of vile hypocrisy." Salvation is thus shut out at either entrance: the poet damns the man, and the man the poet.

'Nobody will suspect us of being so absurd as to suppose that it is possible for people to draw no inferences as to the character of an author from his book, or to shut entirely out of view, in judging of a book, that which they may happen to know about the man who writes it. The cant of the day supposes such things to be practicable; but they are not. But what we complain of and scorn is the extent to which they are carried in the case of this particular individual, as compared with others; the impudence with which things are at once assumed to be facts in regard to his private history; and the absolute unfairness of never arguing from his writings to him, but for evil.

'Take the man, in the first place, as unconnected, in so far as we can thus consider him, with his works; and ask, What, after all, are the bad things we know of him? Was he dishonest or dishonourable? had he ever done anything to forfeit, or even endanger, his rank as a gentleman? Most assuredly, no such accusations have ever been maintained against Lord Byron the private nobleman, although something of the sort may have been insinuated against the author. "But he was such a profligate in his morals, that his name cannot be mentioned with anything like tolerance." Was he so, indeed? We should like extremely to have the catechising of the individual man who says so. That he indulged in sensual vices, to some extent, is certain, and to be regretted and condemned. But was he worse, as to such matters, than the enormous majority of those who join in the cry of horror upon this occasion? We most assuredly believe exactly the reverse; and we rest our belief upon very plain and intelligible grounds. First, we hold it impossible that the majority of mankind, or that anything beyond a very small minority, are or can be

entitled to talk of sensual profligacy as having formed a part of the life and character of the man, who, dying at six and thirty, bequeathed a collection of works such as Byron's to the world. Secondly, we hold it impossible, that laying the extent of his intellectual labours out of the question, and looking only to the nature of the intellect which generated, and delighted in generating, such beautiful and noble conceptions as are to be found in almost all Lord Byron's works,--we hold it impossible that very many men can be at once capable of comprehending these conceptions, and entitled to consider sensual profligacy as having formed the principal, or even a principal, trait in Lord Byron's character. Thirdly, and lastly, we have never been able to hear any one fact established which could prove Lord Byron to deserve anything like the degree or even kind of odium which has, in regard to matters of this class, been heaped upon his name. We have no story of base unmanly seduction, or false and villainous intrigue, against him,--none whatever. It seems to us quite clear, that, if he had been at all what is called in society an unprincipled sensualist, there must have been many such stories, authentic and authenticated. But there are none such,--absolutely none. His name has been coupled with the names of three, four, or more women of some rank: but what kind of women? Every one of them, in the first place, about as old as himself in years, and therefore a great deal older in character; every one of them utterly battered in reputation long before he came into contact with them,--licentious, unprincipled, characterless women. What father has ever reproached him with the ruin of his daughter? What husband has denounced him as the destroyer of his peace?

'Let us not be mistaken. We are not defending the offences of which Lord Byron unquestionably was guilty; neither are we finding fault with those, who, after looking honestly within and around themselves, condemn those offences, no matter how severely: but we are speaking of society in general as it now exists; and we say that there is vile hypocrisy in the tone in which Lord Byron is talked of there. We say, that, although all offences against purity of life are miserable things, and condemnable things, the degrees of guilt attached to different offences of this class are as widely different as are the degrees of guilt between an assault and a murder; and we confess our belief, that no man of Byron's station or age could have run much risk in gaining a very bad name in society, had a course of life similar (in so far as we know any thing of that) to Lord Byron's been the only thing chargeable against him.

'The last poem he wrote was produced upon his birthday, not many weeks before he died. We consider it as one of the finest and most touching effusions of his noble genius. We think he who reads it, and can ever after bring himself to regard even the worst transgressions that have been charged against Lord Byron with any feelings but those of humble sorrow and manly pity, is not deserving of the name of man. The deep and passionate struggles with the inferior elements of his nature (and ours) which it records; the lofty thirsting after purity; the heroic devotion of a soul half weary of life, because unable to believe in its own powers to live up to what it so intensely felt to be, and so reverentially honoured as, the right; the whole picture of this mighty spirit, often darkened, but never sunk,--often erring, but never ceasing to see and to worship the beauty of virtue; the repentance of it; the anguish; the

aspiration, almost stifled in despair,--the whole of this is such a whole, that we are sure no man can read these solemn verses too often; and we recommend them for repetition, as the best and most conclusive of all possible answers whenever the name of Byron is insulted by those who permit themselves to forget nothing, either in his life or in his writings, but the good.'--[1825.]

