

## BYRON'S LONDON JOURNAL, November 14th 1813-April 19th 1814

**Appendix 1: Madame de Staël's *billets* to Byron**

**Appendix 2: Moore's note on Mrs Mule**

**Appendix 3: Byron's reading in Sismondi**

**Appendix 4: "Bracciaferro (of the same name), Count of Ravenna"**

The journal was written between Napoleon's defeat at Leipzig, and his abdication and departure for Elba. Byron is in London for all of its writing, except for the time between January 17th and February 6th, when he is at Newstead with the pregnant Augusta,<sup>1</sup> who gives birth to Medora Leigh on April 15th (an event the diary does not record). There are no entries between January 16th and February 18th.

The first entries coincide with the publication of *The Bride of Abydos* (on December 2nd) and the seventh edition of *The Giaour* (at some other time in December).

Between December 18th and 16th-17th January Byron writes and corrects *The Corsair*. He also writes *The Devils' Drive*, but does not publish it.

Byron is twenty-six on January 22nd 1814.

By the last entry he has written his *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte*, and has reached, politically speaking, what seems the nadir of his emotions, as have many other Whigs and radicals at the time; though they are all to feel worse still after Waterloo, in the year following.

The journal contains many of Byron's most characteristic and conflicting thoughts about poetry, and what it means to him to be a poet. He often writes of his contempt for writing as opposed to acting; but when called upon to perform as straightforward an "act" as the presentation of a debtor's petition to the Lords, he can't be bothered. It shows us, too, his ambivalent feelings about the social life which his success has brought him. He is often undecided whether or not to accept a dinner engagement, but shows no awareness of the luxury he has in such a choice.

It shows us his fascination with women – a factor often neglected in 2004. It's true that he doesn't like them much, even though he is experiencing an *embarras de richesse*: will it be Annabella Milbanke? Frances Wedderburn Webster? or Catherine Annesley, her sister? we sense that for the most part it's a game, to divert his attention, and ours, from the one he really cares for.

It shows us his continental fame starting to spread, as his friends, now free to travel because of Bonaparte's seeming defeat, leave for Europe with his books.

We see the obsessive way in which he uses lines from Shakespeare to illustrate his moods, and to increase his and our sense that he is a dramatic hero. His favourite *personae* are Lear, Macbeth, Falstaff, and (most worryingly) Richard III.

Byron presents himself without shame as a man devoid of inner stability and conviction, a morass of mobility, "a feather for each wind that blows". Had Lady Oxford been in his life still, he assures us, he would have aided Baldwin in the debtors' prison. But with no-one to mother and cajole him, he's adrift:

I never look at a Mem. without seeing that I have remembered to forget.

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**1:** B. to Lady Melbourne, January 29th 1814: "I mentioned yesterday that Augusta was here – which renders it much more pleasant – as we never yawn nor disagree – and laugh much more than is suitable to so solid a mansion – and the family shyness makes us more amusing companions to each other – than we could be to anyone else –" (BLJ IV 40).

In his lack of consistency lies his fascination, and he knows it. On December 6th 1813 he writes:

If I am sincere with myself (but I fear one lies more to one's self than to any one else), every page should confute, refute, and utterly abjure its predecessor.

Always he's in opposition, not "just for the sake of it", but because all seeming certainty makes him feel uneasy. He never defines himself by what he is, but by what he isn't. He's never satisfied with any answer to the question of who he is, or what he believes in. He always rushes to the opposite extreme, and is indifferent to what that extreme may be:

... the first moment of an universal republic would convert me into an advocate for single and uncontradicted despotism.

Such lack of focus, though portrayed comically here, will prove his undoing. Throughout the *Journal*, he expresses his scepticism about the advisability of getting married; but he's married within a year of having finished it, and separated a year after that.

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There is no manuscript known of Byron's *London Journal*, which was edited (and censored) by Moore:

... it would be impossible, of course, to submit it to the public eye, without the omission of some portion of its contents, and unluckily, too, of that very portion which, from its reference to the secret pursuits and feelings of the writer, would the most lively pique and gratify the curiosity of the reader.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the disclaimer, it would seem clear to the "curious" 1830 reader that Tom Cribb the boxing champion had in 1813 been sleeping with his own daughter (see November 24th, "Mezza notte"). References to indiscretions higher up the social scale, however, are cut.

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Moore places horizontal rows of asterisks to signify (I assume) large cuts, and groups of asterisks within the text to signify internal cuts; most of these last are names of people who are either still living, or whose memory would be compromised by the passages cut. Such things as "by the by" (for "by the bye"), and the fact that names are sometimes in italics, sometimes not, suggest either careless or over-fastidious transcription; but the irregularity of the way dates are written, and their curious placing on the right-hand side of the page, suggest fidelity to the manuscript. Also convincing are such usages as "redde", "sate" for "sat", and the irregularity of the uppercasing.

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2: Moore (1832) I 435.

Text here is from Moore (1830) I, 435-75 and 498-514. Parts of names added in square brackets are mine. Moore uses double inverted commas to surround his whole text. I have dispensed with this function, and used them for quotations and titles, as Byron did as a habit. To keep notes short I have not included dates of birth and death.

Abbreviations:

AoB: *The Age of Bronze*.

B.: Byron.

BLJ: *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron*, ed. Leslie A. Marchand, John Murray 1973-94.

CHP: *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

CMP: *Lord Byron The Complete Miscellaneous Prose*, ed. Andrew Nicholson, O.U.P. 1991.

H.: Hobhouse.

Moore: Moore, Thomas. *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron: with Notices of his Life*. London: John Murray, 1830.

OtNB: *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte*.

Peach: Annette Peach, *Portraits of Byron* (Walpole Society reprint) 2000.

Prothero: *The Works of Lord Byron, Letters and Journals*. Edited by R. E. Prothero, 6 vols. London: John Murray, 1900.

TBoA: *The Bride of Abydos*.

TVoJ: *The Vision of Judgement*.

Quotations from Shakespeare are from the text edited by Peter Alexander, Collins 1951.

**JOURNAL, BEGUN NOVEMBER 14, 1813.**

If this had been begun ten years ago, and faithfully kept!!!—heigho! there are too many things I wish never to have remembered, as it is. Well,—I have had my share of what are called the pleasures of this life, and have seen more of the European and Asiatic world than I have made a good use of. They say “virtue is its own reward,”—it certainly should be paid well for its trouble. At five-and-twenty, when the better part of life is over, one should be *something*;—and what am I? nothing but five-and-twenty—and the odd months. What have I seen? the same man all over the world—ay, and woman too. Give *me* a Mussulman who never asks questions, and a she of the same race who saves one the trouble of putting them. But for this same plague—yellow fever—and Newstead delay,<sup>3</sup> I should have been by this time a second time close to the Euxine.<sup>4</sup> If I can overcome the last, I don’t so much mind your pestilence; and, at any rate, the spring shall see me there,—provided I neither marry myself, nor unmarried any one else in the interval. I wish one was—I don’t know what I wish. It is odd I never set myself seriously to wishing without attaining it—and repenting. I begin to believe with the good old Magi, that one should only pray for the nation, and not for the individual;—but, on my principle, this would not be very patriotic.

No more reflections.—Let me see—last night I finished “Zuleika,”<sup>5</sup> my second Turkish Tale. I believe the composition of it kept me alive—for it was written to drive my thoughts from the recollection of —

“Dear sacred name, rest ever unreveal’d.”<sup>6</sup>

At least, even here, my hand would tremble to write it. This afternoon I have burnt the scenes of my commenced comedy. I have some idea of expectorating a romance, or rather a tale, in prose;—but what romance could equal the events—

quæque ipse . . . vidi,  
Et quorum pars magna fui.<sup>7</sup>

To-day Henry Byron<sup>8</sup> called on me with my little cousin Eliza. She will grow up a beauty and a plague; but, in the mean time, it is the prettiest child! dark eyes and eyelashes, black and long as the wing of a raven. I think she is prettier even than my niece, Georgina,<sup>9</sup>—yet I don’t like to think so neither; and though older, she is not so clever.

Dallas<sup>10</sup> called before I was up, so we did not meet. Lewis,<sup>11</sup> too,—who seems out of humour with every thing. What can be the matter? he is not married—has he lost his own mistress, or any other person’s wife? Hodgson,<sup>12</sup> too, came. He is going to be married, and he is the kind of man who will be the happier. He has talent, cheerfulness, every thing that can make him a pleasing companion; and his intended is handsome and young, and all that. But I never see any one much improved by matrimony. All my coupled contemporaries are bald and discontented. W[ordsworth]. and S[outhey]. have both lost their hair and good humour;

**3:** Bubonic plague in the Eastern Mediterranean (see BLJ III 176), plus a stalemate over the sale of Newstead Abbey, had frustrated B.’s plans to travel abroad again, perhaps with Augusta.

**4:** The Black Sea. Compare *Don Juan*, V 5 7-8.

**5:** *The Bride of Abydos*.

**6:** Pope, *Eloisa to Abelard*, 9. Refers to Augusta. The protagonists of *TBoA* were at first to be brother and sister; see BLJ III 199.

**7:** Virgil, *Aeneid*, II 5-6: *I myself saw all this in its horror, and took a great part in it*. Aeneas speaks.

**8:** The Rev. Henry Byron was B.’s father’s first cousin. His daughter Eliza was seven.

**9:** Augusta’s eldest child.

**10:** R.C.Dallas, another cousin of B., to whom he gave the copyrights of *CHP* I and II and *The Corsair*.

**11:** Matthew Gregory Lewis, author of *The Monk*.

**12:** The Rev. Francis Hodgson, one of B.’s old friends from Trinity. He punctuated the manuscript of *TBoA* (BLJ III 166) and preferred it to *The Giaour*.

and the last of the two had a good deal to lose. But it don't much signify what falls off a man's temples in that state.

Mem. I must get a toy to-morrow for Eliza, and send the device for the seals of myself and \* \* \* \* \*<sup>13</sup> Mem. too, to call on the Staël and Lady Holland to-morrow, and on \* \* \*,<sup>14</sup> who has advised me (without seeing it, by the by) not to publish "Zuleika;" I believe he is right, but experience might have taught him that not to print is *physically* impossible. No one has seen it but Hodgson and Mr. Gifford. I never in my life *read* a composition, save to Hodgson, as he pays me in kind. It is a horrible thing to do too frequently;—better print, and they who like may read, and if they don't like, you have the satisfaction of knowing that they have, at least, *purchased* the right of saying so.

I have declined presenting the Debtors' Petition,<sup>15</sup> being sick of parliamentary mummeries. I have spoken thrice; but I doubt my ever becoming an orator. My first was liked; the second and third—I don't know whether they succeeded or not. I have never yet set to it *con amore*;—one must have some excuse to one's self for laziness, or inability, or both, and this is mine. "Company, villainous company, hath been the spoil of me;"<sup>16</sup>—and then, I "have drunk medicines,"<sup>17</sup> not to make me love others, but certainly enough to hate myself.

Two nights ago I saw the tigers sup at Exeter 'Change. Except Veli Pacha's lion in the Morea,<sup>18</sup>—who followed the Arab keeper like a dog,—the fondness of the hyæna for her keeper amused me most. Such a conversazione!—There was a "hippopotamus," like Lord Liverpool<sup>19</sup> in the face; and the "Ursine Sloth" had the very voice and manner of my valet—but the tiger talked too much. The elephant took and gave me my money again—took off my hat—opened a door—*trunked* a whip—and behaved so well, that I wish he was my butler. The handsomest animal on earth is one of the panthers; but the poor antelopes were dead. I should hate to see one *here*:—the sight of the *camel* made me pine again for Asia Minor. "Oh quando te aspiciam?"<sup>20</sup>

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Nov. 16th.

Went last night with Lewis to see the first of *Antony and Cleopatra*. It was admirably got up and well acted—a salad of Shakspeare and Dryden. Cleopatra strikes me as the epitome of her sex—fond, lively, sad, tender, teasing, humble, haughty, beautiful, the devil!—coquettish to the last, as well with the "asp" as with Antony. After doing all she can to persuade him that—but why do they abuse him for cutting off that poltroon Cicero's head? Did not Tully tell Brutus it was a pity to have spared Antony? and did he not speak the Philippic? and are not "*words things*?"<sup>21</sup> and such "*words*" very pestilent "*things*" too? If he had had a hundred heads, they deserved (from Antony) a rostrum (his was stuck up there) apiece—though, after all, he might as well have pardoned him, for the credit of the thing. But to resume—Cleopatra, after securing him, says, "yet go—it is your interest," &c.—how like the sex! and the questions about Octavia—it is woman all over.

To-day received Lord Jersey's invitation to Middleton<sup>22</sup>—to travel sixty miles to meet Madame \* \* !<sup>23</sup> I once travelled three thousand to get among silent people; and this same lady

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13: Marchand guesses "Augusta".

14: Could be one of several people who had, from rumour, disliked *TBoA* in its early version.

15: See BLJ III 134-5 for B.'s letter to the debtor W.J.Baldwin. Lord Holland presented the petition.

16: *Henry IV I*, III iii, 9-10. Falstaff speaks.

17: *Henry IV I*, II ii 22. Falstaff speaks.

18: Veli Pacha was the son of Ali Pacha. His HQ was at Tripolitza, where it seems he had a zoo.

19: The Tory Prime Minister for most of B.'s adult life.

20: *Hor. Sat. II*, vi 60: "Oh, when shall I see you again?"

21: *Words are things*: a Shakespearean-sounding phrase which is, however, a quotation from the Comte de Mirabeau, revolutionary writer, demagogue, debauchee, grocer, and *illuminatus*. Byron was fond of the assertion: see BLJ IV 74 (where he attributes it to Mirabeau), *CHP III Stanza 114* (line 1061), *Don Juan III 88*, 1, *PoD II 2*, and *MF V i 288*.

22: The Jersey's country seat at Middleton Park, near Leeds.

writes octavos and *talks folios*. I have read her books—like most of them, and delight in the last;<sup>24</sup> so I won't hear it, as well as read. \* \* \* \* \*

Read Burns to-day.<sup>25</sup> What would he have been, if a patrician? We should have had more polish—less force—just as much verse, but no immortality—a divorce and a duel or two, the which had he survived, as his potations must have been less spirituous, he might have lived as long as Sheridan, and outlived as much as poor Brinsley. What a wreck is that man! and all from bad pilotage; for no one had ever better gales, though now and then a little too squally. Poor dear Sherry! I shall never forget the day he and Rogers and Moore and I passed together; when he talked, and *we* listened, without one yawn, from six till one in the morning.

Got my seals \* \* \* \* \*. Have again forgot a plaything for *ma petite cousine* Eliza; but I must send for it to-morrow. I hope Harry will bring her to me. I sent Lord Holland the proofs of the last “Giaour,” and the “Bride of Abydos”. He won't like the latter, and I don't think that I shall long. It was written in four nights to distract my dreams from \* \*.<sup>26</sup> Were it not thus, it had never been composed; and had I not done something at that time, I must have gone mad, by eating my own heart,—bitter diet!—Hodgson likes it better than the Giaour, but nobody else will,—and he never liked the Fragment.<sup>27</sup> I am sure, had it not been for Murray, *that* would never have been published, though the circumstances which are the ground-work make it \* \* \* heigh-ho!

To-night I saw both the sisters of \* \*,<sup>28</sup> my God! the youngest so like! I thought I should have sprung across the house, and am so glad no one was with me in Lady H[olland].’s box. I hate those likenesses—the mock-bird, but not the nightingale—so like as to remind, so different as to be painful.<sup>29</sup> One quarrels equally with the points of resemblance and of distinction.

Nov. 17th.

No letter from \* \*,<sup>30</sup> but I must not complain. The respectable Job says, “Why should a *living man* complain?”<sup>31</sup> I really don't know, except it be that a *dead man* can't; and he, the said patriarch, *did* complain, nevertheless, till his friends were tired and his wife recommended that pious prologue, “Curse—and die;”<sup>32</sup> the only time, I suppose, when but little relief is to be found in swearing. I have had a most kind letter from Lord Holland on “The Bride of Abydos”, which he likes, and so does Lady H[olland]. This is very good-natured in both, from whom I don't deserve any quarter. Yet I *did* think, at the time, that my cause of enmity proceeded from Holland-house, and am glad I was wrong, and wish I had not been in such a hurry with that confounded satire,<sup>33</sup> of which I would suppress even the memory;—but people, now they can't get it, make a fuss, I verily believe, out of contradiction.

George Ellis<sup>34</sup> and Murray have been talking something about Scott and me, George pro Scoto,—and very right too. If they want to depose him, I only wish they would not set me up as a competitor. Even if I had my choice, I would rather be the Earl of Warwick than all the *kings* he ever made! Jeffrey and Gifford I take to be the monarch-makers in poetry and prose. The *British Critic*, in their Rokeby Review, have presupposed a comparison, which I am sure my friends never thought of, and W. Scott's subjects are injudicious in descending to. I like

23: Madame de Staël.

24: *de l'Allemagne*, published in 1813 by Murray.

25: Compare B. to Hodgson, BLJ Supp. 31, and to Henry Drury, BLJ III 202.

26: Almost certainly “Augusta”.

27: “the Fragment” is *The Giaour*.

28: Marchand guesses “Frances Wedderburn Webster”.

29: Moore quotes *The Giaour*, 1184-7: *Earth holds no other like to thee, / Or, if it doth, in vain for me – / For worlds I dare not view the dame / Resembling thee, yet not the same.*

30: Marchand again guesses “Frances Wedderburn Webster”.

31: In fact, Jeremiah, at *Lamentations* 3, 39: *Wherefore doth a living man complain?*

32: This, on the other hand, is from *Job*: see 2, 9.

33: *EBSR*. See lines 519, 521, 540 and so on.

34: George Ellis had written for the *Anti-Jacobin* and now reviewed for the *Quarterly*.

the man—and admire his works—to what Mr. Braham<sup>35</sup> calls *Entusymusy*. All such stuff can only vex him, and do me no good. Many hate his politics—(I hate all politics); and, here, a man’s politics are like the Greek *soul*—an *e?d? ???*,<sup>36</sup> besides God knows what *other soul*; but their estimate of the two generally go together.

Harry has not brought *ma petite cousine*. I want us to go to the play together;—she has been but once. Another short note from Jersey, inviting Rogers and me on the 23d. I must see my agent to-night.<sup>37</sup> I wonder when that Newstead business will be finished. It cost me more than words to part with it—and to *have* parted with it! What matters it what I do? or what becomes of me?—but let me remember Job’s saying, and console myself with being “a living man.”<sup>38</sup>

I wish I could settle to reading again,—my life is monotonous, and yet desultory. I take up books, and fling them down again. I began a comedy, and burnt it because the scene ran into *reality*;—a novel, for the same reason. In rhyme, I can keep more away from facts; but the thought always runs through, through.....yes, yes, through. I have had a letter from Lady Melbourne—the best friend I ever had in my life, and the cleverest of women. \* \* \* \*

Not a word from \* \*.<sup>39</sup> Have they set out from \* \*?<sup>40</sup> or has my last precious epistle fallen into the Lion’s jaws? If so—and this silence looks suspicious—I must clap on my “musty morion”<sup>41</sup> and “hold out my iron.”<sup>42</sup> I am out of practice—but I won’t begin again at Manton’s<sup>43</sup> now. Besides, I would not return his shot. I was once a famous wafer-splitter; but then the bullies of society made it necessary. Ever since I began to feel that I had a bad cause to support, I have left off the exercise.

What strange tidings from that Anakim<sup>44</sup> of anarchy—Buonaparte!<sup>45</sup> Ever since I defended my bust of him at Harrow against the rascally time-servers, when the war broke out in 1803, he has been a “Heros de Roman” of mine—on the continent; I don’t want him here. But I don’t like those same flights,—leaving of armies, &c. &c. I am sure when I fought for his bust at school, I did not think he would run away from himself. But I should not wonder if he banged them yet. To be beat by men would be something; but by three stupid, legitimate-old-dynasty boobies of regular-bred sovereigns—O-hone-a-rie!—O-hone-a-rie!<sup>46</sup> It must be, as Cobbett says, his marriage with the thick-lipped and thick-headed *Autrichienne* brood.<sup>47</sup> He had better have kept to her who was kept by Barras.<sup>48</sup> I never knew any good come of your young wife, and legal espousals, to any but your “sober-blooded boy” who “eats fish” and drinketh “no sack.”<sup>49</sup> Had he not the whole opera? all Paris? all France? But a mistress is just as perplexing—that is, *one*—two or more are manageable by division.

I have begun, or had begun, a song, and flung it into the fire. It was in remembrance of Mary Duff,<sup>50</sup> my first of flames, before most people begin to burn. I wonder what the devil is the matter with me! I can do nothing, and—fortunately there is nothing to do. It has lately been in my power to make two persons (and their connexions) comfortable,<sup>51</sup> *pro tempore*, and one happy, *ex tempore*,—I rejoice in the last particularly, as it is an excellent man.<sup>52</sup> I

35: John Braham, famous tenor. Colleague of Isaac Nathan.

