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WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

BY

ROBERT BROWNING.

LONDON:
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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.
INtroductory essay,

by Robert Browning.

An opportunity having presented itself for the acquisition of a series of unedited letters by Shelley, all more or less directly supplementary to and illustrative of the collection already published by Mr. Moxon, that gentleman has decided on securing them. They will prove an acceptable addition to a body of correspondence, the value of which towards a right understanding of its author's purpose and work, may be said to exceed that of any similar contribution exhibiting the worldly
relations of a poet whose genius has operated by a different law.

Doubtless we accept gladly the biography of an objective poet, as the phrase now goes; one whose endeavour has been to reproduce things external (whether the phenomena of the scenic universe, or the manifested action of the human heart and brain) with an immediate reference, in every case, to the common eye and apprehension of his fellow men, assumed capable of receiving and profiting by this reproduction. It has been obtained through the poet's double faculty of seeing external objects more clearly, widely, and deeply, than is possible to the average mind, at the same time that he is so acquainted and in sympathy with its narrower comprehension as to be careful to supply it with no other materials than it can combine into an intelligible whole. The auditory of such a poet will include, not only
the intelligences which, save for such assistance, would have missed the deeper meaning and enjoyment of the original objects, but also the spirits of a like endowment with his own, who, by means of his abstract, can forthwith pass to the reality it was made from, and either corroborate their impressions of things known already, or supply themselves with new from whatever shows in the inexhaustible variety of existence may have hitherto escaped their knowledge. Such a poet is properly the ποιητής, the fashioner; and the thing fashioned, his poetry, will of necessity be substantive, projected from himself and distinct. We are ignorant what the inventor of "Othello" conceived of that fact as he beheld it in completeness, how he accounted for it, under what known law he registered its nature, or to what unknown law he traced its coincidence. We learn only what he intended we should learn by that
particular exercise of his power,—the fact itself,—which, with its infinite significances, each of us receives for the first time as a creation, and is hereafter left to deal with, as, in proportion to his own intelligence, he best may. We are ignorant, and would fain be otherwise.

Doubtless, with respect to such a poet, we covet his biography. We desire to look back upon the process of gathering together in a lifetime, the materials of the work we behold entire; of elaborating, perhaps under difficulty and with hindrance, all that is familiar to our admiration in the apparent facility of success. And the inner impulse of this effort and operation, what induced it? Did a soul’s delight in its own extended sphere of vision set it, for the gratification of an insuppressible power, on labour, as other men are set on rest? Or did a sense of duty or of love lead it to communicate its own
sensations to mankind? Did an irresistible sympathy with men compel it to bring down and suit its own provision of knowledge and beauty to their narrow scope? Did the personality of such an one stand like an open watch-tower in the midst of the territory it is erected to gaze on, and were the storms and calms, the stars and meteors, its watchman was wont to report of, the habitual variegation of his every-day life, as they glanced across its open roof or lay reflected on its four-square parapet? Or did some sunken and darkened chamber of imagery witness, in the artificial illumination of every storied compartment we are permitted to contemplate, how rare and precious were the outlooks through here and there an embrasure upon a world beyond, and how blankly would have pressed on the artificer the boundary of his daily life, except for the amorous diligence with which he had rendered permanent by
art whatever came to diversify the gloom? Still, fraught with instruction and interest as such details undoubtedly are, we can, if needs be, dispense with them. The man passes, the work remains. The work speaks for itself, as we say: and the biography of the worker is no more necessary to an understanding or enjoyment of it, than is a model or anatomy of some tropical tree, to the right tasting of the fruit we are familiar with on the market-stall,—or a geologist’s map and stratification, to the prompt recognition of the hill-top, our land-mark of every day.

We turn with stronger needs to the genius of an opposite tendency—the subjective poet of modern classification. He, gifted like the objective poet with the fuller perception of nature and man, is impelled to embody the thing he perceives, not so much with reference to the many below as to the one above him, the supreme Intelligence which apprehends
all things in their absolute truth,—an ultimate view ever aspired to, if but partially attained, by the poet's own soul. Not what man sees, but what God sees—the Ideas of Plato, seeds of creation lying burningly on the Divine Hand—it is toward these that he struggles. Not with the combination of humanity in action, but with the primal elements of humanity he has to do; and he digs where he stands,—preferring to seek them in his own soul as the nearest reflex of that absolute Mind, according to the intuitions of which he desires to perceive and speak. Such a poet does not deal habitually with the picturesque groupings and tempestuous tossings of the forest-trees, but with their roots and fibres naked to the chalk and stone. He does not paint pictures and hang them on the walls, but rather carries them on the retina of his own eyes: we must look deep into his human eyes, to see those pictures on them. He is
rather a seer, accordingly, than a fashioner, and what he produces will be less a work than an effluence. That effluence cannot be easily considered in abstraction from his personality,—being indeed the very radiance and aroma of his personality, projected from it but not separated. Therefore, in our approach to the poetry, we necessarily approach the personality of the poet; in apprehending it we apprehend him, and certainly we cannot love it without loving him. Both for love's and for understanding's sake we desire to know him, and as readers of his poetry must be readers of his biography also.

I shall observe, in passing, that it seems not so much from any essential distinction in the faculty of the two poets or in the nature of the objects contemplated by either, as in the more immediate adaptability of these objects to the distinct purpose of each, that
the objective poet, in his appeal to the aggregate human mind, chooses to deal with the doings of men, (the result of which dealing, in its pure form, when even description, as suggesting a describer, is dispensed with, is what we call dramatic poetry), while the subjective poet, whose study has been himself, appealing through himself to the absolute Divine mind, prefers to dwell upon those external scenic appearances which strike out most abundantly and uninterruptedly his inner light and power, selects that silence of the earth and sea in which he can best hear the beating of his individual heart, and leaves the noisy, complex, yet imperfect exhibitions of nature in the manifold experience of man around him, which serve only to distract and suppress the working of his brain. These opposite tendencies of genius will be more readily descried in their artistic effect than in their moral spring and cause.
Pushed to an extreme and manifested as a deformity, they will be seen plainest of all in the fault of either artist, when subsidiarily to the human interest of his work his occasional illustrations from scenic nature are introduced as in the earlier works of the originative painters—men and women filling the foreground with consummate mastery, while mountain, grove and rivulet show like an anticipatory revenge on that succeeding race of landscape-painters whose "figures" disturb the perfection of their earth and sky. It would be idle to inquire, of these two kinds of poetic faculty in operation, which is the higher or even rarer endowment. If the subjective might seem to be the ultimate requirement of every age, the objective, in the strictest state, must still retain its original value. For it is with this world, as starting point and basis alike, that we shall always have to concern ourselves: the world is not to
be learned and thrown aside, but reverted to and relearned. The spiritual comprehension may be infinitely subtilised, but the raw material it operates upon, must remain. There may be no end of the poets who communicate to us what they see in an object with reference to their own individuality; what it was before they saw it, in reference to the aggregate human mind, will be as desirable to know as ever. Nor is there any reason why these two modes of poetic faculty may not issue hereafter from the same poet in successive perfect works, examples of which, according to what are now considered the exigences of art, we have hitherto possessed in distinct individuals only. A mere running-in of the one faculty upon the other, is, of course, the ordinary circumstance. Far more rarely it happens that either is found so decidedly prominent and superior, as to be pronounced comparatively
pure: while of the perfect shield, with the gold and the silver side set up for all comers to challenge, there has yet been no instance. Either faculty in its eminent state is doubtless conceded by Providence as a best gift to men, according to their especial want. There is a time when the general eye has, so to speak, absorbed its fill of the phenomena around it, whether spiritual or material, and desires rather to learn the exacter significance of what it possesses, than to receive any augmentation of what is possessed. Then is the opportunity for the poet of loftier vision, to lift his fellows, with their half-apprehensions, up to his own sphere, by intensifying the import of details and rounding the universal meaning. The influence of such an achievement will not soon die out. A tribe of successors (Homerides) working more or less in the same spirit, dwell on his discoveries and reinforce his doctrine; till, at
unawares, the world is found to be subsisting wholly on the shadow of a reality, on sentiments diluted from passions, on the tradition of a fact, the convention of a moral, the straw of last year's harvest. Then is the imperative call for the appearance of another sort of poet, who shall at once replace this intellectual rumination of food swallowed long ago, by a supply of the fresh and living swathe; getting at new substance by breaking up the assumed wholes into parts of independent and unclassed value, careless of the unknown laws for recombining them (it will be the business of yet another poet to suggest those hereafter), prodigal of objects for men's outer and not inner sight, shaping for their uses a new and different creation from the last, which it displaces by the right of life over death,—to endure until, in the inevitable process, its very sufficiency to itself shall require, at length, an exposition of its affinity to something
higher,—when the positive yet conflicting facts shall again precipitate themselves under a harmonising law, and one more degree will be apparent for a poet to climb in that mighty ladder, of which, however cloud-involved and undefined may glimmer the topmost step, the world dares no longer doubt that its gradations ascend.