LETTERS OF LADY BYRON TO H. C. ROBINSON

The following letters of Lady Byron's are reprinted from the Memoirs of H. C. Robinson. They are given that the reader may form some judgment of the strength and activity of her mind, and the elevated class of subjects upon which it habitually dwelt.

LADY BYRON TO H. C. R.

'DEC. 31, 1853.

'DEAR MR. CRABB ROBINSON,--I have an inclination, if I were not afraid of trespassing on your time (but you can put my letter by for any leisure moment), to enter upon the history of a character which I think less appreciated than it ought to be. Men, I observe, do not understand men in certain points, without a woman's interpretation. Those points, of course, relate to feelings.

'Here is a man taken by most of those who come in his way either for Dry-as-Dust, Matter-of-fact, or for a "vain visionary." There are, doubtless, some defective or excessive characteristics which give rise to those impressions.

'My acquaintance was made, oddly enough, with him twenty-seven years ago. A pauper said to me of him, "He's the poor man's doctor." Such a recommendation seemed to me a good one: and I also knew that his organizing head had formed the first district society in England (for Mrs. Fry told me she could not have effected it without his aid); yet he has always ignored his own share of it. I felt in him at once the curious combination of the Christian and the cynic,--of reverence for man, and contempt of men. It was then an internal war, but one in which it was evident to me that the holier cause would be victorious, because there was deep belief, and, as far as I could learn, a blameless and benevolent life. He appeared only to want sunshine. It was a plant which could not be brought to perfection in darkness. He had begun life by the most painful conflict between filial duty and conscience,--a large provision in the church secured for him by his father; but he could not sign. There was discredit, as you know, attached to such scruples.

'He was also, when I first knew him, under other circumstances of a nature to depress him, and to make him feel that he was unjustly treated. The gradual removal of these called forth his better nature in thankfulness to God. Still the old misanthropic modes of expressing himself obtruded themselves at times. This passed in '48 between him and

Robertson. Robertson said to me, "I want to know something about ragged schools." I replied, "You had better ask Dr. King: he knows more about them."--"I?" said Dr. King. "I take care to know nothing of ragged schools, lest they should make me ragged." Robertson did not see through it. Perhaps I had been taught to understand such suicidal speeches by my cousin, Lord Melbourne.

'The example of Christ, imperfectly as it may be understood by him, has been ever before his eyes: he woke to the thought of following it, and he went to rest consoled or rebuked by it. After nearly thirty years of intimacy, I may, without presumption, form that opinion. There is something pathetic to me in seeing any one so unknown. Even the other medical friends of Robertson, when I knew that Dr. King felt a woman's tenderness, said on one occasion to him, "But we know that you, Dr. King, are above all feeling."

'If I have made the character more consistent to you by putting in these bits of mosaic, my pen will not have been ill employed, nor unpleasingly to you.

'Yours truly,

'A. NOEL BYRON.'

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LADY BYRON TO H. C. R.

'BRIGHTON, NOV. 15,1854.