36: “an image”, or “a vision”.

37: B.’s “agent” is Hanson, the solicitor.

38: Again B. confuses Job with Jeremiah. See *Lamentations* 3, 39.

39: Probably Frances Wedderburn Webster.

40: Aston Hall, the estate the Websters had leased in Yorkshire.

41: A morion is a helmet; reference unidentified.

42: *Henry V*, II i, 8-9. Corporal Nym speaks.

43: Joe Manton was a top London gunsmith who ran a shooting-gallery.

44: “Giant” (should be *Anak*, the singular). See *Numbers* 13, 22, *Deuteronomy* 9, 2, and so on.

45: Napoleon had been defeated at Leipzig (October 16th-18th), and was now retreating towards Paris.

46: Marchand (BLJ XI 224) identifies “an expression of lament” from Scott’s poem *Glenfinlas*.

47: Refers to Napoleon’s marriage with Maria Louisa, daughter of the Austrian Emperor.

48: Refers to Josephine, who had been the mistress of the revolutionary Paul Jean Barras.

49: *Henry IV* II, IV iii, final speech.

50: Mary Duff was B.’s Scots cousin, and his first love.

51: Refers to Augusta and her husband, and Francis Hodgson, to both of whom B. had given money.

52: Refers to Hodgson.

wish there had been more inconvenience and less gratification to my self-love in it, for then there had been more merit. We are all selfish—and I believe, ye gods of Epicurus! I believe in Rochefoucault about *men*,<sup>53</sup> and in Lucretius (not Busby’s translation)<sup>54</sup> about yourselves. Your bard has made you very *nonchalant* and blest; but as he has excused us from damnation, I don’t envy you your blessedness *much*—a little, to be sure. I remember, last year, \* \*<sup>55</sup> said to me, at \* \*<sup>56</sup> “Have we not passed our last month like the gods of Lucretius?” And so we had. She is an adept in the text of the original (which I like too); and when that booby Bus[by]. sent his translating prospectus, she subscribed. But, the devil prompting him to add a specimen, she transmitted him a subsequent answer, saying, that “after perusing it, her conscience would not permit her to allow her name to remain on the list of sub-scribblers.” \* \* \* \* \*

Last night, at Lord H[olland].’s—Mackintosh,<sup>57</sup> the Ossulstones,<sup>58</sup> Puységur,<sup>59</sup> &c. there—I was trying to recollect a quotation (as I think) of Staël’s, from some Teutonic sophist about architecture. “Architecture,” says this Macoronico Tedesco, “reminds me of frozen music.”<sup>60</sup> It is somewhere—but where?—the demon of perplexity must know and won’t tell. I asked M[ackintosh]., and he said it was not in her: but P——r said it must be *hers*, it was so *like*. \* \* \* \* \*

H[olland]. laughed, as he does at all “De l’Allemagne”,—in which, however, I think he goes a little too far. B.,<sup>61</sup> I hear, contemns it too. But there are fine passages;—and, after all, what is a work—any—or every work—but a desert with fountains, and, perhaps, a grove or two, every day’s journey? To be sure, in Madame, what we often mistake, and “pant for,” as the “cooling stream,”<sup>62</sup> turns out to be the “*mirage*” (criticé, *verbiage*); but we do, at last, get to something like the temple of Jove Ammon, and then the waste we have passed is only remembered to gladden the contrast.

\* \* \* \* \*

Called on C \* \*, to explain \* \* \*.<sup>63</sup> She is very beautiful, to my taste, at least; for on coming home from abroad, I recollect being unable to look at any woman but her—they were so fair, and unmeaning, and *blonde*. The darkness and regularity of her features reminded me of my “Jannat al Aden.”<sup>64</sup> But this impression wore off; and now I can look at a fair woman, without longing for a Hourî. She was very good-tempered, and every thing was explained.

To-day, great news—“the Dutch have taken Holland,”<sup>65</sup>—which, I suppose, will be succeeded by the actual explosion of the Thames. Five provinces have declared for young Stadt,<sup>66</sup> and there will be inundation, conflagration, constupration, consternation, and every sort of nation and nations, fighting away, up to their knees, in the damnable quags of this will-o’-the-wisp abode of Boors.<sup>67</sup> It is said Bernadotte<sup>68</sup> is amongst them, too; and, as Orange will

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53: Rochefoucault wrote that all men were at heart self-interested.

54: Lucretius had been translated (as *The Nature of Things*) by Thomas Busby in 1813.

55: Lady Oxford, who had been B.’s lover in 1812 and 1813.

56: Eywood, the Oxfords’ country house.

57: Sir James Mackintosh, Whig MP and philosopher.

58: The Ossulton[e]s were the Earl of Tankerville and his French wife, daughter of the duc de Gramont.

59: The Marquis de Puységur, specialist in “magnetic” cures for hypertension.

60: “Erstarrte Musik” is a phrase used by Friedrich von Schlegel to describe architecture (not by Goethe, as both Prothero and Marchand write).

61: “B.” unidentified.

62: See Psalm 42: “As the hart panteth for the water brooks, so panteth my soul for thee, O God!”

63: Both unidentified.

64: Reference untraced.

65: Refers to the dethronement of Louis Bonaparte, Napoleon’s brother, puppet King of Holland.

66: The Hereditary Prince of Orange.

67: B. had never been to Holland.

68: The Crown Prince of Sweden was not in Holland at this time.



be there soon, they will have (Crown) Prince Stork and King Log in their Loggery at the same time. Two to one on the new dynasty!<sup>69</sup>

Mr. Murray has offered me one thousand guineas for the “Giaour” and the “Bride of Abydos”. I won’t—it is too much, though I am strongly tempted, merely for the *say* of it.<sup>70</sup> No bad price for a fortnight’s (a week each) what?—the gods know—it was intended to be called Poetry.

I have dined regularly to-day, for the first time since Sunday last—this being Sabbath, too: All the rest, tea and dry biscuits—six *per diem*. I wish to God I had not dined now!—It kills me with heaviness, stupor, and horrible dreams;—and yet it was but a pint of bucellas,<sup>71</sup> and fish.<sup>72</sup> Meat I never touch,—nor much vegetable diet. I wish I were in the country, to take exercise,—instead of being obliged to *cool* by abstinence, in lieu of it. I should not so much mind a little accession of flesh,—my bones can well bear it. But the worst is, the devil always came with it,—till I starved him out,—and I will *not* be the slave of *any* appetite. If I do err, it shall be my heart, at least, that heralds the way. Oh, my head—how it aches!—the horrors of digestion! I wonder how Buonaparte’s dinner agrees with him?<sup>73</sup>

Mem. I must write to-morrow to “Master Shallow, who owes me a thousand pounds,”<sup>74</sup> and seems, in his letter, afraid I should ask him for it;<sup>75</sup>—as if I would!—I don’t want it (just now, at least,) to begin with; and though I have often wanted that sum, I never asked for the repayment of £10 in my life—from a friend. His bond is not due this year, and I told him when it was, I should not enforce it. How often must he make me say the same thing?

I am wrong—I did once ask<sup>76</sup> to repay me. But it was under circumstances that excused me *to him*, and would to any one. I took no interest, nor required security. He paid me soon,—at least, his *padre*.<sup>77</sup> My head! I believe it was given me to ache with. Good even.

Nov. 22d, 1813.

“Orange Boven!”<sup>78</sup> So the bees have expelled the bear that broke open their hive. Well,—if we are to have new De Witts and De Ruyters,<sup>79</sup> God speed the little republic! I should like to see the Hague and the village of Brock,<sup>80</sup> where they have such primitive habits. Yet, I don’t know,—their canals would cut a poor figure by the memory of the Bosphorus; and the Zuyder Zee look awkwardly after “Ak-Degnity.”<sup>81</sup> No matter,—the bluff burghers, puffing freedom out of their short tobacco-pipes, might be worth seeing; though I prefer a cigar or a hooka, with the rose-leaf mixed with the milder herb of the Levant. I don’t know what liberty means,—never having seen it,—but wealth is power all over the world; and as a shilling performs the duty of a pound (besides sun and sky and beauty for nothing) in the East,—*That* is the country. How I envy Herodes Atticus!—more than Pomponius.<sup>82</sup> And yet a little *tumult*, now and then, is an agreeable quickener of sensation;—such as a revolution, a battle, or an *aventure* of any lively description. I think I rather would have been Bonneval, Ripperda,

69: Compare B. to Lady Melbourne, BLJ III 172.

70: Murray finally paid B. a thousand guineas for *The Giaour* and *TBoA* on October 25th 1815.

71: Portuguese white wine.

72: Moore notes, “He had this year so far departed from his strict plan of diet as to eat fish occasionally”.

73: B. turns this joke against Louis XVIII at *AoB*, 502-11.

74: *Henry IV* II, V v, 74. Falstaff speaks. B. refers to Wedderburn Webster.

75: Moore notes, “We have here another instance, in addition to the munificent aid afforded to Mr. Hodgson, of the generous readiness of the poet, notwithstanding his own limited means, to make the resources he possessed available for the assistance of his friends”.

76: Moore says this is a gap in the original. The name omitted may be “Hobhouse”.

77: Sir Benjamin Hobhouse.

78: *Orange Boven* was the title of a play announced for Drury Lane on December 8th; but it was not performed because no license had been obtained for it.

79: Seventeenth-century Dutch freedom fighters against the Spanish.

80: In fact, “Broek”. H. is to visit it on January 26th 1814.

81: Ak-Denkiz (“White Sea”) is the Turkish name for the Mediterranean (BLJ XI 224).

82: Herodes Atticus was a wealthy Greek; Pomponius a wealthy Roman.

Alberoni, Hayreddin, or Horuc Barbarossa, or even Wortley Montague,<sup>83</sup> than Mahomet himself.

Rogers will be in town soon?—the 23d is fixed for our Middleton visit. Shall I go? umph!—In this island, where one can't ride out without overtaking the sea, it don't much matter where one goes.

\* \* \* \* \*

I remember the effect of the *first* Edinburgh Review on me.<sup>84</sup> I heard of it six weeks before,—read it the day of its denunciation,—dined and drank three bottles of claret, (with S. B. Davies, I think.)—neither ate nor slept the less, but, nevertheless, was not easy till I had vented my wrath and my rhyme, in the same pages, against every thing and every body. Like George, in the *Vicar of Wakefield*, “the fate of my paradoxes”<sup>85</sup> would allow me to perceive no merit in another. I remembered only the maxim of my boxing-master,<sup>86</sup> which, in my youth, was found useful in all general riots,—“Whoever is not for you is against you—*mill* away right and left,” and so I did;—like Ishmael, my hand was against all men, and all men's anent me. I did wonder, to be sure, at my own success—

And marvels so much wit is all his own,

as Hobhouse sarcastically says<sup>87</sup> of somebody (not unlikely myself, as we are old friends);—but were it to come over again, I would *not*. I have since redde<sup>88</sup> the cause of my couplets, and it is not adequate to the effect. C \* <sup>89</sup> told me that it was believed I alluded to poor Lord Carlisle's nervous disorder in one of the lines. I thank Heaven I did not know it—and would not, could not, if I had. I must naturally be the last person to be pointed on defects or maladies.

Rogers is silent,—and, it is said, severe. When he does talk, he talks well; and, on all subjects of taste, his delicacy of expression is pure as his poetry. If you enter his house—his drawing-room—his library—you of yourself say, this is not the dwelling of a common mind. There is not a gem, a coin, a book thrown aside on his chimney-piece, his sofa, his table, that does not bespeak an almost fastidious elegance in the possessor. But this very delicacy must be the misery of his existence. Oh the jarrings his disposition must have encountered through life!

Southey, I have not seen much of. His appearance is *Epic*; and he is the only existing entire man of letters. All the others have some pursuit annexed to their authorship. His manners are mild, but not those of a man of the world, and his talents of the first order. His prose is perfect. Of his poetry there are various opinions: there is, perhaps, too much of it for the present generation;—posterity will probably select. He has *passages* equal to any thing. At present, he has a *party*, but no *public*—except for his prose writings. The life of Nelson is beautiful.

\* <sup>90</sup> is a *Littérateur*, the Oracle of the Coteries, of the \* \* s, L\*W\* (Sydney Smith's “Tory Virgin,”)<sup>91</sup> Mrs. Wilmot (she, at least, is a swan, and might frequent a purer stream), Lady B \* \*,<sup>92</sup> and all the Blues, with Lady C \* <sup>93</sup> at their head—but I say nothing of *her*—

**83:** French, Dutch, Italian, Algerian, and British soldiers of fortune and adventurers.

**84:** The first *Edinburgh Review* came out in October 1802. B. was fourteen then, so he must be mistaken. He had not yet met Davies in 1802. He probably means the issue in which *ESBR* was attacked, which was February 1808.

**85:** *The Vicar of Wakefield*, 12: “the learned world said nothing to my paradoxes; nothing at all, Sir”.

**86:** Gentleman John Jackson.

**87:** Hobhouse, *From Boileau, in Imitations and Translations*. In fact, *A wonder so much wit was all his own*.

**88:** Moore notes, “It was thus that he, in general, spelled this word”.

**89:** Probably Campbell.

**90:** The poet William Sotheby. Compare *Beppo*, stanzas 72-77.

**91:** Lydia White, Irish bluestocking; “Miss Diddle” in *The Blues*. At a dinner-party given by her, Sydney Smith suggested the sacrifice of ‘A Tory Virgin’ to improve the Whigs' chances.

**92:** Lady Beaumont, whose husband was co-founder of the National Gallery. She wrote tragedies.

”look in her face and you forget them all,”<sup>94</sup> and every thing else. Oh that face!—by “te, Diva potens Cypri,”<sup>95</sup> I would, to be beloved of that woman, build and burn another Troy.

M \* \* e<sup>96</sup> has a peculiarity of talent, or rather talents,—poetry, music, voice, all his own; and an expression in each, which never was, nor will be, possessed by another. But he is capable of still higher flights in poetry. By the by, what humour, what—every thing, in the “Post-Bag”!<sup>97</sup> There is nothing M \* \* e may not do, if he will but seriously set about it. In society, he is gentlemanly, gentle, and, altogether more pleasing than any individual with whom I am acquainted. For his honour, principle, and independence, his conduct to \* \* \* speaks “trumpet-tongued.”<sup>98</sup> He has but one fault—and that one I daily regret—he is not *here*.

Nov. 23d.

Ward—I like Ward.<sup>99</sup> By Mahomet! I begin to think I like every body:—a disposition, not to be encouraged;—a sort of social gluttony that swallows every thing set before it. But I like Ward. He is *piquant*; and, in my opinion, will stand *very* high in the House and every where else,—if he applies *regularly*. By the by,<sup>100</sup> I dine with him to-morrow, which may have some influence on my opinion. It is as well not to trust one’s gratitude *after* dinner. I have heard many a host libelled by his guests, with his burgundy yet reeking on their rascally lips.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have taken Lord Salisbury’s<sup>101</sup> box at Covent Garden for the season; and now I must go and prepare to join Lady Holland and party, in theirs, at Drury Lane, *questa sera*.

Holland doesn’t think the man *is Junius*;<sup>102</sup> but that the yet unpublished journal throws great light on the obscurities of that part of George the Second’s reign.—What is this to George the Third’s? I don’t know what to think. Why should Junius be yet dead? If suddenly apoplexed, would he rest in his grave without sending his *e?d? ???* to shout in the ears of posterity, “Junius was X. Y. Z., Esq., buried in the parish of \* \* \*. Repair his monument, ye churchwardens! Print a new Edition of his Letters, ye booksellers!” Impossible,—the man must be alive, and will never die without the disclosure. I like him;—he was a good hater.

Came home unwell and went to bed,—not so sleepy as might be desirable.

Tuesday morning.

I awoke from a dream!—well! and have not others dreamed?—Such a dream!—but she did not overtake me. I wish the dead would rest, however.<sup>103</sup> Ugh! how my blood chilled,—and I could not wake—and—and—heigho!

Shadows to-night

Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard,  
Than could the substance of ten thousand \* \*s,  
Arm’d all in proof, and led by shallow \* \*.<sup>104</sup>

93: Lady Charlemont, another Irish intellectual.

94: Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, II 18.

95: Hor. Od. I iii i: “May the goddess who rules over Cyprus ...”

96: Moore, the Journal’s editor, modestly asterisks his own name out.

97: Moore’s *Twopenny Post-Bag* was a satire published in 1813.

98: *Macbeth*, I vii 19. Jeffery Vail suggests that B. means Lord Moira, from whom Moore had refused to accept favours for fear of compromising himself as a critic of the government.

99: J.W.Ward, Later Lord Dudley. B. had planned a trip to Holland with him. See BLJ III 180 and 184.

100: But B. always wrote “by the bye”. See BLJ III 168.

101: James Cecil, seventh Earl and first Marquis of Salisbury. A Tory. See BLJ III 171.

102: Junius was the anonymous eighteenth-century pamphleteer whom B. used as an alter ego in *TVoJ*. He wrote against George III. He is thought to have been Sir Philip Francis.

103: B. seems to have dreamed that his mother came back to life. Compare *Sardanapalus*, IV i, 148-65.

I do not like this dream,—I hate its “foregone conclusion.”<sup>105</sup> And am I to be shaken by shadows? Ay, when they remind us of—no matter—but, if I dream thus again, I will try whether *all* sleep has the like visions. Since I rose, I’ve been in considerable bodily pain also; but it is gone, and now, like Lord Ogleby, I am wound up for the day.<sup>106</sup>

A note from Mountnorris<sup>107</sup>—I dine with Ward;—Canning is to be there, Frere and Sharpe, perhaps Gifford.<sup>108</sup> I am to be one of “the five” (or rather six), as Lady \* \* \*<sup>109</sup> said a little sneeringly yesterday. They are all good to meet, particularly Canning, and Ward, when he likes. I wish I may be well enough to listen to these intellectuals.

No letters to-day;—so much the better,—there are no answers. I must not dream again;—it spoils even reality. I will go out of doors, and see what the fog will do for me. Jackson has been here: the boxing world much as usual;—but the club increases. I shall dine at Crib[b]’s<sup>110</sup> to-morrow. I like energy—even animal energy—of all kinds; and I have need of both mental and corporeal. I have not dined out, nor, indeed *at all*, lately: have heard no music—have seen nobody. Now for a *plunge*—high life and low life. *Amant alterna Camæna!*<sup>111</sup>

I have burnt my *Roman*—as I did the first scenes and sketch of my comedy<sup>112</sup>—and, for aught I see, the pleasure of burning is quite as great as that of printing. These two last would not have done. I ran into *realities* more than ever; and some would have been recognised and others guessed at.

Redde the Ruminator—a collection of Essays, by a strange, but able, old man (Sir E[rgerton]. B[ridges].),<sup>113</sup> and a half-wild young one,<sup>114</sup> author of a poem on the Highlands, called ‘Childe Alarique’. The word “sensibility” (always my aversion) occurs a thousand times in these Essays; and, it seems, is to be an excuse for all kinds of discontent. This young man can know nothing of life; and, if he cherishes the disposition which runs through his papers, will become useless, and, perhaps, not even a poet, after all, which he seems determined to be. God help him! no one should be a rhymist who could be any thing better. And this is what annoys me, to see Scott and Moore, and Campbell and Rogers, who might have all been agents and leaders, now mere spectators. For, though they may have other ostensible avocations, these last are reduced to a secondary consideration. \* \*,<sup>115</sup> too, frittering away his time among dowagers and unmarried girls. If it advanced any *serious* affair, it were some excuse; but, with the unmarried, that is a hazardous speculation, and tiresome enough, too; and, with the veterans, it is not much worth trying, unless, perhaps, one in a thousand.

If I had any views in this country, they would probably be parliamentary. But I have no ambition; at least, if any, it would be “aut Cæsar aut nihil”.<sup>116</sup> My hopes are limited to the arrangement of my affairs, and settling either in Italy or the East (rather the last), and drinking deep of the languages and literature of both. Past events have unnerved me; and all I can now do is to make life an amusement, and look on, while others play. After all,—even the highest game of crowns and sceptres, what is it? *Vide* Napoleon’s last twelvemonth. It has completely upset my system of fatalism. I thought, if crushed, he would have fallen, when “fractus

**104:** *Richard III*, V iii 216-19, where the missing words are “soldiers” and “Richmond”.

**105:** *Echoes Twelfth Night*, II iii 6: “A false conclusion – I hate it as an unfilled can”.

**106:** Colman and Garrick, *The Clandestine Marriage*: “... he must have a great deal of brushing, oyling, screwing, and winding up, to set him a-going for the day”.