Such being the two kinds of artists, it is naturally, as I have shown, with the biography of the subjective poet that we have the deeper concern. Apart from his recorded life altogether, we might fail to determine with satisfactory precision to what class his productions belong, and what amount of praise is assignable to the producer. Certainly, in the face of any conspicuous achievement of genius, philosophy, no less than sympathetic instinct, warrants our belief in a great moral purpose having mainly inspired even where it does not visibly look out of
the same. Greatness in a work suggests an adequate instrumentality; and none of the lower incitements, however they may avail to initiate or even effect many considerable displays of power, simulating the nobler inspiration to which they are mistakenly referred, have been found able, under the ordinary conditions of humanity, to task themselves to the end of so exacting a performance as a poet’s complete work. As soon will the galvanism that provokes to violent action the muscles of a corpse, induce it to cross the chamber steadily: sooner.

The love of displaying power for the display’s sake, the love of riches, of distinction, of notoriety,—the desire of a triumph over rivals, and the vanity in the applause of friends,—each and all of such whetted appetites grow intenser by exercise and increasingly sagacious as to the best and readiest means of self-appeasement,—while
for any of their ends, whether the money or the pointed finger of the crowd, or the flattery and hate to heart’s content, there are cheaper prices to pay, they will all find soon enough, than the bestowment of a life upon a labour, hard, slow, and not sure. Also, assuming the proper moral aim to have produced a work, there are many and various states of an aim: it may be more intense than clear-sighted, or too easily satisfied with a lower field of activity than a steadier aspiration would reach. All the bad poetry in the world (accounted poetry, that is, by its affinities) will be found to result from some one of the infinite degrees of discrepancy between the attributes of the poet’s soul, occasioning a want of correspondency between his work and the verities of nature,—issuing in poetry, false under whatever form, which shows a thing not as it is to mankind generally, nor as it is to the particular describer,
but as it is supposed to be for some unreal neutral mood, midway between both and of value to neither, and living its brief minute simply through the indolence of whoever accepts it or his incapacity to denounce a cheat. Although of such depths of failure there can be no question here we must in every case betake ourselves to the review of a poet's life ere we determine some of the nicer questions concerning his poetry,—more especially if the performance we seek to estimate aright, has been obstructed and cut short of completion by circumstances,—a disastrous youth or a premature death. We may learn from the biography whether his spirit invariably saw and spoke from the last height to which it had attained. An absolute vision is not for this world, but we are permitted a continual approximation to it, every degree of which in the individual, provided it exceed the attainment of the masses, must procure
him a clear advantage. Did the poet ever
attain to a higher platform than where he
rested and exhibited a result? Did he know
more than he spoke of?

I concede however, in respect to the subject
of our study as well as some few other illus­
trious examples, that the unmistakeable quality
of the verse would be evidence enough, under
usual circumstances, not only of the kind and
degree of the intellectual but of the moral
constitution of Shelley: the whole personality
of the poet shining forward from the poems,
without much need of going further to seek
it. The "Remains"—produced within a
period of ten years, and at a season of life
when other men of at all comparable genius
have hardly done more than prepare the eye
for future sight and the tongue for speech—
present us with the complete enginery of a
poet, as signal in the excellence of its several
adaptitudes as transcendent in the combina­
tion of effects,—examples, in fact, of the whole poet’s function of beholding with an understanding keenness the universe, nature and man, in their actual state of perfection in imperfection,—of the whole poet’s virtue of being untempted by the manifold partial developments of beauty and good on every side, into leaving them the ultimates he found them,—induced by the facility of the gratification of his own sense of those qualities, or by the pleasure of acquiescence in the short-comings of his predecessors in art, and the pain of disturbing their conventionalisms,—the whole poet’s virtue, I repeat, of looking higher than any manifestation yet made of both beauty and good, in order to suggest from the utmost actual realisation of the one a corresponding capability in the other, and out of the calm, purity and energy of nature, to reconstitute and store up for the forthcoming stage of man’s being, a gift in repay-
ment of that former gift, in which man's own thought and passion had been lavished by the poet on the else-incompleted magnificence of the sunrise, the else-uninterpreted mystery of the lake,—so drawing out, lifting up, and assimilating this ideal of a future man, thus described as possible, to the present reality of the poet's soul already arrived at the higher state of development, and still aspirant to elevate and extend itself in conformity with its still-improving perceptions of, no longer the eventual Human, but the actual Divine. In conjunction with which noble and rare powers, came the subordinate power of delivering these attained results to the world in an embodiment of verse more closely answering to and indicative of the process of the informing spirit, (failing as it occasionally does, in art, only to succeed in highest art),—with a diction more adequate to the task in its natural and acquired richness, its material
colour and spiritual transparency,—the whole being moved by and suffused with a music at once of the soul and the sense, expressive both of an external might of sincere passion and an internal fitness and consonancy,—than can be attributed to any other writer whose record is among us. Such was the spheric poetical faculty of Shelley, as its own self-sufficing central light, radiating equally through immaturity and accomplishment, through many fragments and occasional completion, reveals it to a competent judgment.

But the acceptance of this truth by the public, has been retarded by certain objections which cast us back on the evidence of biography, even with Shelley's poetry in our hands. Except for the particular character of these objections, indeed, the non-appreciation of his contemporaries would simply class, now that it is over, with a series of
experiences which have necessarily happened and needlessly been wondered at, ever since the world began, and concerning which any present anger may well be moderated, no less in justice to our forerunners than in policy to ourselves. For the misapprehensiveness of his age is exactly what a poet is sent to remedy; and the interval between his operation and the generally perceptible effect of it, is no greater, less indeed, than in many other departments of the great human effort. The "E pur si muove" of the astronomer was as bitter a word as any uttered before or since by a poet over his rejected living work, in that depth of conviction which is so like despair.