'The thoughts of all this public and private suffering have taken the life out of my pen when I tried to write on matters which would otherwise have been most interesting to me: these seemed the shadows, that the stern reality. It is good, however, to be drawn out of scenes in which one is absorbed most unprofitably, and to have one's natural interests revived by such a letter as I have to thank you for, as well as its predecessor. You touch upon the very points which do interest me the most, habitually. The change of form, and enlargement of design, in "The Prospective" had led me to express to one of the promoters of that object my desire to contribute. The religious crisis is instant; but the man for it? The next best thing, if, as I believe, he is not to be found in England, is an association of such men as are to edit the new periodical. An address delivered by Freeman Clarke at Boston, last May, makes me think him better fitted for a leader than any other of the religious "Free-thinkers." I wish I could send you my one copy; but you do not need, it, and others do. His object is the same as that of the "Alliance Universelle:" only he is still more free from "partialism" (his own word) in his aspirations and practical suggestions with respect to an ultimate "Christian synthesis." He so far adopts Comte's theory as to speak of religion itself under three successive aspects, historically,--1. Thesis; 2. Antithesis; 3. Synthesis. I made his acquaintance in England; and he inspired confidence at once by his brave independence (incomptis capillis) and self-unconsciousness. J. J. Tayler's address of last month follows in the same path,--all in favour of the "irenics," instead of

polemics.

'The answer which you gave me so fully and distinctly to the questions I proposed for your consideration was of value in turning to my view certain aspects of the case which I had not before observed. I had begun a second attack on your patience, when all was forgotten in the news of the day.'

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LADY BYRON TO H. C. R.

'BRIGHTON, Dec. 25, 1854.

'With J. J. Tayler, though almost a stranger to him, I have a peculiar reason for sympathising. A book of his was a treasure to my daughter on her death-bed. {320a}

'I must confess to intolerance of opinion as to these two points,--eternal evil in any form, and (involved in it) eternal suffering. To believe in these would take away my God, who is all-loving. With a God with whom omnipotence and omniscience were all, evil might be eternal; but why do I say to you what has been better said elsewhere?'

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LADY BYRON TO H. C. R.

'BRIGHTON, Jan. 31, 1855.

. . . 'The great difficulty in respect to "The Review" {320b} seems to be to settle a basis, inclusive and exclusive; in short, a boundary question. From what you said, I think you agreed with me, that a latitudinarian Christianity ought to be the character of the periodical; but the depth of the roots should correspond with the width of the branches of that tree of knowledge. Of some of those minds one might say, "They have no root;" and then, the richer the foliage, the more danger that the trunk will fall. "Grounded in Christ" has to me a most practical significance and value. I, too, have anxiety about a friend (Miss Carpenter) whose life is of public importance: she, more than any of the English reformers, unless Nash and Wright, has found the art of drawing out the good of human nature, and proving its existence. She makes these discoveries by the light of love. I hope she may recover, from to-day's report. The object of a Reformatory in Leicester has just been secured at a county meeting . . . . Now the desideratum is well-qualified masters and mistresses. If you hear of such by chance, pray let me know. The regular schoolmaster is an extinguisher. Heart, and familiarity with the class to be educated, are all important. At home and abroad, the evidence is conclusive on that point; for I have for many years attended to such experiments in various parts of Europe. "The Irish Quarterly" has taken up the subject with rather more zeal than judgment. I had hoped that a sound and temperate exposition of the facts might form an article in the "Might-have-been Review."'

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LADY BYRON TO H. C. R.

'BRIGHTON, Feb. 12, 1855.

'I have at last earned the pleasure of writing to you by having settled troublesome matters of little moment, except locally; and I gladly take a wider range by sympathizing in your interests. There is, besides, no responsibility--for me at least--in canvassing the merits of Russell or Palmerston, but much in deciding whether the "village politician" Jackson or Thompson shall be leader in the school or public-house.

'Has not the nation been brought to a conviction that the system should be broken up? and is Lord Palmerston, who has used it so long and so cleverly, likely to promote that object?

'But, whatever obstacles there may be in state affairs, that general persuasion must modify other departments of action and knowledge. "Unroasted coffee" will no longer be accepted under the official seal,--another reason for a new literary combination for distinct special objects, a review in which every separate article should be convergent. If, instead of the problem to make a circle pass through three given points, it were required to find the centre from which to describe a circle through any three articles in the "Edinburgh" or "Westminster Review," who would accomplish it? Much force is lost for want of this one-mindedness amongst the contributors. It would not exclude variety or

freedom in the unlimited discussion of means towards the ends unequivocally recognized. If St. Paul had edited a review, he might

have admitted Peter as well as Luke or Barnabas . . . .