**107:** The Earl of Mountnorris was the father of Frances Wedderburn Webster. See BLJ Supp. 28.

**108:** George Canning; John Hookham Frere; Richard “Conversation” Sharpe; and William Gifford.

**109:** Unidentified.

**110:** Tom Cribb was sometime heavyweight champion of England.

**111:** Virgil, *Eclogues*, III 59: “Singing by turns the Muses’ love”. See also BLJ III 17.

**112:** “Roman” – “novel”. No trace of either work remains.

**113:** *The Ruminator* was published in 1813. Brydges wrote an early life of B.

**114:** Unidentified.

**115:** Perhaps Sotheby.

**116:** “Either Emperor, or nothing”.

illabatur orbis,”<sup>117</sup> and not have been pared away to gradual insignificance; that all this was not a mere *jeu* of the gods, but a prelude to greater changes and mightier events. But Men never advance beyond a certain point;—and here we are, retrograding, to the dull, stupid old system,—balance of Europe—poising straws upon kings’ noses, instead of wringing them off! Give me a republic, or a despotism of one, rather than the mixed government of one, two, three. A republic!—look in the history of the Earth—Rome, Greece, Venice, France, Holland, America, our short (eheu!) Commonwealth, and compare it with what they did under masters. The Asiatics are not qualified to be republicans, but they have the liberty of demolishing despots,—which is the next thing to it. To be the first man—not the Dictator—not the Sylla, but the Washington or the Aristides—the leader in talent and truth—is next to the Divinity! Franklin, Penn, and, next to these, either Brutus or Cassius—even Mirabeau—or St. Just. I shall never be any thing, or rather always be nothing. The most I can hope is, that some will say, “He might, perhaps, if he would.”<sup>118</sup>

12, midnight.

Here are two confounded proofs from the printer.<sup>119</sup> I have looked at the one, but for the soul of me, I can’t look over that “*Giaour*” again,—at least, just now, and at this hour—and yet there is no moon.

Ward talks of going to Holland, and we have partly discussed an *ensemble* expedition. It must be in ten days, if at all,—if we wish to be in at the Revolution. And why not? \* \* is distant, and will be at \* \*<sup>120</sup>, still more distant, till spring. No one else, except Augusta, cares for me; no ties—no trammels—*andiamo dunque—se torniamo, bene—se non, ch’ importa?*<sup>121</sup> Old William of Orange talked of dying in “the last ditch” of his dingy country. It is lucky I can swim, or I suppose I should not well weather the first. But let us see. I have heard hyænas and jackalls in the ruins of Asia; and bull-frogs in the marshes;<sup>122</sup> besides wolves and angry Mussulmans. Now, I should like to listen to the shout of a free Dutchman.

Alla! Viva! For ever! Hourra! Huzza!—which is the most rational or musical of these cries? “Orange Boven,” according to the *Morning Post*.

Wednesday, 24th.

No dreams last night of the dead, nor the living; so—I am “firm as the marble, founded as the rock,”<sup>123</sup> till the next earthquake.

Ward’s dinner went off well. There was not a disagreeable person there—unless I offended any body, which I am sure I could not by contradiction, for I said little, and opposed nothing. Sharpe (a man of elegant mind, and who has lived much with the best—Fox, Horne Tooke, Windham,<sup>124</sup> Fitzpatrick,<sup>125</sup> and all the agitators of other times and tongues,) told us the particulars of his last interview with Windham, a few days before the fatal operation which sent “that gallant spirit to aspire the skies.”<sup>126</sup> Windham,—the first in one department of oratory and talent, whose only fault was his refinement beyond the intellect of half his hearers,—Windham, half his life an active participator in the events of the earth, and one of

**117:** Hor. Od. III iii 7: “Were the vault of heaven to break and fall upon him”.

**118:** *Hamlet*, I v 176.

**119:** The proofs of *TBoA* (published December 2nd 1813) and of *The Giaour*, seventh edition (published December 1813).

**120:** *Perhaps* a reference to H., who is on the continent, and will be until February. B. has not had a letter from H. since June 4th 1813, and cannot know where he is.

**121:** “Let’s go, then – if we return, good – if we don’t, what does it matter?” (They don’t go.)

**122:** B. almost certainly did not hear jackals at Ephesus; but he’s told the story so often that he probably by now believes he did. He did hear frogs, however. See *HfH*, preface; *SoC* 1024-5n; and later, *CHP* IV 153 4-6 and *Don Juan* IX 27 2-3.

**123:** *Macbeth*, III iv 22.

**124:** William Windham (1750-1810), politician, scholar, and amateur of cock-fighting and boxing.

**125:** Note on Fitzpatrick.

**126:** *Romeo and Juliet*, III i 114. In fact, “aspire the clouds”. Windham died from a hip operation.

those who governed nations,—*he* regretted,—and dwelt much on that regret, that “he had not entirely devoted himself to literature and science!!!” His mind certainly would have carried him to eminence there, as elsewhere;—but I cannot comprehend what debility of that mind could suggest such a wish. I, who have heard him, cannot regret any thing but that I shall never hear him again. What! would he have been a plodder? a metaphysician?—perhaps a rhymers? a scribbler? Such an exchange must have been suggested by illness. But he is gone and Time “shall not look upon his like again.”<sup>127</sup>

I am tremendously in arrear with my letters,—except to \* \*,<sup>128</sup> and to her my thoughts overpower me:—my words never compass them. To Lady Melbourne I write with most pleasure—her answers, so sensible, so *tactique*—I never met with half her talent. If she had been a few years younger, what a fool she would have made of me, had she thought it worth her while,—and I should have lost a valuable and most agreeable *friend*. Mem.—a mistress never is nor can be a friend. While you agree, you are lovers; and, when it is over, any thing but friends.

I have not answered W[alter]. Scott’s last letter,<sup>129</sup>—but I will. I regret to hear from others, that he has lately been unfortunate in pecuniary involvements. He is undoubtedly the Monarch of Parnassus, and the most *English* of bards. I should place Rogers next in the living list (I value him more as the last of the *best* school)—Moore and Campbell both *third*—Southey and Wordsworth and Coleridge—the rest, ?? p????<sup>130</sup>— thus:—

W.SCOTT.

ROGERS.

MOORE.-CAMPBELL.

SOUTHEY.-WORDSWORTH.-COLERIDGE.

THE MANY.

There is a triangular Gradus ad Parnassum!—the names are too numerous for the base of the triangle. Poor Thurlow<sup>131</sup> has gone wild about the poetry of Queen Bess’s reign—*c’est dommage*. I have ranked the names upon my triangle more upon what I believe popular opinion, than any decided opinion of my own. For, to me, some of M \* \*e’s last *Erin* sparks—“As a beam o’er the face of the waters”—“When he who adores thee”—“Oh blame not”—and “Oh breathe not his name”—are worth all the Epics that ever were composed.<sup>132</sup>

\* \*<sup>133</sup> thinks the Quarterly will attack me next. Let them. I have been “peppered so highly” in my time, *both* ways, that it must be cayenne or aloes to make me taste. I can sincerely say, that I am not very much alive *now* to criticism. But—in tracing this—I rather believe that it proceeds from my not attaching that importance to authorship which many do, and which, when young, I did also. “One gets tired of every thing, my angel,” says Valmont.<sup>134</sup> The “angels” are the only things of which I am not a little sick—but I do think the preference of *writers* to *agents*—the mighty stir made about scribbling and scribes, by themselves and others—a sign of effeminacy, degeneracy, and weakness. Who would write, who had any thing better to do? “Action—action—action”—said Demosthenes: “Actions—actions,” I say,— and not writing,—least of all, rhyme. Look at the querulous and monotonous

127: *Hamlet*, I ii 188.

128: Perhaps Augusta.

129: Scott last wrote to B. on November 6th 1813.

130: “The mob”.

131: Edward Thurlow edited Sidney’s *Defence of Poetry*. B. parodied him.

132: All titles from Moore’s *Irish Melodies*. Compare BLJ III 193

133: Prothero guesses “Rogers”.

134: Valmont is the male protagonist of Laclos’ *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*. See Letter CXLI, where the line is written by the Marquise de Merteuil, the female protagonist. Perhaps B. could not imagine a woman saying it.

lives of the “genus ;”—except Cervantes, Tasso, Dante, Ariosto, Kleist (who were brave and active citizens), Æschylus, Sophocles, and some other of the antiques also—what a worthless, idle brood it is!

12, Mezza notte.

Just returned from dinner with Jackson (the Emperor of Pugilism) and another of the select, at Crib[b]’s, the champion’s. I drank more than I like, and have brought away some three bottles of very fair claret—for I have no headache. We had Tom \* \*<sup>135</sup> up after dinner;—very facetious, though somewhat prolix. He don’t like his situation—wants to fight again—pray Pollux (or Castor, if he was the *miller*)<sup>136</sup> he may! Tom has been a sailor—a coal-heaver—and some other genteel profession, before he took to the cestus. Tom has been in action at sea, and is now only three-and-thirty. A great man!<sup>137</sup> has a wife and a mistress, and conversations well—bating some sad omissions and misapplications of the aspirate. Tom is an old friend of mine; I have seen some of his best battles in my nonage. He is now a publican, and, I fear, a sinner;—for Mrs. \* \* is on alimony, and \* \*’s daughter lives with the champion. *This* \* \* told me,—Tom, having an opinion of my morals, passed her off as a legal spouse. Talking of her, he said, “she was the truest of women”—from which I immediately inferred she could *not* be his wife, and so it turned out.

These panegyrics don’t belong to matrimony;—for, if “true,” a man don’t think it necessary to say so; and if not, the less he says the better. \* \* \* \* is the only man except \* \* \* \*, I ever heard harangue upon his wife’s virtue;<sup>138</sup> and I listened to both with great credence and patience, and stuffed my handkerchief into my mouth, when I found yawning irresistible—By the by, I am yawning now—so, good night to thee.—? ? ? ????.<sup>139</sup>

Thursday, 26th November.

Awoke a little feverish, but no headache—no dreams neither, thanks to stupor! Two letters; one from \* \* \* \*,<sup>140</sup> the other from Lady Melbourne—both excellent in their respective styles. \* \* \* \*’s contained also a very pretty lyric on “concealed griefs;” if not her own, yet very like her. Why did she not say that the stanzas were, or were not, of her composition? I do not know whether to wish them *hers* or not. I have no great esteem for poetical persons, particularly women; they have so much of the “ideal” in *practics*, as well as *ethics*.

I have been thinking lately a good deal of Mary Duff ...<sup>141</sup>

\*\* ... How very odd that I should have been so utterly, devotedly fond of that girl, at an age when I could neither feel passion, nor know the meaning of the word. And the effect! My mother used always to rally me about this childish amour; and, at last, many years after, when I was sixteen, she told me one day, “Oh, Byron, I have had a letter from Edinburgh, from Miss Abercromby, and your old sweetheart Mary Duff is married to a Mr. Co<sup>o</sup>.” And what was my answer? I really cannot explain or account for my feelings at that moment; but they nearly threw me into convulsions, and alarmed my mother so much, that after I grew better, she generally avoided the subject—to *me*—and contented herself with telling it to all her acquaintance. Now, what could this be? I had never seen her since her mother’s faux-pas at Aberdeen had been the cause of her removal to her grandmother’s at Banff; we were both the merest children. I had and have been attached fifty times since that period; yet I recollect all we said to each other, all our caresses, her features, my restlessness, sleeplessness, my

**135:** Tom Cribb; as the passage implies that he is living with his own daughter, Moore must in 1832 have thought discretion the best approach. Cribb died in 1848.

**136:** “miller” – “aggressive fighter” (“one who mills”).

**137:** B. uses the phrase ironically, as Fielding does in *Jonathan Wild*. Compare *Don Juan* XI 19 1.

**138:** One of the \* \* \* \*s is James Wedderburn Webster.

**139:** Prothero and Marchand both change this to “? pa????” (“Byron”).

**140:** Unidentified.

**141:** At this point Moore (1832 p. 453) puts “&c. &c. &c. &c.” because he has used the passages (\*\*-\*\* and ¶-¶) already. He cuts down to “Lord Holland invited me ...”.

tormenting my mother's maid to write for me to her, which she at last did, to quiet me. Poor Nancy thought I was wild, and, as I could not write for myself, became my secretary. I remember, too, our walks, and the happiness of sitting by Mary, in the children's apartment, at their house not far from the Plainstones at Aberdeen, while her lesser sister Helen played with the doll, and we sat gravely making love, in our way.

How the deuce did all this occur so early? where could it originate? I certainly had no sexual ideas for years afterwards; and yet my misery, my love for that girl were so violent, that I sometimes doubt if I have ever been really attached since. Be that as it may, hearing of her marriage several years after was like a thunder-stroke—it nearly choked me—to the horror of my mother and the astonishment and almost incredulity of every body. And it is a phenomenon in my existence (for I was not eight years old) which has puzzled, and will puzzle me to the latest hour of it; and lately, I know not why, the *recollection* (*not* the attachment) has recurred as forcibly as ever. I wonder if she can have the least remembrance of it or me? or remember pitying her sister Helen for not having an admirer too? How very pretty is the perfect image of her in my memory—her brown, dark hair, and hazel eyes; her very dress! I should be quite grieved to see *her now*; the reality, however beautiful, would destroy, or at least confuse, the features of the lovely Peri which then existed in her, and still lives in my imagination, at the distance of more than sixteen years. I am now twenty-five and odd months. . . .

I think my mother told the circumstances (on my hearing of her marriage) to the Parkynses, and certainly to the Pigot family, and probably mentioned it in her answer to Miss A[bercromby]., who was well acquainted with my childish *penchant*, and had sent the news on purpose for *me*,—and thanks to her!

Next to the beginning, the conclusion has often occupied my reflections, in the way of investigation. That the facts are thus, others know as well as I, and my memory yet tells me so, in more than a whisper. But, the more I reflect, the more I am bewildered to assign any cause for this precocity of affection (from Moore I 18-19). \*\*

¶ In all other respects, I differed not at all from other children, being neither tall nor short, dull nor witty, of my age, but rather lively except in my sullen moods, and then I was always a Devil. They once (in one of my silent rages) wrenched a knife from me, which I had snatched from table at Mrs. B.'s dinner (I always dined earlier),<sup>142</sup> and applied to my breast;—but this was three or four years after, just before the late Lord B.'s decease.

My *ostensible* temper has certainly improved in later years; but I shudder, and must, to my latest hour, regret the consequence of it and my passions combined. One event—but no matter—there are others not much better to think of also—and to them I give the preference....

But I hate dwelling upon incidents. My temper is now under management—rarely loud, and *when* loud, never deadly. It is when silent, and I feel my forehead and my cheek *paling*, that I cannot control it; and then ..... but unless there is a woman (and not any or every woman) in the way, I have sunk into tolerable apathy (from Moore I 68). ¶

Lord Holland invited me to dinner to-day; but three days' dining would destroy me. So, without eating at all since yesterday, I went to my box at Covent-garden.

\* \* \* \* \*

Saw \* \* \* \*<sup>143</sup> looking very pretty, though quite a different style of beauty from the other two. She has the finest eyes in the world, out of which she pretends *not* to see, and the longest eyelashes I ever saw, since Leila's and Phannio's Moslem curtains of the light.<sup>144</sup> She has much beauty,—just enough,—but is, I think, *méchante*.

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**142:** Later, B. threw Annabella out of the dining-room, and Teresa Guiccioli could only dine with him by appointment. This shows that his distaste for watching women eat started early.

**143:** Unidentified. Marchand guesses Frances Wedderburn Webster's younger sister.

**144:** Leila is the heroine of *The Giaour*; but this reference is untraced.



\* \* \* \* \*

I have been pondering on the miseries of separation,<sup>145</sup> that—oh how seldom we see those we love! yet we live ages in moments, *when met*. The only thing that consoles me during absence is the reflection that no mental or personal estrangement, from ennui or disagreement, can take place; and when people meet hereafter, even though many changes may have taken place in the mean time, still, unless they are *tired* of each other, they are ready to reunite, and do not blame each other for the circumstances that severed them. \* \* \* \*

Saturday, 27 (I believe—or rather am in *doubt*, which is the ne plus ultra of mortal faith).

I have missed a day; and, as the Irishman said, or Joe Miller<sup>146</sup> says for him, “have gained a loss,” or *by* the loss. Every thing is settled for Holland, and nothing but a cough, or a caprice of my fellow-traveller’s, can stop us. Carriage ordered,—funds prepared,—and, probably, a gale of wind into the bargain. *N’importe*—I believe, with Clym o’ the Clow,<sup>147</sup> or Robin Hood, “By our Mary, (dear name!) thou art both Mother and May, I think it never was a man’s lot to die before his day.”<sup>148</sup> Heigh for Helvoetsluys, and so forth!

To-night I went with young Henry Fox<sup>149</sup> to see ‘Nourjahad’,<sup>150</sup> a drama, which the Morning Post hath laid to my charge, but of which I cannot even guess the author. I wonder what they will next inflict upon me. They cannot well sink below a Melodrama; but that is better than a Satire, (at least, a personal one), with which I stand truly arraigned, and in atonement of which I am resolved to bear silently all criticisms, abuses, and even praises for bad pantomimes never composed by me, without even a contradictory aspect. I suppose the root of this report is my loan to the manager of my Turkish drawings for his dresses, to which he was more welcome than to my name. I suppose the real author will soon own it, as it has succeeded; if not, Job be my model, and Lethe my beverage!

\* \* \* \* has received the portrait safe,<sup>151</sup> and, in answer, the only remark she makes upon it is, “indeed it is like”—and again, “indeed it is like.” \* \* \* With her the likeness “covered a multitude of sins;” for I happen to know that this portrait was not a flatterer, but dark and stern,—even black as the mood in which my mind was scorching last July, when I sate for it. All the others of me—like most portraits whatsoever—are, of course, more agreeable than nature.



Redde the E[dinburgh]. Review of Rogers.<sup>152</sup> He is ranked highly; but where he should be. There is a summary view of us all—*Moore* and *me* among the rest; and both (the *first* justly) praised—though, by implication (justly again) placed beneath our memorable friend. Mackintosh is the writer, and also of the critique on the Staël. His grand essay on Burke, I

**145:** B. is thinking of Augusta.

**146:** Joe Miller was a popular eighteenth century comedian, who wrote a successful jest-book.

**147:** Clym o’ the Clow unidentified. Anyone got any ideas?

**148:** Prothero quotes the *Ballad of Robin Hood*: “Ah, deere ladye, said Robin Hood, thou / That art both Mother and May, / I think it was never man’s destynye / To die before his day”.

**149:** Henry Fox was the son of Lord and Lady Holland. He, like B., was lame. He had an affair with Teresa Guiccioli in the late 1820s.

**150:** Full title *Illusion, or the Trances of Nourjahad*.

**151:** Marchand guesses that B. refers to his portrait by Holmes (Peach fig. 35). See illustration.

**152:** *Edinburgh Review*, October 1813.

hear, is for the next number. But I know nothing of the Edinburgh, or of any other Review, but from rumour; and I have long ceased—indeed, I could not, in justice, complain of any, even though I were to rate poetry, in general, and my rhymes in particular, more highly than I really do. To withdraw *myself* from *myself* (oh that cursed selfishness!) has ever been my sole, my entire, my sincere motive in scribbling at all; and publishing is also the continuance of the same object, by the action it affords to the mind, which else recoils upon itself. If I valued fame, I should flatter received opinions, which have gathered strength by time, and will yet wear longer than any living works to the contrary. But, for the soul of me, I cannot and will not give the lie to my own thoughts and doubts, come what may. If I am a fool, it is, at least, a doubting one; and I envy no one the certainty of his self-approved wisdom.

All are inclined to believe what they covet, from a lottery-ticket up to a passport to Paradise,—in which, from the description, I see nothing very tempting. My restlessness tells me I have something “within that passeth show.”<sup>153</sup> It is for Him, who made it, to prolong that spark of celestial fire which illuminates, yet burns, this frail tenement; but I see no such horror in a “dreamless sleep,”<sup>154</sup> and I have no conception of any existence which duration would not render tiresome. How else “fell the angels,”<sup>155</sup> even according to your creed? They were immortal, heavenly, and happy, as their apostate Abdiel<sup>156</sup> is now by his treachery. Time must decide; and eternity won’t be the less agreeable or more horrible because one did not expect it. In the mean time, I am grateful for some good, and tolerably patient under certain evils—grace à Dieu et mon bon tempérament.

Sunday, 28th.

Monday, 29th.

Tuesday, 30th.

Two days missed in my log-book;—hiatus *haud* deflendus.<sup>157</sup> They were as little worth recollection as the rest; and, luckily, laziness or society prevented me from *notching* them.