But in this respect was the experience of Shelley peculiarly unfortunate—that the disbelief in him as a man, even preceded the disbelief in him as a writer; the misconstruction of his moral nature preparing the
way for the misappreciation of his intellectual labours. There existed from the beginning,—simultaneous with, indeed anterior to his earliest noticeable works, and not brought forward to counteract any impression they had succeeded in making,—certain charges against his private character and life, which, if substantiated to their whole breadth, would materially disturb, I do not attempt to deny, our reception and enjoyment of his works, however wonderful the artistic qualities of these. For we are not sufficiently supplied with instances of genius of his order, to be able to pronounce certainly how many of its constituent parts have been tasked and strained to the production of a given lie, and how high and pure a mood of the creative mind may be dramatically simulated as the poet’s habitual and exclusive one. The doubts, therefore, arising from such a question, required to be set at rest, as they were
effectually, by those early authentic notices of Shelley's career and the corroborative accompaniment of his letters, in which not only the main tenor and principal result of his life, but the purity and beauty of many of the processes which had conduced to them, were made apparent enough for the general reader's purpose,—whoever lightly condemned Shelley first, on the evidence of reviews and gossip, as lightly acquitting him now, on that of memoirs and correspondence. Still, it is advisable to lose no opportunity of strengthening and completing the chain of biographical testimony; much more, of course, for the sake of the poet's original lovers, whose volunteered sacrifice of particular principle in favour of absorbing sympathy we might desire to dispense with, than for the sake of his foolish haters, who have long since diverted upon other objects their obtuseness or malignancy. A full life of
Shelley should be written at once, while the materials for it continue in reach; not to minister to the curiosity of the public, but to obliterate the last stain of that false life which was forced on the public's attention before it had any curiosity on the matter,—a biography, composed in harmony with the present general disposition to have faith in him, yet not shrinking from a candid statement of all ambiguous passages, through a reasonable confidence that the most doubtful of them will be found consistent with a belief in the eventual perfection of his character, according to the poor limits of our humanity. Nor will men persist in confounding, any more than God confounds, with genuine infidelity and an atheism of the heart, those passionate, impatient struggles of a boy towards distant truth and love, made in the dark, and ended by one sweep of the natural seas before the full moral
sunrise could shine out on him. Crude convictions of boyhood, conveyed in imperfect and inapt forms of speech,—for such things all boys have been pardoned. There are growing-pains, accompanied by temporary distortion, of the soul also. And it would be hard indeed upon this young Titan of genius, murmuring in divine music his human ignorances, through his very thirst for knowledge, and his rebellion, in mere aspiration to law, if the melody itself substantiated the error, and the tragic cutting short of life perpetuated into sins, such faults as, under happier circumstances, would have been left behind by the consent of the most arrogant moralist, forgotten on the lowest steps of youth.

The responsibility of presenting to the public a biography of Shelley, does not, however lie with me: I have only to make it a little easier by arranging these few supplementary letters, with a recognition of the
value of the whole collection. This value I take to consist in a most truthful conformity of the Correspondence, in its limited degree, with the moral and intellectual character of the writer as displayed in the highest manifestations of his genius. Letters and poems are obviously an act of the same mind, produced by the same law, only differing in the application to the individual or collective understanding. Letters and poems may be used indifferently as the basement of our opinion upon the writer's character; the finished expression of a sentiment in the poems, giving light and significance to the rudiments of the same in the letters, and these, again, in their incipiency and unripeness, authenticating the exalted mood and reattaching it to the personality of the writer. The musician speaks on the note he sings with; there is no change in the scale, as he diminishes the volume into familiar
intercourse. There is nothing of that jarring between the man and the author, which has been found so amusing or so melancholy; no dropping of the tragic mask, as the crowd melts away; no mean discovery of the real motives of a life's achievement, often, in other lives, laid bare as pitifully as when, at the close of a holiday, we catch sight of the internal lead-pipes and wood-valves, to which, and not to the ostensible conch and dominant Triton of the fountain, we have owed our admired waterwork. No breaking out, in household privacy, of hatred anger and scorn, incongruous with the higher mood and suppressed artistically in the book: no brutal return to self-delighting, when the audience of philanthropic schemes is out of hearing: no indecent stripping off the grander feeling and rule of life as too costly and cumbersome for every-day wear. Whatever Shelley was, he was with an admirable sincerity. It was not always
truth that he thought and spoke; but in the purity of truth he spoke and thought always. Everywhere is apparent his belief in the existence of Good, to which Evil is an accident; his faithful holding by what he assumed to be the former, going everywhere in company with the tenderest pity for those acting or suffering on the opposite hypothesis. For he was tender, though tenderness is not always the characteristic of very sincere natures; he was eminently both tender and sincere. And not only do the same affection and yearning after the well-being of his kind, appear in the letters as in the poems, but they express themselves by the same theories and plans, however crude and unsound. There is no reservation of a subtler, less costly, more serviceable remedy for his own ill, than he has proposed for the general one; nor does he ever contemplate an object on his own account, from a less elevation than
he uses in exhibiting it to the world. How shall we help believing Shelley to have been, in his ultimate attainment, the splendid spirit of his own best poetry, when we find even his carnal speech to agree faithfully, at faintest as at strongest, with the tone and rhythm of his most oracular utterances?

For the rest, these new letters are not offered as presenting any new feature of the poet's character. Regarded in themselves, and as the substantive productions of a man, their importance would be slight. But they possess interest beyond their limits, in confirming the evidence just dwelt on, of the poetical mood of Shelley being only the intensification of his habitual mood; the same tongue only speaking, for want of the special excitement to sing. The very first letter, as one instance for all, strikes the key-note of the predominating sentiment of Shelley throughout his whole life—his sympathy with the oppressed.
And when we see him at so early an age, casting out, under the influence of such a sympathy, letters and pamphlets on every side, we accept it as the simple exemplification of the sincerity, with which, at the close of his life, he spoke of himself, as—

"One whose heart a stranger's tear might wear
As water-drops the sandy fountain stone;
Who loved and pitied all things, and could moan
For woes which others hear not, and could see
The absent with the glass of phantasy,
And near the poor and trampled sit and weep,
Following the captive to his dungeon deep—
One who was as a nerve o'er which do creep
The else-unfelt oppressions of this earth."

Such sympathy with his kind was evidently developed in him to an extraordinary and even morbid degree, at a period when the general intellectual powers it was impatient to put in motion, were immature or deficient.

I conjecture, from a review of the various publications of Shelley's youth, that one of the causes of his failure at the outset, was the peculiar practicalness of his mind, which
was not without a determinate effect on his progress in theorising. An ordinary youth, who turns his attention to similar subjects, discovers falsities, incongruities, and various points for amendment, and, in the natural advance of the purely critical spirit unchecked by considerations of remedy, keeps up before his young eyes so many instances of the same error and wrong, that he finds himself unawares arrived at the startling conclusion, that all must be changed—or nothing: in the face of which plainly impossible achievement, he is apt (looking perhaps a little more serious by the time he touches at the decisive issue), to feel, either carelessly or considerately, that his own attempting a single piece of service would be worse than useless even, and to refer the whole task to another age and person—safe in proportion to his incapacity. Wanting words to speak, he has never made a fool of himself by speaking.
But, in Shelley's case, the early fervour and power to see, was accompanied by as precocious a fertility to contrive: he endeavoured to realise as he went on idealising; every wrong had simultaneously its remedy, and, out of the strength of his hatred for the former, he took the strength of his confidence in the latter—till suddenly he stood pledged to the defence of a set of miserable little expedients, just as if they represented great principles, and to an attack upon various great principles, really so, without leaving himself time to examine whether, because they were antagonistical to the remedy he had suggested, they must therefore be identical or even essentially connected with the wrong he sought to cure,—playing with blind passion into the hands of his enemies, and dashing at whatever red cloak was held forth to him, as the cause of the fireball he had last been stung with—mistaking Churchdom
for Christianity, and for marriage, "the sale of love" and the law of sexual oppression.

Gradually, however, he was leaving behind him this low practical dexterity, unable to keep up with his widening intellectual perception; and, in exact proportion as he did so, his true power strengthened and proved itself. Gradually he was raised above the contemplation of spots and the attempt at effacing them, to the great Abstract Light, and, through the discrepancy of the creation, to the sufficiency of the First Cause. Gradually he was learning that the best way of removing abuses is to stand fast by truth. Truth is one, as they are manifold; and innumerable negative effects are produced by the upholding of one positive principle. I shall say what I think,—had Shelley lived he would have finally ranged himself with the Christians; his very instinct for helping the weaker side (if numbers make strength), his
very "hate of hate," which at first mistranslated itself into delirious Queen Mab notes and the like, would have got clearer-sighted by exercise. The preliminary step to following Christ, is the leaving the dead to bury their dead—not clamouring on His doctrine for an especial solution of difficulties which are referable to the general problem of the universe. Already he had attained to a profession of "a worship to the Spirit of good within, which requires (before it sends that inspiration forth, which impresses its likeness upon all it creates) devoted and disinterested homage, as Coleridge says,"—and Paul likewise. And we find in one of his last exquisite fragments, avowedly a record of one of his own mornings and its experience, as it dawned on him at his soul and body's best in his boat on the Serchio—that as surely as

"The stars burnt out in the pale blue air,
And the thin white moon lay withering there—"
Day had kindled the dewy woods,
And the rocks above, and the stream below,
And the vapours in their multitudes,
And the Apennine's shroud of summer snow—
Day had awakened all things that be;'

just so surely, he tells us (stepping forward from this delicious dance-music, choragus-like, into the grander measure befitting the final enunciation),

"All rose to do the task He set to each,
Who shaped us to his ends and not our own;
The million rose to learn, and One to teach
What none yet ever knew or can be known."