'Ross gave us an excellent sermon, yesterday, on "Hallowing the Name." Though far from commonplace, it might have been delivered in any church.

'We have had Fanny Kemble here last week. I only heard her "Romeo and Juliet,"--not less instructive, as her readings always are, than exciting; for in her glass Shakspeare is a philosopher. I know her, and honour her, for her truthfulness amidst all trials.'

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LADY BYRON TO H. C. R.

'BRIGHTON, March 5, 1855.

'I recollect only those passages of Dr. Kennedy's book which bear upon the opinions of Lord Byron. Strange as it may seem, Dr. Kennedy is most faithful where you doubt his being so. Not merely from casual expressions, but from the whole tenor of Lord Byron's feelings, I could not but conclude he was a believer in the inspiration of the Bible, and had the gloomiest Calvinistic tenets. To that unhappy view of the relation of the creature to the Creator, I have always ascribed the misery of his life . . . . It is enough for me to remember, that he who

thinks his transgressions beyond forgiveness (and such was his own deepest feeling) has righteousness beyond that of the self-satisfied sinner, or, perhaps, of the half-awakened. It was impossible for me to doubt, that, could he have been at once assured of pardon, his living faith in a moral duty, and love of virtue ("I love the virtues which I cannot claim"), would have conquered every temptation. Judge, then, how I must hate the creed which made him see God as an Avenger, not a Father! My own impressions were just the reverse, but could have little weight; and it was in vain to seek to turn his thoughts for long from that idee fixe with which he connected his physical peculiarity as a stamp. Instead of being made happier by any apparent good, he felt convinced that every blessing would be "turned into a curse" to him. Who, possessed by such ideas, could lead a life of love and service to God or man? They must, in a measure, realize themselves. "The worst of it is, I do believe," he said. I, like all connected with him, was broken against the rock of predestination. I may be pardoned for referring to his frequent expression of the sentiment that I was only sent to show him the happiness he was forbidden to enjoy. You will now better understand why "The Deformed Transformed" is too painful to me for discussion. Since writing the above, I have read Dr. Granville's letter on the Emperor of Russia, some passages of which seem applicable to the prepossession I have described. I will not mix up less serious matters with these, which forty years have not made less than present still to me.'

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LADY BYRON TO H. C. R.

'BRIGHTON, April 8, 1855.

. . . . 'The book which has interested me most, lately, is that on "Mosaism," translated by Miss Goldsmid, and which I read, as you will believe, without any Christian (unchristian?) prejudice. The missionaries of the Unity were always, from my childhood, regarded by me as in that sense the people; and I believe they were true to that mission, though blind, intellectually, in demanding the crucifixion. The present aspect of Jewish opinions, as shown in that book, is all but Christian. The author is under the error of taking, as the representatives of Christianity, the Mystics, Ascetics, and Quietists; and therefore he does not know how near he is to the true spirit of the gospel. If you should happen to see Miss Goldsmid, pray tell her what a great service I think she has rendered to us soi-disant Christians in translating a book which must make us sensible of the little we have done, and the much we have to do, to justify our preference of the later to the earlier dispensation.' . . .

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LADY BYRON TO H. C. R.

BRIGHTON, April 11, 1855.

'You appear to have more definite information respecting "The Review" than I have obtained . . . It was also said that "The Review" would, in

fact, be "The Prospective" amplified,--not satisfactory to me, because I have always thought that periodical too Unitarian, in the sense of separating itself from other Christian churches, if not by a high wall, at least by a wire-gauze fence. Now, separation is to me the [Greek text]. The revelation through Nature never separates: it is the revelation through the Book which separates. Whewell and Brewster would have been one, had they not, I think, equally dimmed their lamps of science when reading their Bibles. As long as we think a truth better for being shut up in a text, we are not of the wide-world religion, which is to include all in one fold: for that text will not be accepted by the followers of other books, or students of the same; and separation will ensue. The Christian Scripture should be dear to us, not as the charter of a few, but of mankind; and to fashion it into cages is to deny its ultimate objects. These thoughts hot, like the roll at breakfast, where your letter was so welcome an addition.'