Sunday, I dined with the Lord Holland in St. James’s-square. Large party—among them Sir S[amuel]. Romilly and Lady R[omilly].—General Sir Somebody Bentham,<sup>158</sup> a man of science and talent, I am told—Horner<sup>159</sup>—*the* Horner, an Edinburgh Reviewer, an excellent speaker in the “Honourable House,” very pleasing, too, and gentlemanly in company, as far as I have seen—Sharpe—Philips of Lancashire<sup>160</sup>—Lord John Russell,<sup>161</sup> and others, “good men and true.”<sup>162</sup> Holland’s society is very good; you always see some one or other in it worth knowing. Stuffed myself with sturgeon, and exceeded in champagne and wine in general, but not to confusion of head. When I *do* dine, I gorge like an Arab or a Boa snake, on fish and vegetables, but no meat. I am always better, however, on my tea and biscuit than any other regimen, and even *that* sparingly.

Why does Lady H[olland]. always have that damned screen between the whole room and the fire? I, who bear cold no better than an antelope, and never yet found a sun quite *done* to my taste, was absolutely petrified, and could not even shiver. All the rest, too, looked as if they were just unpacked, like salmon from an ice-basket, and set down to table for that day

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153: *Hamlet*, I ii 85.

154: “Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep” is from Wordsworth’s *The Prelude* (which is not published yet). B. may paraphrase “To be or not to be” (*Hamlet*, III iii 66: “in that sleep of death what dreams may come”).

155: Perhaps an echo of *Macbeth*, IV iii 22: “Angels were bright still, though the brightest fell”.

156: See *Paradise Lost* V 896-7.

157: *hiatus haud deflendus* means roughly, “Either an accidental gap or a deliberate one”.

158: Sir Samuel Bentham, naval architect. Like his brother Jeremy, an advocate of reform.

159: Francis Horner, Scots advocate; co-founder of the *Edinburgh Review*.

160: George Phillips, future Whig MP for South Warwickshire.

161: Lord John Russell was to be the architect of the 1832 Reform Bill.

162: *Much Ado About Nothing*, III iii 1.

only. When she retired, I watched their looks as I dismissed the screen, and every cheek thawed, and every nose reddened with the anticipated glow.

Saturday, I went with Harry Fox to *Nourjahad*; and, I believe, convinced him, by incessant yawning, that it was not mine. I wish the precious author would own it, and release me from his fame. The dresses are pretty, but not in costume;—Mrs. Horne's,<sup>163</sup> all but the turban, and the want of a small dagger (if she is a Sultana), *perfect*. I never saw a Turkish woman with a turban in my life—nor did any one else. The Sultanas have a small poniard at the waist. The dialogue is drowsy—the action heavy—the scenery fine—the actors tolerable. I can't say much for their seraglio—Teresa, Phannio, or \* \* \* \*,<sup>164</sup> were worth them all.

Sunday, a very handsome note from Mackintosh, who is a rare instance of the union of very transcendent talent and great good-nature. To-day (Tuesday), a very pretty billet from M. la Baronne de Staël Holstein. She is pleased to be much pleased with my mention of her and her last work in my notes.<sup>165</sup> I spoke as I thought. Her works are my delight, and so is she herself, for—half an hour. I don't like her politics—at least, her *having changed* them; had she been *qualis ab incepto*,<sup>166</sup> it were nothing. But she is a woman by herself, and has done more than all the rest of them together, intellectually;—she ought to have been a man. She *flatters* me very prettily in her note;—but I *know* it. The reason that adulation is not displeasing is, that, though untrue, it shows one to be of consequence enough, in one way or other, to induce people to lie, to make us their friend:—that is their concern.

\* \* \* is, I hear, thriving on the repute of a *pun* (which was *mine* at Mackintosh's dinner some time back), on Ward, who was asking, "how much it would take to *re-whig* him?" I answered that, probably, "he must first, before he was *re-whigged*, be *re-warded*." This foolish quibble, before the Staël and Mackintosh and a number of conversationers, has been *mouthed* about, and at last settled on the head of \* \*, where long may it remain!

George<sup>167</sup> is returned from afloat to get a new ship. He looks thin, but better than I expected. I like George much more than most people like their heirs. He is a fine fellow, and every inch a sailor. I would do any thing, *but apostatize*, to get him on in his profession.

Lewis called. It is a good and good-humoured man, but pestilently prolix and paradoxical and *personal*. If he would but talk half, and reduce his visits to an hour, he would add to his popularity. As an author he is very good, and his vanity is *ouverte*, like Erskine's,<sup>168</sup> and yet not offending.

Yesterday, a very pretty letter from Annabella, which I answered. What an odd situation and friendship is ours!—without one spark of love on either side, and produced by circumstances which in general lead to coldness on one side, and aversion on the other.<sup>169</sup> She is a very superior woman, and very little spoiled, which is strange in an heiress—a girl of twenty—a peeress that is to be, in her own right—an only child, and a *savante*, who has always had her own way. She is a poetess—a mathematician—a metaphysician, and yet, withal, very kind, generous, and gentle, with very little pretension. Any other head would be turned with half her acquisitions, and a tenth of her advantages.

Wednesday, December 1st, 1813.

To-day responded to La Baronne de Staël Holstein, and sent to Leigh Hunt (an acquisition to my acquaintance—through Moore—of last summer)<sup>170</sup> a copy of the two Turkish Tales. Hunt is an extraordinary character, and not exactly of the present age. He reminds me more of

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**163:** Mrs Horne played the wife of Nourjahad at Drury Lane. B. had lent some Turkish drawings for the costumes; see BLJ III 175.

**164:** Again unidentified. Perhaps names from his destroyed comedy, or novel.

**165:** See Appendix I.

**166:** "Thus from the beginning". See *TVoJ*, Preface. It's not clear how de Staël's politics have changed.

**167:** George Byron, B.'s cousin, who inherited his title in 1824. He was a sailor.

**168:** Thomas, Lord Erskine, famous liberal advocate.

**169:** But which side is which? Sadly prophetic whichever the case.

**170:** Leigh Hunt was still in jail for libelling the Prince Regent. See BLJ III 188-9.

the Pym and Hampden times<sup>171</sup>—much talent, great independence of spirit, and an austere, yet not repulsive, aspect. If he goes on *qualis ab incepto*, I know few men who will deserve more praise or obtain it. I must go and see him again;—the rapid succession of adventure, since last summer, added to some serious uneasiness and business, have interrupted our acquaintance; but he is a man worth knowing; and though, for his own sake, I wish him out of prison, I like to study character in such situations. He has been unshaken, and will continue so. I don't think him deeply versed in life;—he is the bigot of virtue (not religion), and enamoured of the beauty of that “empty name,” as the last breath of Brutus pronounced, and every day proves it. He is, perhaps, a little opinionated, as all men who are the *centre* of *circles*, wide or narrow—the Sir Oracles, in whose name two or three are gathered together—must be, and as even Johnson was; but, withal, a valuable man, and less vain than success and even the consciousness of preferring “the right to the expedient” might excuse.

To-morrow there is a party of *purple* at the “blue” Miss \* \* \*’s.<sup>172</sup> Shall I go? um!—I don't much affect your blue-bottles;—but one ought to be civil. There will be, “I guess now” (as the Americans say),<sup>173</sup> the Staëls and Mackintoshes—good—the \* \* \*s and \* \* \*s—not so good—the \* \* \*s, &c., &c.—good for nothing. Perhaps that blue-winged Kashmirian butterfly of book-learning, Lady \* \* \* \*<sup>174</sup> will be there. I hope so; it is a pleasure to look upon that most beautiful of faces.

Wrote to H[odgson].—he has been telling that *I <— —>*.<sup>175</sup> I am sure, at least, I did not mention it, and I wish he had not. He is a good fellow, and I obliged myself ten times more by being of use than I did him,—and there's an end on't.

Baldwin<sup>176</sup> is boring me to present their King's Bench petition. I presented Cartwright's last year; and Stanhope<sup>177</sup> and I stood against the whole House, and mouthed it valiantly—and had some fun and a little abuse for our opposition. But “I am not i' th' vein”<sup>178</sup> for this business. Now, had \* \*<sup>179</sup> been here, she would have *made* me do it. *There* is a woman, who, amid all her fascination, always urged a man to usefulness or glory. Had she remained, she had been my tutelar genius.

Baldwin is very importunate—but, poor fellow, “I can't get out, I can't get out—said the starling.”<sup>180</sup> Ah, I am as bad as that dog Sterne, who preferred whining over “a dead ass to relieving a living mother”<sup>181</sup>—villain—hypocrite—slave—sycophant! but *I* am no better. Here I cannot stimulate myself to a speech for the sake of these unfortunates, and three words and half a smile of \* \*<sup>182</sup> had she been here to urge it (and urge it she infallibly would—at least she always pressed me on senatorial duties, and particularly in the cause of weakness), would have made me an advocate, if not an orator. Curse on Rochefoucault for being always right! In him a lie were virtue,—or, at least, a comfort to his readers.

George Byron has not called to-day; I hope he will be an admiral, and, perhaps, Lord Byron into the bargain. If he would but marry, I would engage never to marry, myself, or cut him out of the heirship. He would be happier, and I should like nephews better than sons.

**171:** B. was to transfer this sentimental epithet to Hunt's brother John when he became his publisher.

**172:** Prothero has “Berrys”.

**173:** Compare *TVoJ*, 59, 8. B. was convinced that Americans said “I guess” all the time.

**174:** Prothero has “Charlemont”.

**175:** Moore writes “Two or three words are here scratched out in the manuscript, but the import of the sentence evidently is, that Mr. Hodgson (to whom the passage refers) had been revealing to some friends the secret of Lord Byron's kindness to him”. B.'s erasures are often easy to see through.

**176:** W.J. Baldwin was in the debtors' prison, and wanted B. to petition the Lords about the plight of people there. See BLJ III 164-5.

**177:** Charles Stanhope, later Earl of Harrington. B. (and he) had presented Cartwright's petition on June 1st 1813.

**178:** *Richard III*, IV ii 120 and 122.

**179:** Lady Oxford. B.'s inability to take a responsible step without female bullying is characteristic.

**180:** Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey II, The Passport: The Hotel de Paris*. See *Don Juan*, IV 109, 4.

**181:** Sterne, op. cit., I, *The Dead Ass*. It is of course not “that dog” Sterne, but a character in Sterne. B. misremembers anyway: *I thought by the accent, it had been an apostrophe to his child; but 'twas to his ass, the very ass we had seen dead in the road ...*

**182:** Lady Oxford again.

I shall soon be six-and-twenty (January 22d, 1814). Is there any thing in the future that can possibly console us for not being always *twenty-five*?

*Oh Gioventu!*  
*Oh Primavera! gioventu dell' anno.*  
*Oh Gioventu! primavera della vita.*<sup>183</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

Sunday, December 5th.

Dallas's nephew (son to the American Attorney-general)<sup>184</sup> is arrived in this country, and tells Dallas that my rhymes are very popular in the United States. These are the first tidings that have ever sounded like *Fame* to my ears—to be redde on the banks of the Ohio! The greatest pleasure I ever derived, of this kind, was from an extract, in Cooke the actor's *Life*, from his *Journal*, stating that in the reading-room at Albany, near Washington, he perused English Bards and Scotch Reviewers. To be popular in a rising and far country has a kind of *posthumous feel*, very different from the ephemeral *éclat* and fêteing, buzzing and party-ing compliments of the well-dressed multitude. I can safely say that, during my *reign* in the spring of 1812, I regretted nothing but its duration of six weeks instead of a fortnight, and was heartily glad to resign.

Last night I supped with Lewis;—and, as usual, though I neither exceeded in solids nor fluids, have been half dead ever since. My stomach is entirely destroyed by long abstinence, and the rest will probably follow. Let it—I only wish the *pain* over. The “leap in the dark” is the least to be dreaded.

The Duke of \*<sup>185</sup> called. I have told them forty times that, except to half-a-dozen old and specified acquaintances, I am invisible. His Grace is a good, noble, ducal person; but I am content to think so at a distance, and so—I was not at home.

Galt<sup>186</sup> called.—Mem.—to ask some one to speak to Raymond<sup>187</sup> in favour of his play. We are old fellow-travellers, and, with all his eccentricities, he has much strong sense, experience of the world, and is, as far as I have seen, a good-natured philosophical fellow. I showed him Sligo's letter on the reports of the Turkish girl's *aventure* at Athens soon after it happened.<sup>188</sup> He and Lord Holland, Lewis, and Moore, and Rogers, and Lady Melbourne have seen it. Murray has a copy. I thought it had been *unknown*, and wish it were; but Sligo arrived only some days after, and the *rumours* are the subject of his letter. That I shall preserve,—*it is as well*. Lewis and Galt were both *horrified*; and L[ewis]. wondered I did not introduce the situation into “the *Giaour*”. He *may* wonder;—he might wonder more at that production's being written at all. But to describe the *feelings* of *that situation* were impossible—it is *icy* even to recollect them.

The *Bride of Abydos* was published on Thursday the second of December; but how it is liked or disliked, I know not. Whether it succeeds or not is no fault of the public, against whom I can have no complaint. But I am much more indebted to the tale than I can ever be to the most partial reader; as it wrung my thoughts from reality to imagination—from selfish regrets to vivid recollections—and recalled me to a country replete with the *brightest* and *darkest*, but always most *lively* colours of my memory. Sharpe called, but was not let in,—which I regret.

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**183:** “Oh Youth! / Oh Spring! the Youth of the Year. / Oh Youth! The Spring of Life.” Poem by Guarini.

**184:** Alexander James Dallas was U.S. District Attorney General for East Pennsylvania.

**185:** Unidentified.

**186:** John Galt, Scots merchant and writer. Did a life of B., and wrote tragedies. See BLJ III 196.

**187:** Raymond was “Stage Manager” at Drury Lane.

**188:** The Marquis of Sligo wrote B. a letter on August 31st 1813, giving his version of the “Greek Girl in a Sack” story which was said to lie behind *The Giaour*. See LJ II 257-8 and BLJ III 200.

Saw \* \*<sup>89</sup> yesterday. I have not kept my appointment at Middleton, which has not pleased him, perhaps; and my projected voyage with \* \*<sup>190</sup> will, perhaps, please him less. But I wish to keep well with both. They are instruments that don't do in concert; but, surely, their separate tones are very musical, and I won't give up either,

It is well if I don't jar between these great discords. At present I stand tolerably well with all, but I cannot adopt their *dislikes*;—so many *sets*. Holland's is the first;—every thing *distingué* is welcome there, and certainly the *ton* of his society is the best. Then there is M<sup>de</sup> de Staël's—there I never go, though I might, had I courted it. It is composed of the \* \*<sup>191</sup> and the \* \*<sup>192</sup> family, with a strange sprinkling,—orators, dandies, and all kinds of *Blue*, from the regular Grub-street uniform, down to the azure jacket of the *Littérateur*. To see \* \*<sup>193</sup> and \* \*<sup>194</sup> sitting together, at dinner, always reminds me of the grave, where all distinctions of friend and foe are levelled; and they—the Reviewer and Reviewée—the Rhinoceros and Elephant—the Mammoth and Megalonyx<sup>195</sup>—all will lie quietly together. They now *sit* together, as silent, but not so quiet, as if they were already immured.

\* \* \* \* \*

I did not go to the Berrys' the other night. The elder is a woman of much talent, and both are handsome, and must have been beautiful. To-night asked to Lord H[olland]. 's—shall I go? um!—perhaps.

Morning, two o'clock.

Went to Lord H.'s—party numerous—*milady* in perfect good humour and consequently *perfect*. No one more agreeable, or perhaps so much so, when she will. Asked for Wednesday to dine and meet the Staël—asked particularly, I believe, out of mischief to see the first interview after the *note*,<sup>196</sup> with which Corinne professes herself to be so much taken. I don't much like it; she always talks of *myself* or *herself*, and I am not (except in soliloquy, as now) much enamoured of either subject—especially one's works. What the devil shall I say about “De l'Allemagne”? I like it prodigiously; but unless I can twist my admiration into some fantastical expression, she won't believe me; and I know, by experience, I shall be overwhelmed with fine things about rhyme, &c. &c. The lover, Mr. \* \*<sup>197</sup> was there to-night, and C \* \*<sup>198</sup> said “it was the only proof *he* had seen of her good taste.” Monsieur L'Amant is remarkably handsome; but I don't think more so than her book.

C \* \* looks well,—seems pleased, and dressed to *sprucery*. A blue coat becomes him,—so does his new wig. He really looked as if Apollo had sent him a birthday suit, or a wedding-garment, and was witty and lively. He abused Corinne's<sup>199</sup> book, which I regret; because, firstly, he understands German, and is consequently a fair judge; and, secondly, he is *first-rate*, and, consequently, the best of judges. I reverence and admire him; but I won't give up my opinion—Why should I? I read *her* again and again, and there can be no affectation in this. I cannot be mistaken (except in taste) in a book I read and lay down, and take up again; and no book can be totally bad, which finds *one*, even *one* reader, who can say as much sincerely.

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189: Prothero conjectures “Rogers”.

190: Ward.

191: Unidentified.

192: Ibid.

193: Ibid.

194: Ibid.

195: Large sloth-like beast discovered via fossils in North America.

196: B.'s flattering note to *TBoA*, 179. See Appendix 1.

197: Madame de Staël's lover was Albert Jean Michel de Rocca. B. and H. meet him again in Switzerland in 1816. He had written a book, *Into the Peninsula with a French Hussar*.

198: Thomas Campbell.

199: Madame de Staël, named after her novel *Corinne* (1807).

C[ampbell]. talks of lecturing next spring; his last lectures were eminently successful. Moore thought of it, but gave it up,—I don't know why. \* \*<sup>200</sup> had been prating *dignity* to him, and such stuff; as if a man disgraced himself by instructing and pleasing at the same time.

Introduced to Marquis Buckingham<sup>201</sup>—saw Lord Gower<sup>202</sup>—he is going to Holland; Sir J[ames]. and Lady Mackintosh and Horner, G[eorge]. Lamb, with I know not how many (R[ichard]. Wellesley,<sup>203</sup> one—a clever man) grouped about the room. Little Henry Fox, a very fine boy, and very promising in mind and manner,—he went away to bed, before I had time to talk to him. I am sure I had rather hear him than all the *savans*.

Monday, Dec. 6th.

Murray tells me that C[roker]<sup>204</sup> asked him why the thing was called the *Bride* of Abydos? It is a cursed awkward question, being unanswerable. *She* is not a *bride*, only about to be one; but for, &c. &c. &c.

I don't wonder at his finding out the *Bull*; but the detection \* \* \* is too late to do any good. I was a great fool to make it, and am ashamed of not being an Irishman. \* \* \* \* \*

C——I last night seemed a little nettled at something or other, I know not what. We were standing in the ante-saloon, when Lord H[olland]. brought out of the other room a vessel of some composition similar to that which is used in Catholic churches, and, seeing us, he exclaimed, "Here is some *incense* for you." C——I answered—"Carry it to Lord Byron,—*he is used to it.*" \* \* \*

Now, this comes of "bearing no brother near the throne."<sup>205</sup> I, who have no throne, nor wish to have one *now*,—whatever I may have done,—am at perfect peace with all the poetical fraternity: or, at least, if I dislike any, it is not *poetically*, but *personally*. Surely the field of thought is infinite;—what does it signify who is before or behind in a race where there is no *goal*? The temple of Fame is like that of the Persians, the Universe;<sup>206</sup> our altar, the tops of mountains. I should be equally content with Mount Caucasus<sup>207</sup> or Mount Anything; and those who like it, may have Mount Blanc or Chimborazo, without my envy of their elevation.

I think I may *now* speak thus; for I have just published a poem,<sup>208</sup> and am quite ignorant whether it is *likely* to be *liked* or not. I have hitherto heard little in its commendation, and no one can *downright* abuse it to one's face, except in print. It can't be good, or I should not have stumbled over the threshold, and blundered in my very title. But I began it with my heart full of \* \* \*,<sup>209</sup> and my head of *orientalities* (I can't call them *isms*), and wrote on rapidly.

This journal is a relief. When I am tired—as I generally am—out comes this, and down goes every thing. But I can't read it over; and God knows what contradictions it may contain. If I am sincere with myself (but I fear one lies more to one's self than to any one else), every page should confute, refute, and utterly abjure its predecessor.

Another scribble from Martin Baldwin the petitioner; I have neither head nor nerves to present it. That confounded supper at Lewis's has spoiled my digestion and my philanthropy. I have no more charity than a cruet of vinegar. Would I were an ostrich, and dieted on fire irons,—or any thing that my gizzard could get the better of.

To-day saw W[ard]. His uncle is dying,<sup>210</sup> and W[ard]. don't much affect our Dutch determinations. I dine with him on Thursday, provided *l'oncle* is not dined upon, or

**200:** Unidentified.

**201:** The Marquis of Buckingham, formerly Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

**202:** Lord Granville Leveson-Gower ("Lewson-Gore") one time ambassador to Russia.

**203:** Richard Colley Wellesley, brother to Wellington; formerly Governor-General of India.

**204:** John Wilson Croker, reviewer for the *Quarterly*.

**205:** Pope, *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*, 198: *Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne.*

**206:** Compare *Manfred* III i 109-110, or *CHP* III stanza 91.

**207:** Where Prometheus was punished by Zeus.

**208:** *The Bride of Abydos*.

**209:** Augusta.

**210:** Ward's uncle was William Bosville, a lieutenant in the Coldstream Guards.

peremptorily bespoke by the posthumous epicures before that day. I wish he may recover—not for *our* dinner's sake, but to disappoint the undertaker, and the rascally reptiles that may well wait, since they *will* dine at last.