No more difference than this, from David's pregnant conclusion so long ago!

Meantime, as I call Shelley a moral man, because he was true, simple-hearted, and brave, and because what he acted corresponded to what he knew, so I call him a man of religious mind, because every audacious negative cast up by him against the Divine, was inter-penetrated with a mood of reverence and adoration,—and because I find him every-
where taking for granted some of the capital dogmas of Christianity, while most vehemently denying their historical basement. There is such a thing as an efficacious knowledge of and belief in the politics of Junius, or the poetry of Rowley, though a man should at the same time dispute the title of Chatterton to the one, and consider the author of the other, as Byron wittily did, "really, truly, nobody at all."* There is even such a thing, we come to learn wonderingly in these very letters, as a profound sensibility and adaptitude for art, while the science of

* Or, to take our illustrations from the writings of Shelley himself, there is such a thing as admirably appreciating a work by Andrea Verocchio,—and fancifully characterising the Pisan Torre Guelfa by the Ponte a Mare, black against the sunsets,—and consummately painting the islet of San Clemente with its penitentiary for rebellious priests, to the west between Venice and the Lido—while you believe the first to be a fragment of an antique sarcophagus,—the second, Ugolino's Tower of Famine (the vestiges of which should be sought for in the Piazza de' Cavalieri)—and the third (as I convinced myself last summer at Venice), San Servolo with its madhouse—which, far from being "windowless," is as full of windows as a barrack.
the percipient is so little advanced as to admit of his stronger admiration for Guido (and Carlo Dolce!1) than for Michael Angelo. A Divine Being has Himself said, that "a word against the Son of man shall be forgiven to a man," while "a word against the Spirit of God" (implying a general deliberate preference of perceived evil to perceived good) "shall not be forgiven to a man." Also, in religion, one earnest and unextorted assertion of belief should outweigh, as a matter of testimony, many assertions of unbelief. The fact that there is a gold-region is established by the finding of one lump, though you miss the vein never so often.

He died before his youth ended. In taking the measure of him as a man, he must be considered on the whole and at his ultimate spiritual stature, and not be judged of at the immaturity and by the mistakes of ten years before: that, indeed, would be to judge of
the author of "Julian and Maddalo" by "Zastrozzi." Let the whole truth be told of his worst mistake. I believe, for my own part, that if anything could now shame or grieve Shelley, it would be an attempt to vindicate him at the expense of another.

In forming a judgment, I would, however, press on the reader the simple justice of considering tenderly his constitution of body as well as mind, and how unfavourable it was to the steady symmetries of conventional life; the body, in the torture of incurable disease, refusing to give repose to the bewildered soul, tossing in its hot fever of the fancy,—and the laudanum-bottle making but a perilous and pitiful truce between these two. He was constantly subject to "that state of mind" (I quote his own note to "Hellas") "in which ideas may be supposed to assume the force of sensation, through the confusion of thought with the
objects of thought, and excess of passion animating the creations of the imagination:” in other words, he was liable to remarkable delusions and hallucinations. The nocturnal attack in Wales, for instance, was assuredly a delusion; and I venture to express my own conviction, derived from a little attention to the circumstances of either story, that the idea of the enamoured lady following him to Naples, and of the “man in the cloak” who struck him at the Pisan post-office, were equally illusory,—the mere projection, in fact, from himself, of the image of his own love and hate.

“To thirst and find no fill—to wail and wander
With short unsteady steps—to pause and ponder—
To feel the blood run through the veins and tingle
When busy thought and blind sensation mingle,—
To nurse the image of unfelt caresses
Till dim imagination just possesses
The half-created shadow”—

of unfelt caresses,—and of unfelt blows as well: to such conditions was his genius sub-
ject. It was not at Rome only (where he heard a mystic voice exclaiming, "Cenci, Cenci," in reference to the tragic theme which occupied him at the time),—it was not at Rome only that he mistook the cry of "old rags." The habit of somnambulism is said to have extended to the very last days of his life.

Let me conclude with a thought of Shelley as a poet. In the hierarchy of creative minds, it is the presence of the highest faculty that gives first rank, in virtue of its kind, not degree; no pretension of a lower nature, whatever the completeness of development or variety of effect, impeding the precedence of the rarer endowment though only in the germ. The contrary is sometimes maintained; it is attempted to make the lower gifts (which are potentially included in the higher faculty) of independent value, and equal to some exercise of the special
function. For instance, should not a poet possess common sense? Then the possession of abundant common sense implies a step towards becoming a poet. Yes; such a step as the lapidary's, when, strong in the fact of carbon entering largely into the composition of the diamond, he heaps up a sack of charcoal in order to compete with the Koh-i-noor. I pass at once, therefore, from Shelley's minor excellencies to his noblest and pre-dominating characteristic.

This I call his simultaneous perception of Power and Love in the absolute, and of Beauty and Good in the concrete, while he throws, from his poet's station between both, swifter, subtler, and more numerous films for the connexion of each with each, than have been thrown by any modern artificer of whom I have knowledge; proving how, as he says,

"The spirit of the worm within the sod,
In love and worship blends itself with God."
I would rather consider Shelley's poetry as a sublime fragmentary essay towards a presentment of the correspondency of the universe to Deity, of the natural to the spiritual, and of the actual to the ideal, than I would isolate and separately appraise the worth of many detachable portions which might be acknowledged as utterly perfect in a lower moral point of view, under the mere conditions of art. It would be easy to take my stand on successful instances of objectivity in Shelley: there is the unrivalled "Cenci;" there is the "Julian and Maddalo" too; there is the magnificent "Ode to Naples:" why not regard, it may be said, the less organised matter as the radiant elemental foam and solution, out of which would have been evolved, eventually, creations as perfect even as those? But I prefer to look for the highest attainment, not simply the high,—and, seeing it, I hold by it. There is
surely enough of the work "Shelley" to be known enduringly among men, and, I believe, to be accepted of God, as human work may; and around the imperfect proportions of such, the most elaborated productions of ordinary art must arrange themselves as inferior illustrations.

It is because I have long held these opinions in assurance and gratitude, that I catch at the opportunity offered to me of expressing them here; knowing that the alacrity to fulfil an humble office conveys more love than the acceptance of the honour of a higher one, and that better, therefore, than the signal service it was the dream of my boyhood to render to his fame and memory, may be the saying of a few, inadequate words upon these scarcely more important supplementary letters of Shelley.

Paris, Dec. 4th, 1851.
LETTERS.
LETTERS.

LETTER I.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE STATESMAN, LONDON.

University College, Oxford,
February 22nd, 1811.

Sir,

The present age has been distinguished from every former period of English history, by the number of those writers who have suffered the penalties of the law for the freedom and the spirit with which they descanted on the morals of the age, and chastised the vices, or ridiculed the follies, of individuals in every rank of life, and among every description of society. In former periods of British civilisation, as during the flourishing ages of Greece and Rome, the
oratorical censor, and the satirical poet, were regarded as exercising only that just preeminence to which superior genius, and an intimate knowledge of life and human nature, were conceived to entitle them; the MacFlecknoe of Dryden, the Dunciad and the satirical imitations of Pope, remained secure from molestation by the Attorney-General; the literary castigators of a Bolingbroke and a Wharton enjoyed the triumph of truth and justice unawed by ex-officios; and Addison could describe a coward and a liar without being called to account for his inuendos by the interference of the judicial servants of the king.