THREE DOMESTIC POEMS BY LORD BYRON.

FARE THEE WELL.

Fare thee well! and if for ever,
Still for ever fare thee well!
Even though unforgiving, never
'Gainst thee shall my heart rebel.

Would that breast were bared before thee
Where thy head so oft hath lain,
While that placid sleep came o'er thee
Which thou ne'er canst know again!

Would that breast, by thee glanced over,
Every inmost thought could show!
Then thou wouldst at last discover
'Twas not well to spurn it so.

Though the world for this commend thee,
Though it smile upon the blow,
Even its praises must offend thee,
Founded on another's woe.

Though my many faults defaced me,
Could no other arm be found,
Than the one which once embraced me,
To inflict a cureless wound?

Yet, oh! yet, thyself deceive not:
Love may sink by slow decay;
But, by sudden wrench, believe not
Hearts can thus be torn away:

Still thine own its life retaineth;

Still must mine, though bleeding, beat
And the undying thought which paineth
Is--that we no more may meet.

These are words of deeper sorrow
Than the wail above the dead:
Both shall live, but every morrow
Wake us from a widowed bed.

And when thou wouldst solace gather,
When our child's first accents flow,
Wilt thou teach her to say 'Father,'
Though his care she must forego?

When her little hand shall press thee,
When her lip to thine is pressed,
Think of him whose prayer shall bless thee;
Think of him thy love had blessed.

Should her lineaments resemble
Those thou never more mayst see,
Then thy heart will softly tremble
With a pulse yet true to me.

All my faults, perchance, thou knowest;
All my madness none can know:
All my hopes, where'er thou goest,

Wither; yet with thee they go.

Every feeling hath been shaken:
Pride, which not a world could bow,
Bows to thee, by thee forsaken;
Even my soul forsakes me now.

But 'tis done: all words are idle;
Words from me are vainer still;
But the thoughts we cannot bridle
Force their way without the will.

Fare thee well!--thus disunited,
Torn from every nearer tie,
Seared in heart, and lone and blighted,
More than this I scarce can die.

A SKETCH.

Born in the garret, in the kitchen bred;
Promoted thence to deck her mistress' head;
Next--for some gracious service unexpress'd,
And from its wages only to be guessed--
Raised from the toilette to the table, where
Her wondering betters wait behind her chair,
With eye unmoved, and forehead unabashed,
She dines from off the plate she lately washed.

Quick with the tale, and ready with the lie,
The genial confidante and general spy,
Who could, ye gods! her next employment guess?--
An only infant's earliest governess!
She taught the child to read, and taught so well,
That she herself, by teaching, learned to spell.
An adept next in penmanship she grows,
As many a nameless slander deftly shows:
What she had made the pupil of her art,
None know; but that high soul secured the heart,
And panted for the truth it could not hear,
With longing breast and undeluded ear.
Foiled was perversion by that youthful mind,
Which flattery fooled not, baseness could not blind,
Deceit infect not, near contagion soil,
Indulgence weaken, nor example spoil,
Nor mastered science tempt her to look down
On humbler talents with a pitying frown,
Nor genius swell, nor beauty render vain,
Nor envy ruffle to retaliate pain,
Nor fortune change, pride raise, nor passion bow,
Nor virtue teach austerity, till now.
Serenely purest of her sex that live;
But wanting one sweet weakness,--to forgive;
Too shocked at faults her soul can never know,
She deems that all could be like her below:
Foe to all vice, yet hardly Virtue's friend;

For Virtue pardons those she would amend.