Gell<sup>211</sup> called—he of Troy—after I was out. Mem.—to return his visit. But my Memos. are the very land-marks of forgetfulness;—something like a light-house, with a ship wrecked under the nose of its lantern. I never look at a Mem. without seeing that I have remembered to forget. Mem.—I have forgotten to pay Pitt's taxes, and suppose I shall be surcharged. “An I do not turn rebel when thou art king”,<sup>212</sup>—oons! I believe my very biscuit is leavened with that impostor's imposts.

L<sup>y</sup> M<sup>e</sup> returns from Jersey's to-morrow;—I must call. A Mr. Thomson<sup>213</sup> has sent a song, which I must applaud. I hate annoying them with censure or silence;—and yet I hate *lettering*.

Saw Lord Glenbervie<sup>214</sup> and his Prospectus, at Murray's, of a new Treatise on Timber. Now here is a man more useful than all the historians and rhymers ever planted. For, by preserving our woods and forests, he furnishes materials for all the history of Britain worth reading, and all the odes worth nothing.

Redde a good deal, but desultorily. My head is crammed with the most useless lumber. It is odd that when I do read, I can only bear the chicken broth of—*any thing* but Novels. It is many a year since I looked into one, (though they are sometimes ordered, by way of experiment, but never taken) till I looked yesterday at the worst parts of the Monk.<sup>215</sup> These descriptions ought to have been written by Tiberius at Caprea—they are forced—the *philtered* ideas of a jaded voluptuary. It is to me inconceivable how they could have been composed by a man of only twenty—his age when he wrote them. They have no nature—all the sour cream of cantharides.<sup>216</sup> I should have suspected Buffon<sup>217</sup> of writing them on the death-bed of his detestable dotage. I had never redde this edition, and merely looked at them from curiosity and recollection of the noise they made, and the name they have left to Lewis. But they could do no harm, except \* \* \* \*.

Called this evening on my agent<sup>218</sup>—my business as usual. Our strange adventures are the only inheritances of our family that have not diminished.

I shall now smoke two cigars, and get me to bed. The cigars don't keep well here. They get as old as a *donna di quaranti anni*<sup>219</sup> in the sun of Africa. The Havannah are the best;—but neither are so pleasant as a hooka or chiboque. The Turkish tobacco is mild, and their horses entire—two things as they should be. I am so far obliged to this Journal, that it preserves me from verse,—at least from keeping it. I have just thrown a poem into the fire (which it has relighted to my great comfort), and have smoked out of my head the plan of another. I wish I could as easily get rid of thinking, or, at least, the confusion of thought.

Tuesday, December 7.

Went to bed, and slept dreamlessly, but not refreshingly. Awoke, and up an hour before being called; but dawdled three hours in dressing. When one subtracts from life infancy (which is vegetation),—sleep, eating, and swilling—buttoning and unbuttoning—how much remains of downright existence? The summer of a dormouse. \* \* \*

Redde the papers and *tea*-ed and soda-watered, and found out that the fire was badly lighted. L[ord]. Glenbervie wants me to go to Brighton—um!

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211: William Gell, classical topographer. He had written about Troy. See *EBSR* 1034.

212: Falstaff might say this in *Henry IV*; but doesn't.

213: J. Thomson is otherwise unknown. He had tried a Drury Lane Address; see *BLJ* III 121.

214: Baron Glenbervie, First Commissioner of Land Revenue and Woods and Forests.

215: Matthew Lewis's novel.

216: Dried beetle used either as a diuretic or aphrodisiac.

217: Respected eighteenth-century French botanist. I know nothing of his writings when senile.

218: John Hanson, B.'s trusted but untrustworthy solicitor and agent.

219: “Forty-year-old woman”.



This morning, a very pretty billet from the Staël<sup>220</sup> about meeting her at L[or]d. H[olland].’s to-morrow. She has written, I dare say, twenty such this morning to different people, all equally flattering to each. So much the better for her and those who believe all she wishes them, or they wish to believe. She has been pleased to be pleased with my slight eulogy in the note annexed to “The Bride”. This is to be accounted for in several ways,—firstly, all women like all, or any, praise; secondly, this was unexpected, because I have never courted her; and, thirdly, as Scrub<sup>221</sup> says, those who have been all their lives regularly praised, by regular critics, like a little variety, and are glad when any one goes out of his way to say a civil thing; and, fourthly, she is a very good-natured creature, which is the best reason, after all, and, perhaps, the only one.

A knock—knocks single and double. Bland<sup>222</sup> called. He says Dutch society (he has been in Holland) is second-hand French; but the women are like women every where else. This is a bore: I should like to see them a little *unlike*; but that can’t be expected.

Went out—came home—this, that, and the other—and “all is vanity, saith the preacher,”<sup>223</sup> and so say I, as part of his congregation. Talking of vanity, whose praise do I prefer? Why, Mrs. Inchbald’s,<sup>224</sup> and that of the Americans. The first, because her “Simple Story” and “Nature and Art” are, to me, *true* to their *titles*; and, consequently, her short note to Rogers about “The Giaour” delighted me more than any thing, except the Edinburgh Review. I like the Americans, because *I* happened to be in *Asia*, while the English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers were redde in *America*. If I could have had a speech against the *Slave Trade in Africa*, and an epitaph on a dog in *Europe* (i.e. in the Morning Post), my *vertex sublimis*<sup>225</sup> would certainly have displaced stars enough to overthrow the Newtonian system.

Friday, December 10th, 1813.

I am *ennuyé* beyond my usual tense of that yawning verb, which I am always conjugating; and I don’t find that society much mends the matter. I am too lazy to shoot myself—and it would annoy Augusta, and perhaps \* \* \*; but it would be a good thing for George, on the other side, and no bad one for me; but I won’t be tempted.

I have had the kindest letter from M[\* \*]e.<sup>226</sup> I do think that man is the best-hearted, the only *hearted* being I ever encountered; and, then, his talents are equal to his feelings.

Dined on Wednesday at Lord H[olland].’s—the Staffords, Staëls, Cowpers, Ossulstones, Melbournes, Mackintoshes, &c. &c.—and was introduced to the Marquis and Marchioness of Stafford,—an unexpected event. My quarrel with Lord Carlisle (their or his brother-in-law) having rendered it improper, I suppose, brought it about. But, if it was to happen at all, I wonder it did not occur before. She is handsome, and must have been beautiful—and her manners are princessly. \* \* \*

The Staël was at the other end of the table, and less loquacious than heretofore. We are now very good friends; though she asked Lady Melbourne whether I had really any *bonhomme*. She might as well have asked that question before she told C[aroline]. L[amb].<sup>227</sup> “c’est un demon.” True enough, but rather premature, for *she* could not have found it out, and so—she wants me to dine there next Sunday.

Murray prospers, as far as circulation. For my part, I adhere (in liking) to my Fragment.<sup>228</sup> It is no wonder that I wrote one—my mind is a fragment.

220: This *billet* seems not to have survived. See Appendix 1 for those who have.

221: In Farquhar’s *The Beaux’ Stratagem*. See *TVoJ*, Preface.

222: Bland unidentified.

223: Ecclesiastes 1, 2.

224: Elizabeth Inchbald, actress, novelist, playwright, and anthologist. Her praise to Rogers of *The Giaour* seems not to have survived.

225: Virgil, Georgics I 242: *vertex nobis semper sublimis*: “One pole is ever high above us”. Also Hor., Od. I i 36: *sublimi feriam sidera vertice*: “I shall touch the stars with my exalted head”.

226: “M[\* \*]e” is probably Moore. No letters to Byron from Moore survive from the latter part of 1813.

227: May be Charlotte Leveson, daughter of the Duke of Portland. But Caroline Lamb knew de Staël.

228: *The Giaour*.

Saw Lord Gower, Tierney, &c. in the square. Took leave of Lord G[ower], who is going to Holland and Germany. He tells me, that he carries with him a parcel of “Harolds” and “Giauors”, &c. for the readers of Berlin, who, it seems, read English, and have taken a caprice for mine. Um!—have I been *German* all this time, when I thought myself *oriental*? \* \* \*

Lent Tierney<sup>229</sup> my box for to-morrow; and received a new Comedy sent by Lady C. A.<sup>230</sup>—but *not hers*. I must read it, and endeavour not to displease the author. I hate annoying them with cavil; but a comedy I take to be the most difficult of compositions, more so than tragedy.

G[al]t says there is a coincidence between the first part of “The Bride” and some story of his—whether published or not, I know not, never having seen it. He is almost the last person on whom any one would commit literary larceny, and I am not conscious of any *witting* thefts on any of the *genus*. As to originality, all pretensions are ludicrous,—“there is nothing new under the sun.”<sup>231</sup>

Went last night to the play. \* \* \* \* Invited out to a party, but did not go;—right. Refused to go to Lady \* \* \*’s on Monday;—right again. If I must fritter away my life, I would rather do it alone. I was much tempted;—C \* \* \* looked so Turkish with her red turban, and her regular, dark, and clear features. Not that *she* and *I* ever were, or could be, any thing; but I love any aspect that reminds me of the “children of the sun.”

To dine to-day with Rogers and Sharpe, for which I have some appetite, not having tasted food for the preceding forty-eight hours. I wish I could leave off eating altogether.

Saturday, December 11.

Sunday, December 12.

By G—t’s answer, I find it is some story in *real life*, and not any work with which my late composition coincides. It is still more singular, for mine is drawn from *existence* also.

I have sent an excuse to M[adame]. de Staël. I do not feel sociable enough for dinner to-day;—and I will not go to Sheridan’s on Wednesday. Not that I do not admire and prefer his unequalled conversation; but—that “*but*” must only be intelligible to thoughts I cannot write. Sheridan was in good talk at Rogers’s the other night, but I only stayed till *nine*. All the world are to be at the Staël’s to-night, and I am not sorry to escape any part of it. I only go out to get me a fresh appetite for being alone. Went out—did not go to the Staël’s, but to L[or]d. Holland’s. Party numerous—conversation general. Stayed late—made a blunder—got over it—came home and went to bed, not having eaten. Rather empty, but *fresco*, which is the great point with me.

Monday, December 13, 1813.

Called at three places—read, and got ready to leave town to-morrow. Murray has had a letter from his brother Bibliopole of Edinburgh, who says, “he is lucky in having such a *poet*”—something as if one was a pack-horse, or “ass, or any thing that is his:”<sup>232</sup> or, like Mrs. Packwood, who replied to some inquiry after the Odes on Razors,—“Laws, sir, we keeps a Poet.”<sup>233</sup> The same illustrious Edinburgh bookseller once sent an order for books, poesy, and cookery,—with this agreeable postscript—“The *Harold* and *Cookery*<sup>234</sup> are much wanted.” Such is fame, and, after all, quite as good as any other “life in others’ breath.” “’Tis much the same to divide purchasers with Hannah Glasse<sup>235</sup> or Hannah More.<sup>236</sup>

229: George Tierney, prominent Whig politician.

230: Marchand suggests Lady Catherine Annesley, sister to Frances Wedderburn Webster.

231: *Ecclesiastes*, 1, 9: “... there is no new thing under the sun”.

232: The seventh commandment: *Thou shalt not covet* ... (Exodus 20, 17).

233: Packwood was a Soho razor-strop maker who employed a poet to write his advertisements.

234: Mrs Rundell’s *Domestic Cookery*. Mrs Rundell was, like B., one of Murray’s best-selling authors.

235: Hannah Glasse wrote *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* (1755).

236: Hannah More was author of improving novels, including *Cæleb’s Wife* (see *Don Juan* I, 16, 4).

Some editor of some magazine has *announced* to Murray his intention of abusing the thing “*without reading it.*” So much the better; if he redde it first, he would abuse it more.

Allen (Lord Holland’s Allen<sup>237</sup>—the best informed and one of the ablest men I know—a perfect Magliabecchi<sup>238</sup>—a devourer, a Helluo<sup>239</sup> of books, and an observer of men) has lent me a quantity of Burns’s unpublished, and never-to-be published, Letters. They are full of oaths and obscene songs. What an antithetical mind!—tenderness, roughness—delicacy, coarseness—sentiment, sensuality—soaring and grovelling, dirt and deity—all mixed up in that one compound of inspired clay!

It seems strange; a true voluptuary will never abandon his mind to the grossness of reality. It is by exalting the earthly, the material, the *physique* of our pleasures, by veiling these ideas, by forgetting them altogether, or, at least, never naming them hardly to one’s self, that we alone can prevent them from disgusting.

\* \* \* \* \*

December 14, 15, 16.

Much done, but nothing to record. It is quite enough to set down my thoughts,—my actions will rarely bear retrospection.

December 17, 18.

Lord Holland told me a curious piece of sentimentality in Sheridan. The other night we were all delivering our respective and various opinions on him and other *hommes marquans*, and mine was this:—“Whatever Sheridan has done or chosen to do has been, *par excellence*, always the *best* of its kind. He has written the *best* comedy (School for Scandal), the *best* drama (in my mind, far before that St. Giles’s lampoon, the Beggar’s Opera), the best farce (the Critic—it is only too good for a farce), and the best Address (Monologue on Garrick), and, to crown all, delivered the very best Oration (the famous Begum Speech) ever conceived or heard in this country.” Somebody told S[heridan]. this the next day, and on hearing it he burst into tears!

Poor Brinsley! if they were tears of pleasure, I would rather have said these few, but most sincere, words than have written the Iliad or made his own celebrated Philippic. Nay, his own comedy never gratified me more than to hear that he had derived a moment’s gratification from any praise of mine, humble as it must appear to “my elders and my betters.”

Went to my box at Covent-garden to-night; and my delicacy felt a little shocked at seeing S \* \* \*’s mistress (who, to my certain knowledge, was actually educated, from her birth for her profession) sitting with her mother, “a three-piled b—d, b—d-Major to the army,” in a private box opposite. I felt rather indignant; but, casting my eyes round the house, in the next box to me, and the next, and the next, were the most distinguished old and young Babylonians of quality;—so I burst out a laughing. It was really odd; Lady \* \* *divorced*—Lady \* \* and her daughter, Lady \* \*, both *divorceable*—Mrs. \* \*, in the next the *like*, and still nearer \* \* \* \* \*! What an assemblage to *me*, who know all their histories.<sup>240</sup> It was as if the house had been divided between your public and your *understood* courtesans;—but the Intriguantes much outnumbered the regular mercenaries. On the other side were only Pauline and *her* mother, and, next box to her, three of inferior note. Now, where lay the difference between *her* and *mamma*, and Lady \* \* and daughter? except that the two last may enter Carleton and any *other house*, and the two first are limited to the opera and b— house. How I do delight in observing life as it really is!—and myself, after all, the worst of any. But no matter—I must avoid egotism, which, just now, would be no vanity.

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237: John Allen was the Hollands’ librarian, and a radical. He wrote for the *Edinburgh Review*.

238: Antonio Magliabecchi was Librarian to the Grand Duke of Tuscany. A virtuoso bibliophile.

239: A helluo is a gormandiser or glutton (Latin).

240: Moore’s note says “These names are all left blank in the original”.

I have lately written a wild, rambling, unfinished rhapsody, called "The Devil's Drive", the notion of which I took from Porson's "Devil's Walk".<sup>241</sup>

Redde some Italian, and wrote two Sonnets on \* \* \*.<sup>242</sup> I never wrote but one sonnet before, and that was not in earnest, and many years ago, as an exercise—and I will never write another.<sup>243</sup> They are the most puling, petrifying, stupidly platonic compositions. I detest the Petrarch so much, that I would not be the man even to have obtained his Laura, which the metaphysical, whining dotard never could.<sup>244</sup>

January 16, 1814.

\* \* \* \* \*<sup>245</sup>

To-morrow I leave town for a few days. I saw Lewis to-day, who is just returned from Oatlands,<sup>246</sup> where he has been squabbling with Mad[ame]. de Staël about himself, Clarissa Harlowe, Mackintosh, and me. My homage has never been paid in that quarter, or we would have agreed still worse. I don't talk—I can't flatter, and won't listen, except to a pretty or a foolish woman. She bored Lewis with praises of himself till he sickened—found out that Clarissa was perfection, and Mackintosh the first man in England. There I agree, at least *one* of the first—but Lewis did not. As to Clarissa, I leave to those who can read it to judge and dispute. I could not do the one, and am, consequently, not qualified for the other. She told Lewis wisely, he being my friend, that I was affected, in the first place; and that, in the next place, I committed the heinous offence of sitting at dinner with my *eyes* shut, or half shut. \* \* \* I wonder if I really have this trick. I must cure myself of it, if true. One insensibly acquires awkward habits, which should be broken in time. If this is one, I wish I had been told of it before. It would not so much signify if one was always to be checkmated by a plain woman, but one may as well see some of one's neighbours, as well as the plate upon the table.

I should like, of all things, to have heard the Amabæan<sup>247</sup> eclogue between her and Lewis—both obstinate, clever, odd, garrulous, and shrill. In fact, one could have heard nothing else. But they fell out, alas!—and now they will never quarrel again. Could not one reconcile them for the "nonce?" Poor Corinne—she will find that some of her fine sayings won't suit our fine ladies and gentlemen.

I am getting rather into admiration of \* \*,<sup>248</sup> the youngest sister of \* \*.<sup>249</sup> A wife would be my salvation. I am sure the wives of my acquaintances have hitherto done me little good. \* \* is beautiful, but very young, and, I think, a fool. But I have not seen enough to judge; besides, I hate an *esprit* in petticoats. That she won't love me is very probable, nor shall I love her. But, on my system, and the modern system in general, that don't signify. The business (if it came to business) would probably be arranged between papa and me. She would have her own way; I am good-humoured to women, and docile,<sup>250</sup> and, if I did not fall in love with her, which I should try to prevent, we should be a very comfortable couple. As to conduct, *that* she must look to. \* \* \* \* \* But *if* I love, I shall be jealous;—and for that reason I will not be in love. Though, after all, I doubt my temper, and fear I should not be so patient as becomes the *bienséance* of a married man in my station. \* \* \* \* \* Divorce ruins the poor *femme*, and damages are a paltry compensation. I do fear my temper would lead me into some of our

241: B. did not publish *The Devil's Drive*. Moore appends some of its verses.

242: Marchand says that these were the "Ginevra" sonnets to Frances Wedderburn Webster.

243: In fact he wrote several, including the ones on Chillon and the Swiss notables.

244: Moore notes, "He learned to think more reverently of 'The Petrarch' afterwards"; but see for example *Don Juan* V, 1, 7-8.

245: Moore places these asterisks below the date, indicating that there is a large internal cut at the start of the entry for January 16th. Prothero has no asterisks; Marchand places them above the date. January 16th is one possible date for B.'s finishing correcting the proofs to *The Corsair*.

246: The Duke of York's estate in Surrey.

247: "Amabæan" undefined.

248: Lady Catherine Annesley.

249: Frances Wedderburn Webster.

250: Not in the case of Annabella Milbanke.

oriental tricks of vengeance, or, at any rate, into a summary appeal to the court of twelve paces. So “I’ll none on’t,” but e’en remain single and solitary;—though I should like to have somebody now and then to yawn with one.<sup>251</sup>

W[ard], and, after him, \* \*, has stolen one of my buffooneries about Mde. de Staël’s Metaphysics and the Fog, and passed it, by speech and letter, as their own. As Gibbet says, “they are the most of a gentleman of any on the road.”<sup>252</sup> W[ard]. is in sad enmity with the Whigs about this Review of Fox (if he *did* review him);<sup>253</sup>—all the epigrammatists and essayists are at him. I hate *odds*, and wish he may beat them. As for me, by the blessing of indifference, I have simplified my politics into an utter detestation of all existing governments; and, as it is the shortest and most agreeable and summary feeling imaginable, the first moment of an universal republic would convert me into an advocate for single and uncontradicted despotism. The fact is, riches are power, and poverty is slavery, all over the earth, and one sort of establishment is no better nor worse for a *people* than another. I shall adhere to my party, because it would not be honourable to act otherwise; but, as to *opinions*, I don’t think politics *worth* an *opinion*. *Conduct* is another thing;—if you begin with a party, go on with them. I have no consistency, except in politics; and *that* probably arises from my indifference on the subject altogether.

[Moore breaks off the Journal at this point (p. 475) and resumes it some pages later (p. 498). In the gap, starting the day after the last entry, Byron took Augusta and her children to Newstead for Christmas.]

February 18.