But times are altered, and a man may now be sent to prison for a couple of years, and ruined for life, because he "calls a spade a spade," and tells a public individual the very truth(s) that are obvious to the most partial of his friends.
As I am not in the number of those determined censors to whom Newgate is an elysium, and whom the very idea of being prosecuted by the Attorney-General exhilarates more effectually than all the treasures of the Castalian fountain; yet as I love to speculate on the virtues and the vices of the world, it has been the object of my anxious study to discover some honest and easy means of speaking the whole truth without incurring the vengeance of government. The ultimate intention of my aim is to induce a meeting of such enlightened, unprejudiced members of the community, whose independent principles expose them to evils which might thus become alleviated, and to form a methodical society which should be organised so as to resist the coalition of the enemies of liberty, which, at present, renders any expression of opinion on matters of policy dangerous to individuals.
Although perfectly unacquainted with you privately, I address you as a common friend to liberty, thinking that in cases of this urgency and importance, etiquette ought not to stand in the way of usefulness. With the hope of securing your co-operation,

I remain,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.
LETTER II.

TO J. H. GRAHAM, ESQ.

University College, Oxford,

DEAR GRAHAM,

February 26th, 1811.

The man who comes forward to controvert any long-received opinion, should be fully prepared with proofs to bear him out in all his assertions, for he may be assured that his attempt will be regarded with feelings of suspicion and distrust. There is a kind of superstitious veneration which inclines people to adhere with pertinacity to the ideas which they have formed, no matter whether good or bad. What I sent you last is not enough.
for a pamphlet, I grant you, but I cannot help it. A subject soon exhausts itself with me. You must get some of your volume friends to spin the text for you. There are three classes of women that may be denominated from the Greek numbers—Maids of the Singular, Wives of the Dual, and Courtesans of the Plural.

These may again be compounded according to the different circumstances of each—the constant mistress may be styled the Single-dual; widows, the Dual-single; and faithless wives, the Dual-plural.

Re-married widows may assume this latter denomination also—which, however, I do not mean as the least reflection on their chastity; but that I find myself quite at a loss in what other class to comprehend them—and it may be all the same in the Greek perhaps.

I am sorry that so much has been said about the blues; it is a pity that such a
hue-and-cry has been raised against them all, good, bad, and indifferent. John Bull would have settled it best by just letting them alone, leaving the disagreeable ones to die off in single blessedness.

But the ceruleanly blue—the true celestial, she who really has heaven in her eye; follow her to the world's end. Love her!—Adore her!—You must and will. Win her and wear, if you can. She is the most delightful of God's creatures,—Heaven's best gift; man's joy and pride in prosperity;—man's support and comforter in affliction. I know there are philosophical unbelievers who would class my true celestials among fabulous creatures. I own they are rare; but that such have existed, men of undoubted credibility and wisdom (Solomon among others) have testified in the strongest terms. That such do exist I can affirm—for I know some—one I hope to have for my own.—In the
seasons of silence and solitude only do we learn to appreciate woman. The hurry of the world shuts her out from our soul: but when there is silence in the mind,—when the heart rests,—when the hush of the world has breathed over the spirit,—when the mind, self-left, feels itself in its loneliness,—then is its hour of contemplation.

In a history of Henry IV., it is asserted that an ingenious artist contrived to inscribe the names of all good kings who had appeared in the world within the circumference of a farthing, and that he had still sufficient room for all the good kings who might appear to the end of the world—the libeller who added that a smaller coin would be too large for inscribing the names of all good women who have lived since the Patriarch, deserves to be pricked with needles, till he gives up that black soul of his. His own mother, if alive, ought to stick the first needle into his carcase.
—In a week or ten days I hope to see you.—
You well know all the claims you have upon the affection of

Yours ever,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.
LETTER III.

TO J. H. GRAHAM, ESQ.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD,

DEAR GRAHAM,

March 2nd, 1811.

In referring back to an early volume of the Philosophical Transactions I find there a curious account of a young woman, who, although born without a tongue, contrived to exercise the prerogative of her sex with as much acumen as those who had been better favoured in that valuable medium of organic sound: indeed, I am led to believe, according to the account, that although she was not gifted with that formidable weapon, that she not only sustained no apparent loss by it, but
could defend herself with *singular* volubility, to the great surprise and perhaps disappointment of those who affect to rail at female eloquence.

I refer you to the work itself for particulars—you will find it contained in the thirty-ninth number. I quote the case to prove the illiberality of those declaimers of woman's natural right, and to prove that Providence, although in that one instance he unaccountably forgot to give the woman a tongue, did not fail supplying her with the means of being heard. Some malevolent wit may probably with more flippancy than discretion say that nature did *once*, in pity for mankind, make a woman without a *tongue*; but that her natural inclination for talking quickened her invention, and she learned to speak.—I adduce this as an instance to prove woman's birthright, the decree of nature, that, born without a tongue,
yet woman should not be deprived the privilege of speech. I conclude with an epigram on women:—

"We men have many faults,
Poor women have but two:—
There's nothing good they say,
There's nothing good they do.

As to the rest:—

"Thou sayest well, and it holds well too."

Believe me,

Ever yours most affectionately,

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLY.
LETTER IV.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD,

My dear Sir,

March 3th, 1811.

There exist in all things two principles of right and of wrong; and in the human mind, a tribunal to judge thereof,—judge, discriminate, determine; eschew wrong, and adhere tenaciously to right. Let us swear eternal hatred to religious fanaticism,—that foul pander to the lust of tyranny, that bane of human freedom, that eternal enemy to mental peace. Theologians boast, and monopolists enjoy, the utility of their doctrines, because partial utility may exist independently of truth and universality;
which, under all systems, are held to be secondary considerations, or rather, matters at no rate to be put in competition with presumed utility.

Mohammed, apparently well aware of the general infirmity of human nature, and the paramount influence of superstitious hopes and fears upon the limited and apprehensive reason of man, invented his paradise of eternal enjoyment for true believers, together with the punishment of exclusion and annihilation for infidels. He had ample precedent for his direction. And this is the sure mode which the great leaders and shepherds of man, both before and since Mohammed, have embraced, to enable them to lead and shear their flock. Their instructions and communications have been invariably,—prostrate yourself before the altars of the Divinity (us), obey the divine laws (ours), both with regard to the present
ON RIGHT AND WRONG.

life, and that to come, which we have taught you to expect. These laws and principles are sedulously and deeply engraven upon the plastic minds of youth,—a profound, universal and almost immovable prejudice is established: every casual insurrection of reason and common sense is sedulously watched by the ever-wakeful eye of theologic and aristocratic espionnage, and crushed in the bud, by speedy and terrible punishments, enhanced by the threat of a reversion of blazing and unremitting tortures in a new world of eternity.

Religion, which should be the binding principle,—the cement of universal society, is, on the contrary, the instrument of universal contention and separation. It is, in most countries, merely the bond of aristocracy, monopoly, and despotism; and far from being the harbinger of peace, of justice, and of true morality, filling the human mind
with the fooleries and balderdash of interested and fanatical superstition, it leaves no room for the natural and real virtues to expand. Superstition changes the most indifferent actions into crimes, whilst it bestows its sanction upon the most horrible and flagitious acts. In proportion to the enforcement of strict fanatical observances, will be the progress, amidst a general hypocrisy, of crimes of the highest order; a truth which, I fear, the deluded world is destined still further to experience and exemplify.

Of all reforms that of religion is most essentially necessary; as reformers, apparently unaware of the fact, will ultimately experience. Factitious religion, all over the earth, stands under the indispensable need of a thorough and drastic purge, to cleanse it from the impurities and grossness of superstitions and expletive fanaticism. It requires, for the well-being, comfort, and
salvation of man, to be docked of precisely the one-half of its references [?].

Believe me,

Yours affectionately ever,

P. B. SHELLEY.

P.S. Will you take the trouble of perusing the accompanying MS., and favour me with your opinion on the subject?
LETTER V.

TO JAMES LAWRENCE, ESQ.