But to the theme, now laid aside too long,--
The baleful burthen of this honest song.
Though all her former functions are no more,
She rules the circle which she served before.
If mothers--none know why--before her quake;
If daughters dread her for the mothers' sake;
If early habits--those false links, which bind
At times the loftiest to the meanest mind--
Have given her power too deeply to instil
The angry essence of her deadly will;
If like a snake she steal within your walls
Till the black slime betray her as she crawls;
If like a viper to the heart she wind,
And leave the venom there she did not find,
What marvel that this hag of hatred works
Eternal evil latent as she lurks,
To make a Pandemonium where she dwells,
And reign the Hecate of domestic hells?
Skilled by a touch to deepen scandal's tints
With all the kind mendacity of hints,
While mingling truth with falsehood, sneers with smiles,
A thread of candour with a web of wiles;
A plain blunt show of briefly-spoken seeming,
To hide her bloodless heart's soul-hardened scheming;
A lip of lies; a face formed to conceal,

And, without feeling, mock at all who feel;
With a vile mask the Gorgon would disown;
A cheek of parchment, and an eye of stone.
Mark how the channels of her yellow blood
Ooze to her skin, and stagnate there to mud!
Cased like the centipede in saffron mail,
Or darker greenness of the scorpion's scale,
(For drawn from reptiles only may we trace
Congenial colours in that soul or face,)--
Look on her features! and behold her mind
As in a mirror of itself defined.
Look on the picture! deem it not o'ercharged;
There is no trait which might not be enlarged:
Yet true to 'Nature's journeymen,' who made
This monster when their mistress left off trade,
This female dog-star of her little sky,
Where all beneath her influence droop or die.

O wretch without a tear, without a thought,
Save joy above the ruin thou hast wrought!
The time shall come, nor long remote, when thou
Shalt feel far more than thou inflictest now,--
Feel for thy vile self-loving self in vain,
And turn thee howling in unpitied pain.
May the strong curse of crushed affections light
Back on thy bosom with reflected blight,
And make thee, in thy leprosy of mind,

As loathsome to thyself as to mankind,
Till all thy self-thoughts curdle into hate
Black as thy will for others would create:
Till thy hard heart be calcined into dust,
And thy soul welter in its hideous crust!
Oh, may thy grave be sleepless as the bed,
The widowed couch of fire, that thou hast spread!
Then, when thou fain wouldst weary Heaven with prayer,
Look on thine earthly victims, and despair!
Down to the dust! and, as thou rott'st away,
Even worms shall perish on thy poisonous clay.
But for the love I bore, and still must bear,
To her thy malice from all ties would tear,
Thy name, thy human name, to every eye
The climax of all scorn, should hang on high,
Exalted o'er thy less abhorred compeers,
And festering in the infamy of years.

LINES ON HEARING THAT LADY BYRON WAS ILL.

And thou wert sad, yet I was not with thee!
And thou wert sick, and yet I was not near!
Methought that joy and health alone could be
Where I was not, and pain and sorrow here.
And is it thus? It is as I foretold,

And shall be more so; for the mind recoils
Upon itself, and the wrecked heart lies cold,
While heaviness collects the shattered spoils.
It is not in the storm nor in the strife
We feel benumbed, and wish to be no more,
But in the after-silence on the shore,
When all is lost except a little life.
I am too well avenged! But 'twas my right:
Whate'er my sins might be, thou wert not sent
To be the Nemesis who should requite;
Nor did Heaven choose so near an instrument.
Mercy is for the merciful!--if thou
Hast been of such, 'twill be accorded now.
Thy nights are banished from the realms of sleep!
Yes! they may flatter thee; but thou shalt feel
A hollow agony which will not heal;
For thou art pillowed on a curse too deep:
Thou hast sown in my sorrow, and must reap
The bitter harvest in a woe as real!
I have had many foes, but none like thee;
For 'gainst the rest myself I could defend,
And be avenged, or turn them into friend;
But thou in safe implacability
Hadst nought to dread, in thy own weakness shielded;
And in my love, which hath but too much yielded,
And spared, for thy sake, some I should not spare.
And thus upon the world,--trust in thy truth,

And the wild fame of my ungoverned youth,
On things that were not and on things that are,--
Even upon such a basis hast thou built
A monument, whose cement hath been guilt;
The moral Clytemnestra of thy lord,
And hewed down, with an unsuspected sword,
Fame, peace, and hope, and all the better life,
Which, but for this cold treason of thy heart,
Might still have risen from out the grave of strife,
And found a nobler duty than to part.
But of thy virtues didst thou make a vice,
Trafficking with them in a purpose cold,
For present anger and for future gold,
And buying others' grief at any price.
And thus, once entered into crooked ways,
The early truth, which was thy proper praise,
Did not still walk beside thee, but at times,
And with a breast unknowing its own crimes,
Deceit, averments incompatible,
Equivocations, and the thoughts which dwell
In Janus-spirits; the significant eye
Which learns to lie with silence; the pretext
Of prudence, with advantages annexed;
The acquiescence in all things which tend,
No matter how, to the desired end,--
All found a place in thy philosophy.
The means were worthy, and the end is won:

I would not do by thee as thou hast done!