Better than a month since I last journalized:—most of it out of London and at Notts., but a busy one and a pleasant, at least three weeks of it. On my return, I find all the newspapers in hysterics, and town in an uproar, on the avowal and republication of two stanzas on Princess Charlotte’s weeping at Regency’s speech to Lauderdale in 1812.<sup>254</sup> They are daily at it still;—some of the abuse good, all of it hearty. They talk of a motion in our House upon it—be it so.

Got up—redde the Morning Post—containing the battle of Buonaparte,<sup>255</sup> the destruction of the Custom-house,<sup>256</sup> and a paragraph on me as long as my pedigree, and vituperative, as usual. \* \* \*

Hobhouse is returned to England.<sup>257</sup> He is my best friend, the most lively, and a man of the most sterling talents extant.

“The Corsair” has been conceived, written, published, &c. since I last took up this Journal. They tell me it has great success;<sup>258</sup>—it was written *con amore*, and much from *existence*. Murray is satisfied with its progress; and if the public are equally so with the perusal, there’s an end of the matter.

Nine o’clock.

Been to Hanson’s on business. Saw Rogers, and had a note from Lady Melbourne, who says, it is said that I am “much out of spirits.” I wonder if I really am or not? I have certainly

251: On the day following this B. takes Augusta to Newstead.

252: Gibbet, like Scrub, is from Farquhar’s *The Beaux’ Stratagem*.

253: Ward had written a review in the June 1813 *Quarterly* which contained some criticisms of Fox.

254: B.’s *Lines to a Lady Weeping* (“Weep, Daughter of a Royal Line”) was reprinted in early February in the second edition of *The Corsair*, and was at once attacked by the *Morning Post* and *Courier*. See BLJ IV 51.

255: On February 11th Bonaparte had defeated Blücher at Champaubert; see letter to Annabella, BLJ IV 60.

256: The Custom-house burnt down on February 12th; see BLJ IV 60 and 62.

257: H. returned on February 5th 1814, having been away since May 27th 1813. He had traversed Europe from Sweden to Croatia, often near the war-zone. On February 10th 1814 he records in his diary, “In the evening I went to the play at Covent Garden, which was overflowing. There I saw and joined my dearest Byron in a private box. It is long since I have been so happy. I came home with him and sat till near four in the morning. He showed me several original letters of Robert Burns ...”

258: B. understates. *The Corsair* sold ten thousand copies on its first day of sale.

enough of “that perilous stuff which weighs upon the heart,”<sup>259</sup> and it is better they should believe it to be the result of these attacks than of the real cause; but—ay, ay, always *but*, to the end of the chapter.

Hobhouse has told me ten thousand anecdotes of Napoleon, all good and true. My friend H. is the most entertaining of companions, and a fine fellow to boot.

Redde a little—wrote notes and letters, and am alone, which Locke says is bad company. “Be not solitary, be not idle.”<sup>260</sup>—Um!—the idleness is troublesome; but I can’t see so much to regret in the solitude. The more I see of men, the less I like them. If I could but say so of women too, all would be well. Why can’t I? I am now six-and-twenty; my passions have had enough to cool them; my affections more than enough to wither them,—and yet—and yet—always *yet* and *but*—“Excellent well, you are a fishmonger—get thee to a nunnery.”—“They fool me to the top of my bent.”<sup>261</sup>

Midnight.

Began a letter, which I threw into the fire. Redde—but to little purpose. Did not visit Hobhouse, as I promised and ought. No matter, the loss is mine. Smoked cigars.

Napoleon!—this week will decide his fate. All seems against him; but I believe and hope he will win—at least, beat back the Invaders. What right have we to prescribe sovereigns to France? Oh for a Republic! “Brutus, thou sleepest.”<sup>262</sup> Hobhouse abounds in continental anecdotes of this extraordinary man; all in favour of his intellect and courage, but against his *bonhommie*. No wonder;—how should he, who knows mankind well, do other than despise and abhor them?

The greater the equality, the more impartially evil is distributed, and becomes lighter by the division among so many—therefore, a Republic!

More notes from Mad. de \* \* unanswered<sup>263</sup>—and so they shall remain. I admire her abilities, but really her society is overwhelming—an avalanche that buries one in glittering nonsense—all snow and sophistry.

Shall I go to Mackintosh’s on Tuesday? um!—I did not go to Marquis Lansdowne’s, nor to Miss Berry’s, though both are pleasant. So is Sir James’s,—but I don’t know—I believe one is not the better for parties; at least, unless some *regnante* is there.

I wonder how the deuce any body could make such a world; for what purpose dandies, for instance, were ordained—and kings—and fellows of colleges—and women of “a certain age”<sup>264</sup>—and many men of any age—and myself, most of all!

“Divesne prisco et natus ab Inacho  
 Nil interest, an pauper et infimâ  
 De gente, sub dio moreris,  
 Victima nil miserantis Orci  
 \* \* \* \*  
 Omnes eodem cogimur.”<sup>265</sup>

Is there any thing beyond?—*who* knows? *He* that can’t tell. Who tells that there *is*? He who don’t know. And when shall he know? perhaps, when he don’t expect, and generally

**259:** *Macbeth*, V iii 45. Refers to guilt.

**260:** Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, last paragraph but one, before Latin quotation.

**261:** *Hamlet*, II ii 173; II i 121 (with repetitions); and III ii 374.

**262:** *Julius Caesar*, II i 46 and 48.

**263:** See Appendix 1.

**264:** Compare *Beppo*, 22, 1-3.

**265:** Hor., Od. II iii 21-5: “Whether you are rich and sprung from old Inachus, or live beneath Heaven’s canopy, poor and of low birth, it makes no difference: you are Orcus’ victim. / We are all being gathered into the same fold”.

when he don't wish it.<sup>266</sup> In this last respect, however, all are not alike: it depends a good deal upon education,—something upon nerves and habits—but most upon digestion.

Saturday, Feb. 19th.

Just returned from seeing Kean<sup>267</sup> in Richard.<sup>268</sup> By Jove, he is a soul! Life—nature—truth—without exaggeration or diminution. Kemble's<sup>269</sup> Hamlet is perfect;—but Hamlet is not Nature. Richard is a man; and Kean is Richard.<sup>270</sup> Now to my own concerns.

\* \* \* \* \*

Saturday, Feb. 19th.

Went to Waite's.<sup>271</sup> Teeth are all right and white; but he says that I grind them in my sleep and chip the edges. That same sleep is no friend of mine, though I court him sometimes for half the 24.

February 20th.

Got up and tore out two leaves of this Journal—I don't know why. Hodgson just called and gone. He has much *bonhommie* with his other good qualities, and more talent than he has yet had credit for beyond his circle.

An invitation to dine at Holland-house to meet Kean. He is worth meeting, and I hope, by getting into good society, he will be prevented from falling like Cooke.<sup>272</sup> He is greater now on the stage, and off he should never be less. There is a stupid and underrating criticism upon him in one of the newspapers. I thought that, last night, though great, he rather under-acted more than the first time. This may be the effect of these cavils; but I hope he has more sense than to mind them. He cannot expect to maintain his present eminence, or to advance still higher, without the envy of his green-room fellows, and the nibbling of their admirers. But, if he don't beat them all, why then—merit hath no purchase in “these coster-monger days.”<sup>273</sup>

I wish that I had a talent for the drama; I would write a tragedy *now*.<sup>274</sup> But no,—it is gone. Hodgson talks of one,—he will do it well;—and I think M[oore] should try. He has wonderful powers, and much variety; besides, he has lived and felt. To write so as to bring home to the heart, the heart must have been tried,—but, perhaps, ceased to be so. While you are under the influence of passions, you only feel, but cannot describe them,—any more than, when in action, you could turn round and tell the story to your next neighbour! When all is over,—all, all, and irrevocable,—trust to memory—she is then but too faithful.

Went out, and answered some letters, yawned now and then,—and redde the Robbers.<sup>275</sup> Fine,—but Fiesco<sup>276</sup> is better; and Alfieri[,]<sup>277</sup> and Monti's *Aristodemo*<sup>278</sup> *best*. They are more equal than the Tedeschi dramatists.

Answered—or rather acknowledged—the receipt of young Reynolds's poem, *Safie*.<sup>279</sup> The lad is clever, but much of his thoughts are borrowed,—*whence*, the Reviewers may find

**266:** Inspired by Falstaff at *Henry IV I*, V i, final speech – “Who hath it? – he that died o' Wednesday”, and so on.

**267:** The great actor Edmund Kean.

**268:** Richard III. Kean had opened as him on February 12th.

**269:** John Philip Kemble was the leading actor of the previous generation. He was Sarah Siddons' brother, and very slow, formal and statuesque, a tradition which Kean overturned.

**270:** B. may mean that Hamlet is “acting all the time”; but the same is true of Richard III.

**271:** Waite was a prominent London dentist. B. used his tooth-powder.

**272:** George Frederick Cooke was an actor of the previous generation, who hit the bottle (which Kean also did, despite B.'s aspiration for him here).

**273:** *Henry IV II*, i 2 160: in fact, “these costermongers' times”.

**274:** B. writes several tragedies before his career ends.

**275:** Schiller's *Die Räuber* (1782).

**276:** Schiller's *Fiesco* (1783).

**277:** Comma added by Prothero, otherwise it looks as if there are two *Aristodemo* tragedies.

**278:** *Aristodemo* by Vincenzo Monti (1786). B. and H. see it at Venice on November 29th 1816. H. writes in his diary that it is “no drama”.

out: I hate discouraging a young one; and I think;—though wild and more oriental than he would be, had he seen the scenes where he has placed his tale,—that he has much talent, and, certainly, fire enough.

Received a very singular epistle;<sup>280</sup> and the mode of its conveyance, through Lord H[olland].’s hands, as curious as the letter itself. But it was gratifying and pretty.

Sunday, Feb. 27th.

Here I am, alone, instead of dining at Lord H[olland].’s, where I was asked,—but not inclined to go any where. Hobhouse says I am growing a *loup garou*,—a solitary hobgoblin.<sup>281</sup> True;—“I am myself alone.”<sup>282</sup> The last week has been passed in reading—seeing plays—now and then, visitors—sometimes yawning and sometimes sighing, but no writing,—save of letters. If I could always read, I should never feel the want of society. Do I regret it?—um!—“Man delights not me,”<sup>283</sup> and only one woman—at a time.

There is something to me very softening in the presence of a woman,—some strange influence, even if one is not in love with them—which I cannot at all account for, having no very high opinion of the sex. But yet,—I always feel in better humour with myself and every thing else, if there is a woman within ken. Even Mrs. Mule, my fire-lighter,—the most ancient and withered of her kind,<sup>284</sup>—and (except to myself) not the best-tempered—always makes me laugh,—no difficult task when I am “i’ the vein.”<sup>285</sup>

Heigho! I would I were in mine island!—I am not well and yet I look in good health. At times, I fear, “I am not in my perfect mind;”<sup>286</sup>—and yet my heart and head have stood many a crash, and what should ail them now? They prey upon themselves, and I am sick—sick—“Prithee, undo this button—why should a cat, a rat, a dog have life—and *thou* no life at all?”<sup>287</sup> Six-and-twenty years, as they call them,—why, I might and should have been a Pasha by this time. “I ’gin to be a-weary of the sun.”<sup>288</sup>

Buonaparte is not yet beaten; but has rebutted Blucher, and repiques S[ch]wartzenburg.<sup>289</sup> This it is to have a head. If he again wins, “væ victis!”<sup>290</sup>

Sunday, March 6th.

On Tuesday last dined with Rogers,—Mad<sup>e</sup>. de Staël, Mackintosh, Sheridan, Erskine, and Payne Knight,<sup>291</sup> Lady Donegall and Miss R[andall].<sup>292</sup> there. Sheridan told a very good story of himself and M[adam]e de Recamier’s<sup>293</sup> handkerchief; Erskine a few stories of himself only. *She* is going to write a big book about England, she says;—I believe her. Asked by her how I liked Miss \* \*’s thing, called \* \*,<sup>294</sup> and answered (very sincerely) that I thought it very bad for *her*, and worse than any of the others. Afterwards thought it possible Lady Donegal, being Irish, might be a Patroness of \* \*,<sup>295</sup> and was rather sorry for my opinion, as I hate putting people into fusses, either with themselves or their favourites; it looks as if one did it

279: *The Eden of imagination. Safie. The Naiad* (1814) by Keats’ friend John Hamilton Reynolds. See BLJ IV 68.

280: Epistle unidentified. B. may answer it on February 14th: see BLJ IV 58.

281: In fact, “a wolf that prowls at night”.

282: *Henry VI III*, V iv 83; the line is said by Gloucester, the future Richard III.

283: *Hamlet*, II ii 307.

284: See Appendix 2.

285: *Richard III* IV ii 120 and 122 (again).

286: *King Lear*, IV vii 63.

287: *Ibid.*, V iii 309 and 306-7; B. gets the animals out of sequence.

288: *Macbeth*, V v 48.

289: The Austrian Prince Schwartzenburg was commander of the allied forces chasing Buonaparte.

290: “Woe to the vanquished!” (uttered by the Gallic chieftain Brennus at Livy, 5 49).

291: Richard Payne Knight was a numismatist and antiquary.

292: Miss Randall was governess to Madame de Staël’s daughter.

293: Madame de Recamier, famous French beauty. Painted by David.

294: Maria Edgeworth’s novel *Patronage*. Published in 1814. See BLJ III 204.

295: That is, patroness of Maria Edgeworth.



on purpose. The party went off very well, and the fish was very much to my gusto.<sup>296</sup> But we got up too soon after the women; and Mrs. Corinne always lingers so long after dinner that we wish her in—the drawing-room.

To-day C[ampbell]. called, and while sitting here in came Merivale.<sup>297</sup> During our colloquy, C[ampbell]. (ignorant that M[erivale]. was the writer) abused the “mawkishness of the Quarterly Review of Grimm’s Correspondence.”<sup>298</sup> I (knowing the secret) changed the conversation as soon as I could; and C[ampbell]. went away, quite convinced of having made the most favourable impression on his new acquaintance. Merivale is luckily a very good-natured fellow, or God he knows what might have been engendered from such a malaprop. I did not look at him while this was going on, but I felt like a coal—for I like Merivale, as well as the article in question. \* \* \* \* \*

Asked to Lady Keith’s<sup>299</sup> to-morrow evening—I think I will go;—but it is the first party invitation I have accepted this “season,” as the learned Fletcher called it, when that youngest brat of Lady \* \*’s<sup>300</sup> cut my eye and cheek open with a misdirected pebble—“Never mind, my Lord, the scar will be gone before the *season*,” as if one’s eye was of no importance in the mean time.

Lord Erskine called, and gave me his famous pamphlet with a marginal note and corrections in his handwriting. Sent it to be bound superbly, and shall treasure it.

Sent my fine print of Napoleon to be framed: It *is* framed; and the Emperor becomes his robes as if he had been hatched in them.

March 7th.

Rose at seven—ready by half-past eight—went to Mr. Hanson’s, Berkeley Square<sup>301</sup>—went to church with his eldest daughter, Mary Anne (a good girl), and gave her away to the Earl of Portsmouth.<sup>302</sup> Saw her fairly a countess—congratulated the family and groom (bride)—drank a bumper of wine (wholesome sherris)<sup>303</sup> to their felicity, and all that—and came home. Asked to stay to dinner, but could not. At three sat to Phillips for faces.<sup>304</sup> Called on Lady M[elbourne].—I like her so well, that I always stay too long. (Mem. to mend of that.)

Passed the evening with Hobhouse, who has begun a Poem,<sup>305</sup> which promises highly;—wish he would go on with it. Heard some curious extracts from a life of Morosini, the blundering Venetian, who blew up the Acropolis at Athens with a bomb,<sup>306</sup> and be damned to him! Waxed sleepy—just come home—must go to bed, and am engaged to meet Sheridan to-morrow at Rogers’s.

Queer ceremony that same of marriage—saw many abroad, Greek and Catholic<sup>307</sup>—one, at *home*, many years ago. There be some strange phrases in the prologue (the exhortation), which made me turn away, not to laugh in the face of the surpliceman. Made one blunder, when I joined the hands of the happy—rammed their left hands, by mistake, into one another. Corrected it—bustled back to the altar-rail, and said “Amen.” Portsmouth responded as if he had got the whole by heart; and, if any thing, was rather before the priest. It is now midnight and \* \* \* \* \*

296: “Taste.”

297: John Herman Merivale, author of *Orlando in Roncesvalles*, a version of the *Morgante Maggiore*.

298: *Quarterly Review*, March 1813.

299: Daughter of Dr Johnson’s friend Mrs Thrale.

300: Lady Oxford, whose multi-fathered children were known as The Harleian Miscellany.

301: Prothero corrects this to “Bloomsbury Square”.

302: The marriage was annulled on the grounds of Portsmouth’s insanity.

303: B. thinks he is quoting Falstaff in *Henry IV*, but “excellent” and “fertile” are the only adjectives Falstaff uses to describe his favourite drink there. In the prose Preface to *Don Juan* B. has “right sherris”. He feels proprietorial enough about Shakespeare to employ his idiom, even if he is inaccurate.

304: Thomas Phillips. See Peach fig. 38. This is the famous portrait of B. in his Albanian costume.

305: H.’s poem never sees the light of day.

306: In 1687.

307: I do not know where B. saw a Catholic wedding when abroad.

March 10th, Thor's Day.

On Tuesday dined with Rogers,—Mackintosh, Sheridan, Sharpe,—much talk, and good,—all, except my own little prattlement. Much of old times—Horne Tooke—the Trials—evidence of Sheridan, and anecdotes of those times, when *I*, alas! was an infant. If I had been a man, I would have made an English Lord Edward Fitzgerald.<sup>308</sup>

Set down Sheridan at Brookes's,<sup>309</sup>—where, by the by, he could not have well set down himself, as he and I were the only drinkers. Sherry means to stand for Westminster, as Cochrane (the stock-jobbing hoaxer)<sup>310</sup> must vacate. Brougham<sup>311</sup> is a candidate. I fear for poor dear Sherry. Both have talents of the highest order, but the youngster has *yet* a character. We shall see, if he lives to Sherry's age, how he will pass over the red-hot ploughshares of public life: I don't know why, but I hate to see the *old* ones lose; particularly Sheridan, notwithstanding all his *méchanceté*.

Received many, and the kindest, thanks from Lady Portsmouth, *père* and *mère*, for my match-making. I don't regret it, as she looks the countess well, and is a very good girl. It is odd how well she carries her new honours. She looks a different woman, and high-bred, too. I had no idea that I could make so good a peeress.

Went to the play with Hobhouse. Mrs. Jordan<sup>312</sup> superlative in Hoyden, and Jones well enough in Foppington.<sup>313</sup> *What plays!* what wit!—helas! Congreve and Vanbrugh are your only comedy. Our society is too insipid now for the like copy. Would *not* go to Lady Keith's. Hobhouse thought it odd. I wonder *he* should like parties. If one is in love, and wants to break a commandment and covet any thing that is there, they do very well. But to go out amongst the mere herd, without a motive, pleasure, or pursuit—'sdeath! 'I'll none of it.'<sup>314</sup> He told me an odd report,—that *I* am the actual Conrad, the veritable Corsair, and that part of my travels are supposed to have passed in privacy.<sup>315</sup> Um!—people sometimes hit near the truth; but never the whole truth. H. don't know what I was about the year after he left the Levant; nor does any one—nor—nor—nor—however, it is a lie—but, "I doubt the equivocation of the fiend that lies like truth!"<sup>316</sup>

I shall have letters of importance to-morrow. Which, \* \*, or \* \*? heigho!— \* \*<sup>317</sup> is in my heart, \* \*<sup>318</sup> in my head, \* \* in my eye,<sup>319</sup> and the *single* one, Heaven knows where. All write, and will be answered. "Since I have crept in favour with myself, I must maintain it;"<sup>320</sup> but I never "mistook my person,"<sup>321</sup> though I think others have.

\* \*<sup>322</sup> called to-day in great despair about his mistress, who has taken a freak of \* \* \*. He began a letter to her, but was obliged to stop short—I finished it for him, and he copied and sent it. If *he* holds out, and keeps to my instructions of affected indifference, she will lower her colours. If she don't, he will, at least, get rid of her, and she don't seem much worth keeping. But the poor lad is in love—if that is the case, she will win. When they once discover their power, *finita e la musica*.<sup>323</sup>

Sleepy, and must go to bed.

**308:** Fitzgerald tried to lead the United Irishmen against the English; but was killed, in 1798.

**309:** A club for Whigs.

**310:** Thomas Cochrane, future nautical hero of South America.

**311:** Henry Brougham, Whig politician and one of B.'s worst enemies.

**312:** Dorothy Jordan, famous comic actress.

**313:** Roles in Sheridan's *The Trip to Scarborough*, a version of Vanbrugh's *The Relapse*.

**314:** *Macbeth*, V iii 46: *Throw physic to the dogs, I'll none of it.*

**315:** Marchand suggests "piracy", which would fit; but B., as he now writes, was proud of the fact that few knew what he'd done in Greece in 1810-11 after H. had left.