LYMOUTH, BARNSTAPLE, DEVON,

August 17th, 1812.

SIR,

I feel peculiar satisfaction in seizing the opportunity which your politeness places in my power, of expressing to you personally (as I may say) a high acknowledgment of my sense of your talents and principles, which, before I conceived it possible that I should ever know you, I sincerely entertained. Your "Empire of the Nairs," which I read this spring, succeeded in making me a perfect convert to its doctrines. I then retained no doubts of the evils of marriage,—Mrs.
Wollstonecraft reasons too well for that; but I had been dull enough not to perceive the greatest argument against it, until developed in the “Nairs,” viz. prostitution both legal and illegal.

I am a young man, not yet of age, and have now been married a year to a woman younger than myself. Love seems inclined to stay in the prison; and my only reason for putting him in chains, whilst convinced of the unholliness of the act, was, a knowledge that, in the present state of society, if love is not thus villainously treated, she, who is most loved, will be treated worse by a misjudging world. In short, seduction, which term could have no meaning in a rational society, has now a most tremendous one; the fictitious merit attached to chastity has made that a forerunner of the most terrible of ruins, which, in Malabar, would be a pledge of honour and homage.
If there is any enormous and desolating crime, of which I should shudder to be accused, it is seduction. I need not say how much I admire "Love;" and little as a British public seems to appreciate its merit, in never permitting it to emerge from a first edition, it is with satisfaction I find, that justice has conceded abroad what bigotry has denied at home.

I shall take the liberty of sending you any little publication I may give to the world. Mrs. S. joins with myself in hoping, if we come to London this winter, we may be favoured with the personal friendship of one whose writings we have learnt to esteem.

Yours very truly,

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.
LETTER VI.

TO JAMES LAWRENCE, ESQ.

BIDEFORD, DEVON,

September 4th, 1812.

Sir,

I have read your pamphlet with great interest. In the L. Magazine for September, "Sigma" has laid his sentiments before you, and put the following questions: "Now, Sir, if marriage has no visible sign or ceremony ordained of God, who has ordained the religious forms with which it is now celebrated?"—As the consciences, not only of Unitarians, but of many other respectable members of society, are connected with this inquiry, I beg to submit my humble senti-
ments thereon. By the clergy and laity it is, I believe, generally admitted that marriage is a civil contract; but, whether it be or not, unquestionably the law of the land recognises it as such. It is not pretended that any religious forms were used upon the occasion before Pope Innocent III., who, in his piety and zeal for the Church, enjoined a religious ceremony on marriage. In process of time, his cousins in England, in furtherance of their Christian views, converted the civil into a religious rite. But as we are commanded “not to receive for doctrine the commandments of men,” we should return the borrowed scraps to the Vatican—should regard the injunction of Paul more than the legends of the Pope, and expunge the marriage ceremonial,—at least so much thereof as cannot be reconciled to the feelings of weak minds. By so doing, we may merrily “marry and be given in marriage” like our forefathers and
foremothers, before the introduction of pope-craft and priest-craft.—"Sigma" asks, "why marriage is not put on the same footing with every other regulation for the well-being of society?" Were he to put twenty "why's," he would, in return, have as many "wherefore's." If the ceremony consisted in, "wilt thou have me to be thy husband," and "thou me to be thy wife," with a "yes" or "amen," the marriage, according to the usage in the good primitive patriarchal times, ay, and by the law of this land, would bind the parties, man and wife, as effectual as Pope Innocent's rhodomontade. But then the man that makes a merchandise of heaven—that sells even to his prayers and blessings,—would, like Demetrius, plead for the workmen who made silver models for Diana's temple. How—

"Money, being the common scale
Of things by measure, weight, and tale,
In all the affairs of church and state,
Is both the balance and the weight."
I propose that the present religious ritual be no longer used, and that a short form, treating the marriage as a civil ceremony, be substituted; that, in lieu of the marriage fee now payable to the clergyman, he should be paid double for his attendance to witness the contract and registry thereof, in a proper book of record.

Believe me, Sir,

Yours very truly,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.
LETTER VII.

TO J. H. GRAHAM, ESQ.

HOTEL DE SECHERON, GENEVA,

Dear Graham,

May 15th, 1816.

I was not able to execute your commissions myself; so, if you don’t like the fancy, you are to quarrel with Mary about it, who undertook to select the things. I hope they will reach you safely, and please the bride. I have been confined two days with that serpent in my bosom—my old complaint. This often renders my life extremely miserable, and makes me a bad Christian too. We are advised to “take no heed for the morrow, what we shall eat, or what we shall drink,”
but alas! my constant attention must be given to these articles, lest "sufficient to the day," &c., &c. The things I love best, all fruits and vegetables, are forbidden, as if physicians thought the serpent had distilled his poison into everything in the garden, as divines say he did into our great grandmother. But indeed all foods, I think, equally disagree with me, so that I must never expect to be well, till I become a spirit, and can live without the dangerous helps of meat or drink. I suppose this disorder to be my peculiar speck of mortality, which is to mark my body for the grave; but if it proceeds no faster than it has hitherto done, it may not be so much deemed the arrow of death, as the sickle of time; and it is pretty much the same to me, what instrument the old mower whets his scythe with. We had a very disagreeable journey as far as Dijon. The road, you know, is dull and
tedious. I never opened my eyes, but to number the milestones, nor my mouth, except to yawn. Some say we bring no notions with us into the world; but pick them all up here, through the medium of our senses, and that even the very abstract ideas of time and space are apprehended in our minds by the succession of ideas, of events and objects only. That journey has contradicted this assertion. ’Tis certainly the continuance, not the change of ideas, that renders time long. Variety shortens it. Who has not thought a sermon longer than a play?—The story you mention in your letter has affected me much. I could almost hope that the unhappy woman was not conscious of the force of her own expression, for I have frequently observed, that grief renders persons eloquent, who never were so at any other time. I don’t know whether this may be philosophically or physically accounted for, but I have met with
many instances of this kind. Shakspeare says that *grief is proud and makes its owner stout*. The force of this sentiment does not immediately strike upon the mind, because grief, in general, arises from our imbecility to prevent our suffering either loss or pain, and is, of course, humiliating. But then that thorough indifference we feel after the loss of an object dear to us, gives an idea of independence. Young has very happily expressed this thought, on the death of Narcissa: “My world is dead.”—I am much pleased with Geneva and the sunshine, which makes the lake sparkle with golden beams. During the hot part of the day we read Italian and Latin, and every evening we sail on the lake. Thus pass the hours of

Yours ever,

P. B. SHELLEY.
LETTER VIII.

TO P. W. LONGDILL, ESQ.

Campagne Chapuis, near Coligui, 

June 1st, 1816.

My dear Sir,

I have received your letter, and thank you for the good news. I am as happy as a lark, and care not what sky I fly to, so that I may try my new-found wings. All natural objects make a kindred impression, when the mind is open to their influence. Neither does the wisest man extort all her secrets, and lose his curiosity by finding out all her perfections. What a calm, blessed feeling, when mount and dale and plain, robed in the garment of Spring, extend before our eyes in the warm
light of the sun! What harmony of colours! How the meadows shine with flowers! how the corn waves in the wind! how placidly the lake stretches out its broad mirror,—receives the images of the mountains towering above it! In what bold wavings these rise, until at last they mingle with the blue heaven! What rapture, what extacy, is shed over all! How all enjoys its existence! Who can stand before that sublime, rich, infinite picture, over against that proud mass of mountains, in view of the sun, rising in its majesty, and entertain a degrading thought! Who does not feel exalted above himself? Who does not feel purified, and will not recall, in dark and contracted hours, that sublime image, in order to exalt himself?—The heart is lifted above earth and its trifling concerns, and has intimations of our higher destiny!—Nature is the temple of God, the mountains are its pillars, heaven its dome;
but God dwells neither in temples made by hands, nor in such as are built of earthly materials—yet we adore him in his temple.