FOOTNOTES.

{7} The italics are mine.

{14} The italics are mine.

{16} In Lady Blessington's 'Memoirs' this name is given Charlemont; in the late 'Temple Bar' article on the character of Lady Byron it is given Clermont. I have followed the latter.

{17} The italics are mine.

{21} In Lady Blessington's conversations with Lord Byron, just before he went to Greece, she records that he gave her this poem in manuscript. It was published in her 'Journal.'

{22a} Vol. vi. p.22.

{22b} 'Byron's Miscellany,' vol. ii. p.358. London, 1853.

{23} The italics are mine.

{24} Lord Byron says, in his observations on an article in 'Blackwood:' 'I recollect being much hurt by Romilly's conduct: he (having a general retainer for me) went over to the adversary, alleging, on being reminded

of his retainer, that he had forgotten it, as his clerk had so many. I observed that some of those who were now so eagerly laying the axe to my roof-tree might see their own shaken. His fell and crushed him.'

In the first edition of Moore's Life of Lord Byron there was printed a letter on Sir Samuel Romilly, so brutal that it was suppressed in the subsequent editions. (See Part III.)

{28a} Vol. iv. p.40

{28b} Ibid. p.46.

{31} The italics are mine.

{41} Vol. iv. p.143.

{43} Lord Byron took especial pains to point out to Murray the importance of these two letters. Vol. V. Letter 443, he says: 'You must also have from Mr. Moore the correspondence between me and Lady B., to whom I offered a sight of all that concerns herself in these papers. This is important. He has her letter and my answer.'

{44} 'And I, who with them on the cross am placed,

. . . . truly

My savage wife, more than aught else, doth harm me.'

Inferno, Canto, XVI., Longfellow's translation.

{49} 'Conversations,' p.108.

{51} Murray's edition of 'Byron's Works,' vol. ii. p.189; date of dedication to Hobhouse, Jan. 2, 1818.

{61} Recently, Lord Lindsay has published another version of this story, which makes it appear that he has conversed with a lady who conversed with Hobhouse during his lifetime, in which this story is differently reported. In the last version, it is made to appear that Hobhouse got this declaration from Lady Byron herself.

{70a} The references are to the first volume of the first edition of Moore's 'Life,' originally published by itself.

{70b} 'The officious spies of his privacy,' p.65O.

{72} 'The deserted husband,' p.651.

{86} 'I (Campbell) had not time to ask Lady Byron's permission to print this private letter; but it seemed to me important, and I have published it meo periculo.'

{95a} 'Noctes,' July 1822.

{95b} 'Noctes,' September 1832.

{105} Miss Martineau's Biographical Sketches.

{113} The italics are mine.--H. B. S.

{119} In 'The Noctes' of November, 1824 Christopher North says, 'I don't call Medwin a liar. . . . Whether Byron bammed him, or he, by virtue of his own stupidity, was the sole and sufficient bammifier of himself, I know not.' A note says that Murray had been much shocked by Byron's misstatements to Medwin as to money-matters with him. The note goes on to say, 'Medwin could not have invented them, for they were mixed up with acknowledged facts; and the presumption is that Byron mystified his gallant acquaintance. He was fond of such tricks.'

{121} This one fact is, that Lord Byron might have had an open examination in court, if he had only persisted in refusing the deed of separation.