**316:** *Macbeth*, V v 42-4.

**317:** Augusta.

**318:** Frances Wedderburn Webster.

**319:** Lady Catherine Annesley.

**320:** *Richard III*, I ii 259.

**321:** *Ibid.*, I ii 252.

**322:** Unidentified.

**323:** "The tune ceases".

Tuesday, March 15th.

Dined yesterday with R[oger]s, Mackintosh, and Sharpe. Sheridan could not come. Sharpe told several very amusing anecdotes of Henderson, the actor.<sup>324</sup> Stayed till late, and came home, having drunk so much *tea*, that I did not get to sleep till six this morning. R[ogers]. says I am to be in *this* Quarterly—cut up, I presume, as they “hate us youth.”<sup>325</sup> *N’importe*. As Sharpe was passing by the doors of some Debating Society (the Westminster Forum) in his way to dinner, he saw rubricated on the walls *Scott’s* name and *mine*—“Which the best poet?” being the question of the evening; and I suppose all the Templars and *would bes* took our rhymes in vain in the course of the controversy. Which had the greater show of hands, I neither know nor care; but I feel the coupling of the names as a compliment,—though I think Scott deserves better company.

\* \* \* \* \*

W[edderburn]. W[ebster]. called—Lord Erskine, Lord Holland, &c., &c. Wrote to \* \* the Corsair report. She says she don’t wonder, since “Conrad is so *like*.” It is odd that one, who knows me so thoroughly,<sup>326</sup> should tell me this to my face. However, if she don’t know, nobody can.

Mackintosh is, it seems, the writer of the defensive letter in the Morning Chronicle. If so, it is very kind, and more than I did for myself.

\* \* \* \* \*

Told Murray to secure for me Bandello’s Italian Novels<sup>327</sup> at the sale to-morrow. To me they will be *nuts*. Redde a satire on myself, called “Anti-Byron,” and told Murray to publish it if he liked.<sup>328</sup> The object of the author is to prove me an Atheist and a systematic conspirator against law and government. Some of the verse is good; the prose I don’t quite understand. He asserts that my “deleterious works” have had “an effect upon civil society, which requires,” &c., &c., &c., and his own poetry. It is a lengthy poem, and a long preface, with an harmonious title-page. Like the fly in the fable, I seem to have got upon a wheel which makes much dust; but, unlike the said fly, I do not take it all for my own raising.

A letter from *Bella*,<sup>329</sup> which I answered. I shall be in love with her again, if I don’t take care.

\* \* \* \* \*

I shall begin a more regular system of reading soon.

Thursday, March 17th.

I have been sparring with Jackson for exercise this morning; and mean to continue and renew my acquaintance with the muffles.<sup>330</sup> My chest, and arms, and wind are in very good plight, and I am not in flesh. I used to be a hard hitter, and my arms are very long for my height (5 feet 8 ½ inches). At any rate, exercise is good, and this the severest of all; fencing and the broad-sword never fatigued me half so much.

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**324:** John Henderson, an actor praised by Mrs Siddons. Equally good as Hamlet and Falstaff.

**325:** *Henry IV I*, II ii 82. This quotation appears more often in B.’s letters than any other.

**326:** Probably “\* \*” is in this case Lady Melbourne.

**327:** Matteo Bandello’s *Novelle* provided the sources for *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, and *The Winter’s Tale*.

**328:** See BLJ IV 81 (letter of March 12th); also BLJ IV 93.

**329:** Annabella Milbanke.

**330:** Boxing-gloves. See *Don Juan II*, 92, 7-8.

Redde the “Quarrels of Authors”<sup>331</sup> (another sort of *sparring*)—a new work, by that most entertaining and researching writer, Israeli; They seem to be an irritable set, and I wish myself well out of it. “I’ll not march through Coventry with them, that’s flat.”<sup>332</sup> What the devil had I to do with scribbling? It is too late to inquire, and all regret is useless. But, an it were to do again,—I should write again, I suppose. Such is human nature, at least my share of it;—though I shall think better of myself, if I have sense to stop now. If I have a wife, and that wife has a son—by any body—I will bring up mine heir in the most anti-poetical way—make him a lawyer, or a pirate, or—any thing. But, if he writes too, I shall be sure he is none of mine, and cut him off with a Bank token. Must write a letter—three o’clock.

Sunday, March 20th.

I intended to go to Lady Hardwicke’s, but won’t. I always begin the day with a bias towards going to parties; but, as the evening advances, my stimulus fails, and I hardly ever go out—and, when I do, always regret it. This might have been a pleasant one;—at least, the hostess is a very superior woman. Lady Lansdowne’s to-morrow—Lady Heathcote’s<sup>333</sup> Wednesday. Um!—I must spur myself into going to some of them, or it will look like rudeness, and it is better to do as other people do—confound them!

Redde Machiavel,<sup>334</sup> parts of Chardin,<sup>335</sup> and Sismondi,<sup>336</sup> and Bandello—by starts. Redde the *Edinburgh*, 44, just come out. In the beginning of the article on “Edgeworth’s Patronage”, I have gotten a high compliment, I perceive. Whether this is creditable to me, I know not; but it does honour to the editor, because he once abused me.<sup>337</sup> Many a man will retract praise; none but a high-spirited mind will revoke its censure, or can praise the man it has once attacked. I have often, since my return to England, heard Jeffrey most highly commended by those who know him for things independent of his talents. I admire him for *this*—not because he has *praised me* (I have been so praised elsewhere and abused, alternately, that mere habit has rendered me as indifferent to both as a man at twenty-six can be to any thing), but because he is, perhaps, the *only man* who, under the relations in which he and I stand, or stood, with regard to each other, would have had the liberality to act thus; none but a great soul dared hazard it. The height on which he stands has not made him giddy;—a little scribbler would have gone on cavilling to the end of the chapter. As to the justice of his panegyric, that is matter of taste. There are plenty to question it, and glad, too of the opportunity.

Lord Erskine called to-day. He means to carry down his reflections on the war—or rather wars—to the present day. I trust that he will. Must send to Mr. Murray to get the binding of my copy of his pamphlet finished, as Lord E[rskine]. has promised me to correct it, and add some marginal notes to it. Any thing in his handwriting will be a treasure, which will gather compound interest from years. Erskine has high expectations of Mackintosh’s promised History. Undoubtedly it must be a classic, when finished.

Sparred with Jackson again yesterday morning, and shall to-morrow. I feel all the better for it, in spirits, though my arms and shoulders are very stiff from it. Mem. to attend the pugilistic dinner:—Marquis Huntley<sup>338</sup> is in the chair.

\* \* \* \* \*

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**331:** Isaac Disraeli, *Quarrels of Authors*, 3 vols. 1814.

**332:** *Henry IV I*, IV ii 43.

**333:** Ladies Hardwicke, Heathcote and Lansdowne were all Whig society hostesses. B. receives no Tory invitations.

**334:** Chardin: B. sold his copy of Chardin’s *Voyage en Perse* (Paris 1181) in 1816: see CMP 233 No 59.

**335:** Sismondi: B. did not sell his copy either of Sismondi’s *Littérature du Midi de l’Europe* or of the same writer’s *Histoire des Républiques Italiennes du Moyen Ages*. Hobhouse may have bought them. See Appendix 3.

**336:** Bandello: B. sold his copy of Bandello’s *Novelle* (9 vols Livorno 1791) in 1816: see CMP 233 No 55.

**337:** B. still thinks that Francis Jeffrey reviewed *Hol* in the 1808 *Edinburgh*.

**338:** George Gordon [*sic*] ninth Marquis of Huntley. A Tory.

Lord Erskine thinks that ministers must be in peril of going out. So much the better for him. To me it is the same who are in or out;—we want something more than a change of ministers, and some day we will have it.

I remember, in riding from Chrisso to Castri (Delphos) along the sides of Parnassus, I saw six eagles in the air.<sup>339</sup> It is uncommon to see so many together; and it was the number—not the species, which is common enough—that excited my attention.

The last bird I ever fired at was an *eaglet*, on the shore of the Gulf of Lepanto, near Vostitza.<sup>340</sup> It was only wounded, and I tried to save it, the eye was so bright; but it pined, and died in a few days; and I never did since, and never will, attempt the death of another bird. I wonder what put these two things into my head just now? I have been reading Sismondi, and there is nothing there that could induce the recollection.

I am mightily taken with Braccio di Montone,<sup>341</sup> Giovanni Galeazzo,<sup>342</sup> and Eccelino.<sup>343</sup> But the last is *not* Bracciaferro (of the same name), Count of Ravenna, whose history I want to trace. There is a fine engraving in Lavater,<sup>344</sup> from a picture by Fuseli, of *that* Ezzelin, over the body of Meduna, punished by him for a *hitch* in her constancy during his absence in the Crusades. He was right—but I want to know the story.<sup>345</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

Tuesday, March 22d.

Last night, *party* at Lansdowne-house. To-night, *party* at Lady Charlotte Greville's—deplorable waste of time, and something of temper. Nothing imparted—nothing acquired—talking without ideas—if any thing like *thought* in my mind, it was not on the subjects on which we were gabbling. Heigho!—and in this way half London pass what is called life. Tomorrow there is Lady Heathcote's—shall I go? yes—to punish myself for not having a pursuit.

Let me see—what did I see? The only person who much struck me was Lady S \* \* d's<sup>346</sup> eldest daughter, Lady C. L.<sup>347</sup> They say she is *not* pretty. I don't know—everything is pretty that pleases; but there is an air of soul about her—and her colour changes—and there is that shyness of the antelope (which I delight in) in her manner so much, that I observed her more than I did any other woman in the rooms, and only looked at any thing else when I thought she might perceive and feel embarrassed by my After all, there may be something of association in this friend of Augusta's, and whatever she loves, I can't help liking.

Her mother, the marchioness, talked to me a little; and I was twenty times on the point of asking her to introduce me to *sa fille*, but I stopped short. This comes of that affray with the Carlisles.

Earl Grey told me laughingly of a paragraph in the last *Moniteur*,<sup>348</sup> which has stated, among other symptoms of rebellion, some particulars of the *sensation* occasioned in all our government gazettes by the “tear” lines,—*only* amplifying, in its re-statement, an epigram (by the by, no epigram except in the *Greek* acceptance of the word) into a *roman*. I wonder the Couriers, &c. &c. have not translated that part of the *Moniteur*, with additional comments.

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**339:** On December 16th 1809. H.'s diary mentions no eagles. Like the jackals at Ephesus, they may just be a good idea.

**340:** On December 9th 1809.

**341:** For Braccio di Montone, see Appendix 3.

**342:** For Giovanni Galeazzo Visconti, see Appendix 3.

**343:** For Eccelino, see Appendix 3.

**344:** B. has seen Fuseli's picture of “Count Bracciaferro with his slain mistress”, in Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy* (tr. Hunter, 1789-92), II 294. The book also contains four engravings by Blake. See Appendix 4.

**345:** See Appendix 4.

**346:** Lady Stafford.

**347:** Charlotte Leveson.

**348:** Leading Parisian newspaper.

The Princess of Wales has requested Fuseli to paint from “the Corsair”—leaving to him the choice of any passage for the subject: so Mr. Locke<sup>349</sup> tells me. Tired—jaded—selfish and supine—must go to bed.

*Roman*, at least *Romance*, means a song sometimes, as in the Spanish. I suppose this is the Moniteur’s meaning, unless he has confused it with “the Corsair.”

Albany, March 28.

This night got into my new apartments,<sup>350</sup> rented of Lord Althorpe, on a lease of seven years. Spacious, and room for my books and sabres. *In the house*, too, another advantage. The last few days, or whole week, have been very abstemious, regular in exercise, and yet very *unwell*.

Yesterday, dined *tête-à-tête* at the Cocoa [Tree]<sup>351</sup> with Scrope Davies—sate from six till midnight—drank between us one bottle of champagne and six of claret, neither of which wines ever affect me. Offered to take Scrope home in my carriage; but he was tipsy and pious, and I was obliged to leave him on his knees praying to I know not what purpose or pagod. No headache, nor sickness, that night nor to-day. Got up, if any thing, earlier than usual—spurred with Jackson *ad sudorem*,<sup>352</sup> and have been much better in health than for many days. I have heard nothing more from Scrope. Yesterday paid him four thousand eight hundred pounds, a debt of some standing, and which I wished to have paid before.<sup>353</sup> My mind is much relieved by the removal of that *debit*.

Augusta wants me to make it up with Carlisle.<sup>354</sup> I have refused *every* body else, but I can’t deny her any thing; so I must e’en do it, though I had as lief “drink up Eisel—eat a crocodile.”<sup>355</sup> Let me see—Ward, the Hollands, the Lambs, Rogers, &c. &c.—every body, more or less, have been trying for the last two years to accommodate this *couplet* quarrel to no purpose. I shall laugh if Augusta succeeds.

Redde a little of many things—shall get in all my books to-morrow. Luckily this room will hold them—with “ample room and verge, &c. the characters of hell to trace.”<sup>356</sup> I must set about some employment soon; my heart begins to eat *itself* again.

April 8th.

Out of town six days. On my return, found my poor little pagod,<sup>357</sup> Napoleon, pushed off his pedestal;—the thieves<sup>358</sup> are in Paris. It is his own fault. Like Milo,<sup>359</sup> he would rend the oak; but it closed again, wedged his hands, and now the beasts—lion, bear, down to the dirtiest jackall<sup>360</sup>—may all tear him. That Muscovite winter *wedged* his arms; ever since, he has fought with his feet and teeth. The last may still leave their marks; and “I guess now” (as the Yankies say) that he will yet play them a pass. He is in their rear—between them and their homes. Query—will they ever reach them?

349: William Locke, pupil and friend of Fuseli.

350: Number Two, The Albany. Owned previously by Earl Spencer, an ancestor of Princess Di.

351: The Cocoa Tree was a club in St. James’s Street. Founded by Tories in Queen Anne’s reign, it was later a Jacobite establishment. Famous for gambling. Gibbon had been a member, as was H now.

352: “Till I sweated”.

353: This was the loan which had enabled B. and H. to tour the Orient in 1809-11. The Hoare account shows that on March 28th B. paid Davies £4804 12s 4d.

354: Lord Carlisle had been B.’s guardian, and an amateur poet. They had fallen out on B.’s coming of age in 1811.

355: *Hamlet*, V i 170.

356: Thomas Gray, *The Bard*, 52.

357: Compare BLJ IV 90, 93, and *OtNB*, 26.

358: The “thieves” are the Allied armies of England, Russia, Prussia, and Austria.

359: Compare *OtNB*, 46. Milo was in Greek legend a strong man who attempted to rend an oak, which rebounded and trapped him, and he was eaten by wolves. See *OtNB*, st 6n.

360: Refers to England, Russia, and Austria / Prussia.

Saturday, April 9th, 1814.

I mark this day!

Napoleon Buonaparte has abdicated the throne of the world. "Excellent well."<sup>361</sup> Methinks Sylla<sup>362</sup> did better; for he revenged and resigned in the height of his sway, red with the slaughter of his foes—the finest instance of glorious contempt of the rascals upon record. Dioclesian<sup>363</sup> did well too—Amurath<sup>364</sup> not amis, had he become aught except a dervise—Charles the Fifth<sup>365</sup> but so, so—but Napoleon, worst of all. What! wait till they were in his capital, and then talk of his readiness to give up what is already gone!! "What whining monk art thou—what holy cheat?"<sup>366</sup> 'Sdeath!—Dionysius at Corinth<sup>367</sup> was yet a king to this. The "Isle of Elba" to retire to! –Well—if it had been Caprea,<sup>368</sup> I should have marvelled less. "I see men's minds are but a parcel of their fortunes."<sup>369</sup> I am utterly bewildered and confounded.

I don't know—but I think *I*, even *I* (an insect compared with this creature), have set my life on casts not a millionth part of this man's. But, after all, a crown may be not worth dying for. Yet to outlive *Lodi*<sup>370</sup> for this!!! Oh that Juvenal or Johnson<sup>371</sup> could rise from the dead! "Expende—quot libras in duce summo invenies?"<sup>372</sup> I knew they were light in the balance of mortality; but I thought their living dust weighed more *carats*. Alas! this imperial diamond hath a flaw in it, and is now hardly fit to stick in a glazier's pencil:—the pen of the historian won't rate it worth a ducat.

Psha! "something too much of this."<sup>373</sup> But I won't give him up even now; though all his admirers have, "like the Thanes, fallen from him."<sup>374</sup>

April 10th.

I do not know that I am happiest when alone; but this I am sure of, that I never am long in the society even of *her* I love, (God knows too well, and the Devil probably too), without a yearning for the company of my lamp and my utterly confused and tumbled-over library. Even in the day, I send away my carriage oftener than I use or abuse it. *Per esempio*,—I have not stirred out of these rooms for these four days past: but I have sparred for exercise (windows open) with Jackson an hour daily, to attenuate and keep up the ethereal part of me. The more violent the fatigue, the better my spirits for the rest of the day; and then, my evenings have that calm nothingness of languor, which I most delight in. To-day I have boxed one hour—written an ode to Napoleon Buonaparte—copied it—eaten six biscuits—drunk four bottles of soda water—redde away the rest of my time—besides giving poor \* \* a world of advice about this mistress of his, who is plaguing him into a phthisic and intolerable tediousness. I am a pretty fellow truly to lecture about "the sect." No matter, my counsels are all thrown away.

April 19th, 1814.

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**361:** *Hamlet*, II ii 173.

**362:** Lucius Cornelius Sulla, Roman tyrant who resigned and retired to his estate. See *OtNB*, st 7n.

**363:** Diocletian was a third century Roman emperor who abdicated.

**364:** Amurath II (Murad II) was an Ottoman Sultan who left his throne only to reascend it.

**365:** Compare *OtNB*, 64. Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor who is said to have become a monk on his retirement. See *OtNB* st 8n. B.'s gist is that both Charles V and Sulla knew when their time was up.

**366:** Otway, *Venice Preserved*, IV ii.

**367:** Compare *OtNB*, 125.

**368:** The island to which the Emperor Tiberius retired and orgied, only to return to Rome later.

**369:** *Antony and Cleopatra*, III xii 31-2. In fact, "men's judgements".

**370:** Napoleon beat the Austrians at the battle of Lodi in 1796.

**371:** Juvenal's tenth Satire, and Dr Johnson's imitation of it, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, are important subtexts for *OtNB*. B. wishes to be their avatar.

**372:** Juvenal, Satire X, 147-8: "Put Hannibal in the scales: how many pounds will that peerless / General mark up today?" – tr. Peter Green. B. uses the line as first of three epigraphs to *OtNB*.

**373:** *Hamlet*, III ii 81.

**374:** Paraphrases *Macbeth*, V iii 49.

There is ice at both poles, north and south—all extremes are the same—misery belongs to the highest and the lowest only,—to the emperor and the beggar, when unsixpenced and unthroned. There is, to be sure, a damned insipid medium—an equinoctial line—no one knows where, except upon maps and measurement.

“And all our *yesterdays* have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death.”<sup>375</sup>

I will keep no further journal of that same hesternal<sup>376</sup> torch-light; and, to prevent me from returning, like a dog, to the vomit of memory, I tear out the remaining leaves of this volume, and write, in *Ipecacuanha*<sup>377</sup>,—“that the Bourbons are restored!!!”—“Hang up philosophy.”<sup>378</sup> To be sure, I have long despised myself and man, but I never spat in the face of my species before—“O fool! I shall go mad.”<sup>379</sup>

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**375:** *Macbeth*, V v 22-3.

**376:** “Relating to yesterday”.

**377:** Peruvian bark, used as an emetic. See *Don Juan* X 41, 5.

**378:** *Romeo and Juliet*, III iii 57. See *Don Juan* I, cancelled stanzas.

**379:** *King Lear*, II iv 285.



## APPENDIX 1: Madame de Staël's *billets* to Byron

*The Bride of Abydos* was published on December 2nd 1813, with the following note at line 179 (“The mind – the Music breathing from her face!”):

This expression has met with objections. I will not refer to “Him who hath not Music in his soul,” but merely request the reader to recollect, for ten seconds, the features of the woman whom he believes to be the most beautiful; and if he then does not comprehend fully what is feebly expressed in the above line, I shall be sorry for us both. For an eloquent passage in the latest work of the first female writer of this, perhaps of any age, on the analogy (and the immediate comparison excited by that analogy) between “painting and music,” see vol. iii. cap. 10, “De L’Allemagne.”<sup>380</sup> And is not this connexion still stronger with the original than the copy? with the colouring of Nature than of Art? After all, this is rather to be felt than described; still, I think there are some who will understand it, at least they would have done had they beheld the countenance whose speaking harmony suggested the idea; for this passage is not drawn from imagination but memory, that mirror which Affliction dashes to the earth, and looking down upon the fragments, only beholds the reflection multiplied.

de Staël must have seen an advance copy, for she wrote to Byron on November 30th, and was extremely kind to him for the rest of their relationship, up until their parting in Switzerland in October 1816. These are three of her notes to him, all written during the period of the London Journal:

### A) November 30th 1813:

[The / Lord Byron]

argyll’s street, N<sup>o</sup>. 31.

je ne saurais vous exprimer mylord, à quel point je me trouve honorée d’être dans une note de votre poème et de quel poème! il me semble que pour la première fois je me crois certaine d’un nom avenir et que vous avez disposé pour moi de cet empire de reputation qui vous serez tous les jours plus soumis – je voudrais vous parler de ce poème que tout le monde admire mais j’avouerai que je suis trop suspecte en le louant – et je ne cache pas qu’une louange de vous m’a fait éprouver un sentiment de fierté et de reconnaissance qui me rendait incapable de vous juger mais heureusement vous êtes au dessus du jugement –

donnez moi quelquefois le plaisir de vous voir – il y a un proverbe français qui dit *qu’un bonheur ne va jamais sans d’autre*.