My health is improving—and I enjoy our evening excursions on the lake whenever the state of the weather, which has lately been unfavourable, permits the launching of our little boat. Of Geneva and its society we see little—there is more equality of classes here than in England, which occasions a greater freedom and refinement of manners among the lower orders than is to be met with in England. As I like republican institutions, I cannot join in the complaints of some haughty English ladies who are disgusted with Genevese servants. We intend shortly to make a voyage round the lake, and I shall duly send you a copy of our log-book.

Ever yours affectionately,

P. B. SHELLEY.
LETTER IX.

TO WILLIAM GODWIN, ESQ.

MONTALEGRE, NEAR COLOGI, GENEVA,

MY DEAR SIR,—

July 10th, 1816.

I am much obliged to you for writing to me, more particularly at this time when I want your kindness to counterbalance the ill nature of others. We have read your novel. Without alteration of the original plan, which both you and another friend thought impracticable, you have succeeded in extricating yourself out of the difficulties. Your views agree with mine. By clearness of mind, by strength and vitality of will, man can accomplish much in the work of virtue; but with-
out the third cardinal virtue—purity of heart—he lacks the true consecration. Even the former virtues cannot be complete without the last. The mind cannot live in perfect purity and clearness unless the heart be purified from selfish desires;—the delusive phantom of selfishness will always appear near the highest moral aims, and confuse and darken the view. In misfortune we can maintain no true patience and tranquillity, unless the pure heart, free from self-seeking, suppresses all immoderate demands for outward enjoyments, and, in pure love of that for which we suffer, is peaceful and happy. We cannot in the pressure of danger stand perfectly unshaken, nor meet it with unbroken fortitude, unless the pure heart, which desires nothing for itself, but everything for a truly moral aim, is prepared for every sacrifice and deprivation. We cannot manifest perfect temperance and equanimity if
impure passions rage in the heart; even if we subdue one and another desire, a third, and perhaps the most powerful and deadly, may wrest the reins from our hands. Without a pure heart, indolence, which has a source in selfishness, will more or less chain us to the yoke of custom; without love, pure, and tending to the loftiest aims, we shall always be in danger of stopping complacently upon our path, and resting satisfied with our attainments.

However, a man may exhibit a high degree of clearness of mind, patience, tranquillity, fortitude, temperance, without purity of heart; and can become thereby great and distinguished, but not truly virtuous. All the great characters of history, heroes, statesmen, founders, and rulers, were great by the former virtues; but few have the heavenly glory of purity of heart. Since there humanity appears in its greatest majesty, there
the whole life is grasped and exalted, there nurture for all virtues can be found. But since purity of heart finds itself a stranger and neglected in this evil world,—since the will of man, bound to sensuality, may be overcome by the weapons of power,—these pure souls will oftener fall a sacrifice in the conflict than gain the victory over the world, since they wield only the gentle weapons of truth and virtue. As Mary is writing to you, I abstain from giving you an account of our travels.

Believe me,

Ever yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.
LETTER X.

TO THOMAS HOOKHAM, ESQ.

G E N E V A, August 3rd, 1816.

M Y D E A R  H O O K H A M,

* * * * *

Shall I subjoin to a letter of business details of domestic events, or of our adventures and voyages? I will relate only one piece of news, perhaps interesting to you. Lord Byron has completed the Third Canto of "Childe Harold," in a style far superior not only to the two others, but to all his former productions. It is evidently written under the strong influence of that solemn and humanised strain of thought and feeling, of
which Wordsworth is the most exact specimen, and which seems to have arisen from the startling influence of the causes which preceded the events which signalised the French Revolution. From this influence Lord Byron was long preserved by [the] circumstance of his high birth, and the companionship of ordinary men. Thus we have seen in his writings, as the Christians would say, pride, vain-glory, and hypocrisy, malice, revenge, &c. But that he is a person of consummate genius, and that he has composed a poem in the very highest style of poetry, I, the slowest of all men to praise, now not only allow, but assert. It is the privilege and the power of genius to break through the mere accidents of situation, and to vindicate its own pre-eminence by belonging to no class, and submitting, however late, to no control. This poem, of which I speak, merits so much praise as belongs to
the assertion of this privilege. If I except the "Excursion," it is the finest poem of the age. Lord Byron has had as yet some popularity; I think this poem will secure to him a rarer, but sometimes less brilliant jewel,—fame. You understand the distinction, which is such as I would make between Walter Scott and Coleridge, between Solomon's Guide to Health, and Sir W. Drummond's Academic Questions.

Yours very truly,

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

I hope Peacock's book succeeds. I hear nothing about mine; but undoubtedly the first very small edition will never sell.

I should be extremely glad to be useful to you in any manner at Geneva.
LETTER XI.

TO WILLIAM GODWIN, ESQ.

Bath, December 4th, 1816.

Dear Sir,

Your manuscript, which I have read with great interest, is probably in your hands by this time, if Wall, according to his promise, called in Skinner Street on his way home. In your letter you refer to my own Essay. You must have observed that I have not, as is done by so many, spoken of the attainment of happiness as the end of morality. I have purposely kept silent upon this point, because the first and most important question is that which relates directly to morality; and the question regarding
happiness might easily displace us from our true point of view. The just, virtuous man, is alone truly happy. He bears indestructible tranquillity of mind in himself, and lives in peace with himself and the world. He is independent of outward vicissitudes. Fickle fortune cannot rob him of his happiness of soul. His virtues win for him the joys of friendship, and, even if friends desert him, an approving conscience gives him comfort, and God and good angels are with him. Yet he ought not to seek virtue merely for the pleasure that will follow it. Indeed he, who would succeed in any of the noble aims of life, must love them for themselves, and not for their rewards. Orator, poet, artist, each must love his profession, and can never attain true excellence with no higher inspiration than the hope of pecuniary reward; he must have a higher love of his calling even than the mere luxury of taste. In the sphere of
business and professional action, the mercenary, calculating spirit always fails of the highest aim; how much more in the province of virtue! From him who grasps greedily at the reward of virtue, it will disappear; he destroys the costly prize, like the child who puts into his mouth as food the rose, which is so lovely to the eye, or like the rude boy who breaks with awkward hands the sweet-toned instrument of music. Virtue is like love; nay, it is the highest love. He who asks for the reward of virtue, and practises it for the sake of that, is like the gross youth, who, without loving, desires the enjoyment of love. He desires that which he knows not, and whereof he has a low, unworthy conception. Thus, inexhaustible is the fulness of joy in human life. An ocean waves and swells around us; we stretch out a thousand receptacles of enjoyment; all elements bring us their precious gifts; earth,
water, air, light, colour, and fragrance, and sound, weave for our senses the rich carpet of pleasure; and all the spirits and powers of life lead the dance of joy in gladsome round. Mary and Jane send their love.

Ever yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.
LETTER XII.

TO P. W. LONGDILL, ESQ.

London, January 17th, 1817.

Dear Sir,

The following are the reasons why no man ought to be held amenable to any English tribunal for publishing his theological opinions—they may serve as my defence against the Lord Chancellor's accusation of being the author of Queen Mab.

1. Because no man can in justice be made criminally answerable for mere abstract opinions, which result from the honest convictions of his reason.

2. Because the publication of opinions, on abstract, scientific, and speculative subjects,
is no criminal libel, breach of the peace, or social crime; but it is a duty which every honest man is bound to perform; that, if true, they may be adopted; and that, if false, they may be refuted.

3. Because no opinions can be exceptions to the preceding rule; for, if it be said that certain doctrines are from God, and ought not to be disputed, it is evident that doctrines which emanate from an all-powerful Deity cannot be shaken or overturned by man; and therefore the publication of any adverse opinions of man must necessarily be harmless.

4. Because it is evident, that the employment of the force of law, which implies the civil and military power of the State, to maintain opinions, affords a demonstrative proof that those who consider it necessary to resort to such weapons must know their opinions to be indefensible, and must be
aware that they will not be supported by Omnipotent power.