{126} In the history of 'Blackwood's Magazine,' prefaced to the American edition of 1854, Mackenzie says of the 'Noctes' papers, 'Great as was their popularity in England it was peculiarly in America that their high merit and undoubted originality received the heartiest recognition and appreciation. Nor is this wonderful when it is considered that for one reader of "Blackwood's Magazine" in the old country there cannot be less than fifty in the new.'

{139} The reader is here referred to Lady Byron's other letters, in Part III.; which also show the peculiarly active and philosophical character of her mind, and the class of subjects on which it habitually dwelt.

{147} See her character of Dr. King, Part III.

{148} Alluding to the financial crisis in the United States in 1857.

{149} 'The Minister's Wooing.'

{150} See her letter on spiritualistic phenomena, Part III.

{161} This novel of Godwin's is a remarkably powerful story. It is related in the first person by the supposed hero, Caleb Williams. He represents himself as private secretary to a gentleman of high family named Falkland. Caleb accidentally discovers that his patron has, in a moment of passion, committed a murder. Falkland confesses the crime to Caleb, and tells him that henceforth he shall always suspect him, and keep watch over him. Caleb finds this watchfulness insupportable, and tries to escape, but without success. He writes a touching letter to his patron, imploring him to let him go, and promising never to betray him. The scene where Falkland refuses this is the most highly wrought in the book. He says to him, "Do not imagine that I am afraid of you; I wear an armour against which all your weapons are impotent. I have dug a pit for you: and whichever way you move, backward or forward, to the right or the left, it is ready to swallow you. Be still! If once you fall, call as loud as you will, no man on earth shall hear your cries: prepare a tale however plausible or however true, the whole world shall execrate you for an impostor. Your innocence shall be of no service to you. I laugh at so feeble a defence. It is I that say it: you may believe what I tell

you. Do you know, miserable wretch!" added he, stamping on the ground with fury, "that I have sworn to preserve my reputation, whatever be the expense; that I love it more than the whole world and its inhabitants taken together? and do you think that you shall wound it?" The rest of the book shows how this threat was executed.

{168} Alluding to Buchanan's election.

{178a} Shelton Mackenzie, in a note to the 'Noctes' of July 1822, gives the following saying of Maginn, one of the principal lights of the club: 'No man, however much he might tend to civilisation, was to be regarded as having absolutely reached its apex until he was drunk.' He also records it as a further joke of the club, that a man's having reached this apex was to be tested by his inability to pronounce the word 'civilisation,' which, he says, after ten o'clock at night ought to be abridged to civilation, 'by syncope, or vigorously speaking by hic-cup.'

{178b} Vol. v. pp.61, 75.

{181} These italics are ours.

{190a} This little incident shows the characteristic carefulness and accuracy of Lady Byron's habits. This statement was written fourteen years after the events spoken of; but Lady Byron carefully quotes a passage from her mother's letter written at that time. This shows that a copy of Lady Milbanke's letter had been preserved, and makes it appear probable that copies of the whole correspondence of that period were also

kept. Great light could be thrown on the whole transaction, could these documents be consulted.

{190b} Here, again, Lady Byron's sealed papers might furnish light. The letters addressed to her at this time by those in constant intercourse with Lord Byron are doubtless preserved, and would show her ground of action.

{192} Probably Lady Milbanke's letters are among the sealed papers, and would more fully explain the situation.

{205a} Hunt's Byron, p.77. Philadelphia, 1828.

{205b} From the Temple Bar article, October 1869. 'Mrs. Leigh, Lord Byron's sister, had other thoughts of Mrs. Clermont, and wrote to her offering public testimony to her tenderness and forbearance under circumstances which must have been trying to any friend of Lady Byron.'--Campbell, in the New Monthly Magazine, 183O, p.38O.

{219} 'My Recollections,' p.238.

{225} Vol. vi. p.242.

{227} The reader is here referred to the remarks of 'Blackwood' on 'Don Juan' in Part III.

{258} The article in question is worth a careful reading. Its industry

and accuracy in amassing evidence are worthy attention.

{320a} Probably 'The Christian Aspects of Faith and Duty.' Mr. Tayler has also written 'A Retrospect of the Religious Life of England.'

{320b} 'The National Review.'