N. de Staël

(LJ III 354-5)

**Translation:** I shall never be able to explain to you, my Lord, how honoured I am to be in a note to your poem,<sup>381</sup> and what a poem! It seems to me that for the first time I feel certain of a name in the future and that you have put aside for me a part of that empire and that reputation under which you will be forever. I want to speak to you about this poem which everyone admires, but I admit that I am suspected for praising it, and I shall not disguise the fact that praise from you has caused me a feeling of pride and of recognition which makes me unable to judge you; fortunately, however, you are above judgement.

Allow me the pleasure of seeing you; there is a French proverb which says that one happiness never arrives without another. N[ecker] de Staël.

<sup>380</sup>: Madame de Staël’s *de l’Allemagne* had been published by Murray earlier in 1813.

<sup>381</sup>: See *BoA*, 179, B.’s note, in which he quotes her book *de l’Allemagne*.

**B) February 1814:**

/  
*in Byron's hand: Received February 1814 / NB /*  
 /

j'ai besoin de vous parler de votre dernière poème puisque tous ce qui l'admirent doivent vous flatter plus que moi – je ne juge que des images et des idées et des sentiments mais il y a de plus un style enchanteur que je sais mais que je ne puis juger – si vous avez le tort de ne pas aimer l'espèce humaine il me semble qu'elle fait ce qu'elle peut pour le raccommo-der avec vous pour un [ ] – et la destinée n'a pas maltraité celui qu'elle a fait le premier poète de son siècle et tout le reste – traitez ceux qui vous admirent avec un peu plus de bienveillance et sachez [ ] gré de pardonner à votre génie tout ce qui a du me déplaire en vous – je voudrais causer avec vous quand m'en trouverez vous digne?

N. de Staël Holstein

argyle street n° 31

(BL.Add.Mss. 31037 f. 13)

**Translation:** I need to talk to you about your last poem<sup>382</sup> since all who admire it must flatter you more than I do – I do not judge the images and the ideas and the sentiments but there is besides these an enchanting style which I can see but of which I am no judge – if you are wrong enough not to love the human race it seems to me that they are doing all they can to recommend themselves to you for a [ ] – and destiny has not mistreated him whom she has made the first poet of his age and [of] all the rest – treat those who admire you with a little more benevolence and know [ ] taste to pardon by your genius all who have had to displease you – I should like to chat with you when might you be free to see me? / Necker de Staël Holstein

**C) February 1814:**

[The / Lord Byron / St James]

Je renonce à vos visites, pourvu que vous acceptiez mes diners, car enfin à quoi servirait il de vivre dans le même tems que vous, si l'on ne vous voyait pas – dinez chez moi dimanche avec vos amis – je ne dirai pas vos admirateurs car je n'ai recon- tré que cela de tous parts.

à dimanche,

N. de Staël

Mardi –

je prends le silence pour oui –

(LJ III 384)

**Translation:** I renounce your visits, as long as you accept my dinners, because in the end, what is the point of living at the same time as you, if one never sees you? Dine with me on Sunday with your friends – I shall not say your admirers, for I have met none but them everywhere. Until Sunday. N[ecker]. de Staël – Tuesday. I shall take silence for assent.

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**382:** Murray published *The Corsair* on February 1st 1814.

**APPENDIX 2: Moore's note on Mrs Mule**

This ancient housemaid, of whose gaunt and witch-like appearance it would be impossible to convey an idea but by the pencil, furnished one among the numerous instances of Lord Byron's proneness to attach himself to any thing, however homely, that had once inlisted his good-nature in its behalf, and become associated with his thoughts. He first found this old woman in his lodgings at Bennet-street, where, for a whole season, she was the perpetual scare-crow of his visitors. When, next year, he took chambers in Albany, one of the great advantages which his friends looked to in the change was, that they should get rid of this phantom. But, no,—there she was again—he had actually brought her with him from Bennet-street. The following year saw him married, and, with a regular establishment of servants, in Piccadilly; and here,—as Mrs. Mule had not appeared to any of the visitors,—it was concluded, rashly, that the witch had vanished. One of those friends, however, who had most fondly indulged in this persuasion, happening to call one day when all the male part of establishment were abroad, saw, to his dismay, the door opened by the same grim personage, improved considerably in point of habiliments since he last saw her, and keeping pace with the increased scale of her master's household, as a new peruke, and other symptoms of promotion, testified. When asked, "how he came to carry this old woman about with him from place to place," Lord Byron's only answer was, "the poor old devil was so kind to me."

(Moore, 1830, I 502-3)

### APPENDIX 3: Byron's reading in Sismondi

Byron possessed a copy of J. C. L. S. Sismondi's *Littérature de Midi de l'Europe*. It was probably on page 274 of its second volume that he discovered Filicaia's famous sonnet *Italia! Italia! O tu cui fe la sorte*, which he uses at *Childe Harold IV*, stanzas 42 and 43. But the book to which he here refers is Sismondi's *Histoire des Républiques Italiennes du Moyen Age*, of which there are two editions. One, in four volumes, is dated Zurich, 1807-8; the second, in ten volumes, was published in Paris, and came out between 1809 and 1818. Byron had the second, larger one. Sismondi is a republican, and his history draws a horrible picture of the way the medieval Italian republics were betrayed and destroyed over and over by warlords, nobles, and politicians. Byron draws our attention (and, in a later letter, his future wife's attention) to three characters in it:

**Braccio di Montone** (1368-1424) was a famous condottiero, of a temperament with which Byron would have empathised: charming and generous to his friends, horrible to his enemies. An atheist and sworn enemy of Christianity. His death at the battle of Abruzzi was celebrated with festivities in Rome. Here is Sismondi's account of his death:

Dès que les habitans d'Aquila virent que leurs portes étoient demeurées libres, ils sortirent, au nombre de six mille, et vinrent fondre par derrière sur l'armée de Braccio. Tandis que celui-ci parcourait les rangs pour rendre le courage à ses soldats, il fut blessé d'un coup d'épée dans la gorge, et renversé de son cheval. Ses guerriers, en apprenant sa chute, s'enfuirent de tous côtés; lui-même, relevé par ses ennemis, fut conduit dans la tente de leur général; mais jamais il ne voulut répondre par un mot ou un signe à leurs offres, ou aux consolations qu'ils s'efforçoient de lui donner. Plusieurs de ses soldats étoient prisonniers avec lui; on leur permit de s'approcher de leur général, et de lui parler sans témoins; jamais ils ne purent obtenir de son ame altière qu'il leur donnât aucun signe d'attention après sa défaite, où qu'il prît quelque nourriture. Quoique les médecins eussent déclaré que sa blessure n'étoit point mortelle, lorsqu'il eut passé trois jours sans boire ou manger, ou articuler un seul son, il mourut dans la cinquante-sixième année de son âge, le 5 juin 1424. Les gémissemens et les sanglots de ses soldats retentirent dans le camp des vainqueurs; et la victoire, achetée par la mort d'un si grand homme, plongea ses ennemis mêmes dans le deuil. Son corps fut envoyé à Rome, où le pape le fit enterrer dans un lieu profane, comme étant excommunié. (Sismondi, *Républiques*, Paris 1809, VIII 362-3).

**Translation:** As soon as the inhabitants of Aquila saw that their gates were still free, six thousand of them came out, and fell on the rear of Braccio's army. As Braccio was running through the ranks, to give his soldiers courage, he was wounded by a sword-thrust in the throat, and knocked off his horse. His warriors, hearing of his fall, fled on all sides; he himself, taken up by his enemies, was carried into the tent of their general; but he never gave any indication, by word or signal, of wanting to answer their offers, or the consolations which they forced themselves to give him. Several of his soldiers were prisoners with him; they were allowed to approach their general, and to speak to him without witnesses present; they were never able to obtain indication from his haughty soul that he would give them any attention after his defeat, or that he would take any nourishment. Even though the doctors had declared that his injury was in no way mortal, after he had passed three days without drinking or eating, or making a single sound, he died in his fifty-sixth year, on June 5th 1424. The groans and sighs of his soldiers resounded through his vanquishers' camp; and victory, achieved by the death of such a great man, plunged even his enemies into grief. His body was taken to Rome, where the pope had it interred in unconsecrated ground, as being excommunicated.

**Giovanni Galeazzo Visconti** (1351-1402) was a soldier, politician, and patron of the arts. He extended his family's rule over much of north Italy, both by warfare and by diplomacy. He was a friend of Petrarch, and encouraged the foundation of Milan cathedral. He died of the plague while preparing to attack Florence. Sismondi ignores his cultural achievements, and at first describes him thus:

Jean Galeaz avoit un courage d'entreprise, qui contrastoit étrangement avec sa lâcheté personnelle. Le même homme qui ne se montra jamais à la tête d'aucune armée, qui se déroboit à tous les yeux dans le palais fortifié de Pavie, qui s'entouroit de triples gardes, et qui se mettoit encore en défense contre elles dans son appartement, comme s'il étoit sûr de leur trahison, cet homme n'hésitoit jamais un instant dans ses déterminations; jamais il n'étoit troublé par le danger, ou découragé par le mauvais succès. Supérieur à tous par la profondeur de sa politique, incapable de remords pour le crime, ou de honte pour la mauvaise foi, il tendoit avec ses vastes moyens, à soumettre toute l'Italie, et s'il en avoit achevé la conquête, il auroit trouvé peu d'obstacles à étendre sa domination sur les contrées voisines. Mais la liberté italienne fut sauvée quelque temps encore, parce que dans la carrière de son ambition, Jean Galeaz eut à combattre la vertu, le courage et la magnanimité de la république florentine, et la haine implacable de François de Carrare, qu'il avoit dépouillé. (Sismondi, *Républiques*, Paris 1809, VII 285-6).

**Translation:** Giovanni Galeazzo had an enterprising courage, which contrasted strangely with his personal cowardice. The same man who never showed himself at the head of any army, who hid himself from all eyes in the fortified palace of Pavia, who surrounded himself with triple guards, and then tried to defend himself in turn against them in his apartment, as if he were sure of their treachery, this man never hesitated an instant in his decision-making; he was never bothered by danger, or discouraged by lack of success. Superior to all in the depth of his politicking, incapable or remorse for crime, or of shame at breaking faith, he intended, with his vast means, to subdue all of Italy, and if he had achieved its conquest, would have found few obstacles in the way of his domination of the neighbouring countries. But Italian liberty was saved for a while longer, because in his ambitious career Giovanni Galeazzo had to fight against the virtue, the bravery and the great-heartedness of the Florentine Republic, and the implacable hatred of Francisco de Carrara, which he had provoked and exposed.

Later Sismondi adds this, about the way Visconti destroyed all faith in words:

Mais ses négociations lui réussissoient mieux que les armes. Il avoit l'art de diviser et de dissoudre les ligues qui se formoient contre lui; et il endormoit, par de fausses promesses ou de vaines assurances d'amitié, ceux qu'il vouloit attaquer. Très-peu susceptible de colère ou de ressentiment, ce n'étoit jamais pour se venger qu'il entreprenoit la guerre; mais aussi, jamais l'amitié, jamais la reconnaissance pour des services passés ne l'arrêtoient quand il avoit dessein de nuire. Il ne rougissoit d'aucune perfidie, il ne ménageoit aucun mensonge, et il ne consultoit jamais que son ambition modifiée par sa timidité. Il semble que ses paroles auroient dû n'inspirer aucune confiance, et qu'à force de mentir il auroit dû ne plus pouvoir tromper; mais les hommes, surtout lorsqu'ils sont foibles, ne se désabusent jamais entièrement de l'illusion de la parole. Il faut trop de courage pour chercher une vérité fâcheuse qu'un ennemi puissant bien nous voiler; trop de résolution pour considérer toujours en face un danger imminent dont on peut détourner les yeux; enfin l'exclusion de toute vérité dans les rapports entre les hommes occasionne une trop désolante confusion pour qu'on puisse la supporter. Un imposteur n'est jamais assez décrié pour que sa parole ne fasse plus de dupes. (Sismondi, *Républiques*, Paris 1811, VII 376-7).

**Translation:** But he achieved greater success with negotiations than with arms. He possessed the art of dividing and dissolving the alliances which formed against him; and he pacified, by false promises or insincere assurances of friendship, those whom he wished to attack. Very little subject to anger or resentment, he never went to war to avenge himself; but at the same time, neither friendship, nor the recognition of past services, stopped him when he had a desire to inflict injuries. He blushed at no treachery, avoided no lies, and consulted nothing except his ambition, modified by his timidity. It seems that his words should have inspired no confidence, and that his lies should have left him no remaining power to betray; but men, especially those of feeble character, never quite lose their belief in good faith. Too much courage is needed to detect a deplorable truth which a powerful enemy can easily veil from us; too much resolution is needed to bear constantly in mind a danger from which one can avert one's eyes; finally, the exclusion of all truth from the traffic between men brings about a confusion too desolating to bear. No impostor can be found out so often that his word cannot create more dupes.

**Eccelino** Eccelino da Romano (1194-1259) was a Ghibelline leader, a supporter of the Emperor against the Pope. He married the Emperor's daughter, and was excommunicated. A

notorious sadist (see *Inferno*, XII, 109-10), when finally captured he tore off his bandages and refused medical aid. Here is Sismondi's summing-up:

Eccelino étoit d'une petite taille; mais tout l'aspect de sa personne, tous ses mouvemens indiquoient un soldat. Son langage étoit amer, son déportement superbe, et, par son seul regard il faisoit trembler les plus hardis. Son âme, si avide de tous les crimes, ne ressentait aucun attrait pour les plaisirs des sens; jamais Eccolino n'aima les femmes, et c'est peut-être pourquoi, dans les supplices, il fut aussi impitoyable pour elles que pour les hommes. Il étoit dans la soixante-sixième année de sa vie, lorsqu'il mourut, et son règne de sang avoit duré trente-quatre ans (Sismondi, *Républiques*, Paris 1809, III 220).

**Translation:** Eccelino was of short stature; but everything about him, every movement, indicated a soldier. His language was bitter, his deportment proud, and he made the bravest tremble merely by looking at them. His soul, so greedy for all crimes, felt no attraction at all for the pleasures of the senses; Eccelino never loved women, which is perhaps why, on the scaffold, he was as pitiless to them as he was to men. He was in the sixty-sixth year of his age when he died, and his reign of blood had lasted thirty-four years.

Braccio di Montone appears admirable; but the last two Italian villains create a character which, in its innate untrustworthiness, may have reminded Byron uncomfortably of his own. Compare the curse at *Manfred*, I i, 232-51:

From thy false tears I did distill  
An essence which hath 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 lip I drew the charm  
Which gave all these their chiefest harm;  
In proving every poison known,  
I found the strongest was thine own.

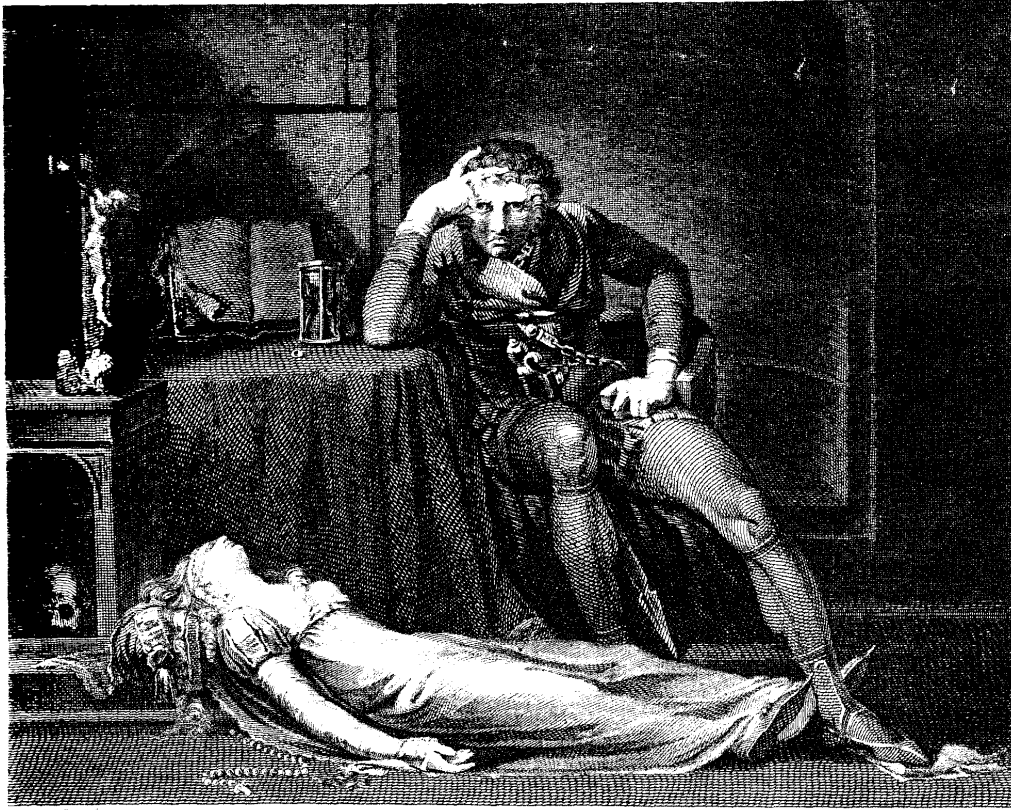
By thy cold breast and serpent smile,  
By thy unfathomed gulphs of Guile,  
By that most seeming virtuous eye,  
By thy shut soul's Hypocrisy,  
By the perfection of thine art  
Which passed for human thine own heart,  
By thy delight in others' pain,  
And by thy brotherhood of Cain,  
I call upon thee! and compell  
Thyself to be thy proper Hell!

On August 25th 1814 he wrote to Annabella (soon to be his wife, and victim):

You can hardly have a better modern work than Sismondi's ... In his *Italian Commonwealths* [*B. avoids the word "Republic" as too subversive and shocking*] there are two characters which interested me much – Eccelin, and Giovanni Galeazzo to say nothing of many others ... (BLJ IV 161)

But the hint was too light, and Annabella too trusting, for his meaning to be understood.

**Appendix 4: “Bracciaferro (of the same name), Count of Ravenna”.** Byron’s confusion here may be an excellent example of the Tricker Tricked. Here is the picture by Fuseli to which Byron refers:



*Fuseli Pinx<sup>t</sup>*

*Hallaway Sculp<sup>t</sup>*

*Ezzelin Count of Ravenna surnamed Braccioferro or Iron arm, musing over the body of Meduna slain by him for infidelity during his absence in the Holy Land.*

The richness of this composition takes nothing away from its simplicity. It is a Knight who has just assassinated his mistress. Fettered by remorse of conscience, accused by the presence of his victim, he deplores his madness, but repents it not; he detests it, and yet still applauds himself for it. A character of such force was capable of committing a premeditated crime in cold blood. Before giving himself up to it, he beheld it not in all its blackness: and even after the fatal blow, he does not feel it in all its enormity. (Lavater’s *Essays on Physiognomy* (tr. Hunter, 1789-92), II 294).

Moore, however, writes:

Fuseli’s picture of Ezzelin Bracciaferro musing over Meduna, slain by him for disloyalty during his absence in the Holy Land, was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1780. Mr. Knowles, in his *Life of the painter*, relates the following anecdote: “Fuseli frequently invented the subjects of his pictures without the aid of the poet or historian, as in his composition of Ezzelin, Belisaire, and some others: these he denominated ‘philosophical ideas intuitive, or sentiment personified’. On one occasion he was much amused by the following inquiry of Lord Byron: ‘I have been looking in vain, Mr. Fuseli, for some months, in the poets and historians of Italy, for the subject of your picture of Ezzelin: pray where is it to be found?’ ‘Only in my brain, my Lord,’ was the answer: ‘for I invented it’” (Moore I 403).