5. Because, on matters of religion, there can be no standard of truth but human reason, or the alleged operations of the Spirit of God, and conviction is the result of either or both; and this result, as a natural or as a supernatural effect, is a question between a man and his own powers of reason, or between a man and his God; and, therefore, not properly cognisable by any other man, or controllable by any human tribunal.

6. Because, the attempts to render Courts of Law, or mere human tribunals, standards of theological opinions, have led to all the wicked, bloody, and disgraceful martyrdoms which stain the pages of history; and at which every succeeding age blushes for the errors, absurdities, and crimes of the preceding ages.

7. Because, if an erroneous, persecuting,
vindictive, and intolerant proceeding, were to lead to any cruel punishment, the proceedings of the Court, and all concerned in them, would be viewed by sensible, just, and liberal men in this age, and by all men in future ages, with the abhorrence in which all men hold the Courts of inquisition, and the jurisdictions of barbarous times, by whom similar martyrdoms have been perpetrated.

8. Because it is not only wicked, but absurd and unjust, for any man to set up his own opinions as standards of theological faith for the implicit guide of any other man.

9. Because it has been invariably found that, where the mind has had its free exercise, mankind have founded different points of faith on the same system of religion; and that such variation arises from the varied dispositions of men, and proves the absurdity of restraint, or of legislating on matters of religious opinion.
10. Because any pretended common law, on which to found a prosecution, can be no other than the law of prejudice, malice, and persecution, inherent in all ages in the minds of wicked and unjust men, and is the very same law, having the same sources, as the pretended laws under which Socrates was poisoned.

11. Because the unshackled right of free discussion, and of publishing truth on all subjects useful and interesting to society, is the great bulwark of civil and religious liberty, and is a fundamental right and undoubted part of the common laws of England; which, without limitations or conditions, ought to be maintained and asserted by all who duly feel and duly respect the value of truth and liberty.

12. Because, in every country in Europe, the utmost latitude of free opinion has been practised with impunity, particularly in
France, Holland, Switzerland, and Prussia; even under the despotic sway of the Bourbons, the writings of Voltaire, Diderot, d’Alembert, Rousseau, Volney, and others, being freely published, and obtaining for their authors honour and renown.

13. Because, if this right were subject to any restriction or limitation, as far as regards subjects and questions of general interest, it would be altogether useless; for the publication of error leads often to the detection of truth, and error is harmless whilst free inquiry and discussion are allowed, in as much as it can easily be refuted.

14. Because, if the opinions of persons in authority were admitted as standards of truth, we might at this day, by parity of reasoning, have been involved in the darkness of Pagan worship, of Druidical rites, of Roman mythology, and of Popish superstitions; all of which have successively been
standards of truth among the public authorities of former ages.

Believe me,

Yours ever and truly,

P. B. SHELLEY.
LETTER XIII.

TO J. H. GRAHAM, ESQ.

Bath, January 28th, 1817.

My dear Graham,

In a late search amongst my manuscripts, I found the papers on a "model republic," which had remained unnoticed. They seem to me applicable, and I should hope, usefully so, to the present crisis, now that religious and political frauds have been once more let loose, and boldly threaten a renewed tyranny over the whole earth. Happily, final success in such a scheme has become impossible, from the too great extent of an enlightened minority of mankind. At the same time, it is the indispensable duty of every man who feels
himself qualified, to stand forth with his mite in the cause of human freedom; a sacred duty, the performance of which he ought to prefer before life or fortune. Obscure an individual as I am, and, in truth, have studied to be, I yet feel a sort of necessity to say something, because I feel also, that I have been deficient in that degree of usefulness to which I aspired very early, and which, in my conviction, certain circumstances since have rendered, in an especial manner, incumbent upon me.

Mankind are fond of inventing certain solemn and sounding expressions which appear to convey much, and in reality mean little; words that are the proxies of absent thoughts, and, like other proxies, add nothing to argument, while they turn the scales of decision. Of those phrases, it seems to me that "public opinion" is one of the most vague, while it is certainly one of the most
popular. We talk of the irresistible might of public opinion; of its progress, of its efficacy, of its promotion of truth, of its gradual but certain victory over abuses, of its ascension to the throne formerly held by force, of the peaceable revolutions it is destined to effect. It is the cant expression of orators and journalists, a convenient finery of verbiage borrowed from the wardrobe of an obsolete philosophy, and worn by all the servitors of the porch or the pnyx. When we hear the chatter of those political-phrase parrots, we are at first inclined to suppose that public opinion is a stream that flows only in one course; that its majestic command is the voice of the general mind; that while, on one side, is the deaf resistance of an interested and sectarian few; on the other, we recognise the clear and definite judgment of the collective multitude. But when we come to examine, we find that this public
opinion is a most divided property; that far from being settled hereditarily upon the people, it is rent into as many fragments and tatters as an estate on the Continent. I do not fear public opinion. Oppression, in the form of governments irresponsible to the people, has had its day. It is only strange that such a perversion of the natural state of man should have existed so long, exercising its frauds and despotisms in the very light of intellectual ages. The tyrannous creeds propounded to mankind by emperors and kings seem too monstrous and absurd, ever to have taken effect upon the will or affection of races, but that they have taken effect is written upon the history of nations. Mad ambition on the one hand, blindness and stupidity on the other! And why have men in all ages bowed down to regal authority as a divine thing—why linked the throne to the altar, and canonised in reverence blood-
stained despots, making them only second to the Supreme Being himself? Only because men have been ignorant of their rights, because cunning priests and legislators have made them believe that humanity had castes, and that kings and lords were not only more powerful and rich than they from birth and position, but better and nobler as human beings. They have preached this deceitful cant for ages to a dumb and obedient people, who, never, in the aggregate, dreamed that the doctrine was a base human dogma. More on the subject in my next.

Believe me, ever yours affectionately,

P. B. SHELLEY.
Dear Graham,

I continue where I broke off in my last letter. It never was in the nature of man to love servitude—to bear the burdens of others shaped and constituted like himself, and all that brought the serf and slave to their conditions, was an over-powering conviction that the ruler was a superior being to the ruled. Generation handed the infamous conceit to generation, and the million, by habitude, became the task-men of the few. Until the dissipation of this charm of regal power, the divine right of kings, by the intelligence of
modern times, society was only freer from its willing bondage, as it was more savage or natural.

And how was this monster deception kept up? By the works which kings and priests wrought, the miracles of power, as it were, by which they attested their superiority. Whatever science or art broke through the wall set against them, were veiled from the common sight, and in the hands of these rulers, robber-craftsmen were made to impose on the credulity of simple men, who had only their hands with such little use as nature taught them. Were not the monuments, temples, and idol-altars, reared as by some omnipotent magic, proof that kings and priests, who in the name of God anointed kings, were more than mere mortals? Kings and priests have necessarily played into each other's hands and shared the spoil of the world. And how deeply devised, how skilfully played was this
game! They knew the springs which bind and control men, and while ignorance con­served to exalt *them*, and debase their *dupes*, they were careful that ignorance should not die out.

But the day of impositions is past. Palaces and monasteries could not for ever confine the aspirations of mankind. Through their dark doors, the light streaked out, like a glorious dawn after a dark and stormy night, on man, so long robbed of the exercise of his rights, in the day-beam, and the tyrant with his blasphemous creeds was unmasked. Intelligence and servility could not exist together, for intelligence taught man that *he* alone was lord of the earth, and not a class of men. All these revolutions that now agitate the world and brighten the face of humanity, are the offspring of intelligence, and the diffusion of that element fully among men is all that is necessary to
the perfect liberty and happiness of the human race.

The grand defect, in both ancient and modern systems, has been a total misconception of the grounds of moral truth and human right, and a general or partial adoption of an arbitrary scheme of causation.

Moral truth is co-essential with universal nature, independent of all authority and convention; for that which requires support is not truth: it cannot be created, or always suddenly acquired, by the reasoning faculties of man; but is destined to be gradually developed. It is, in substance, a result after all possible evidence on each side of a question has been admitted, and every possible objection removed. Conventional or political truth is nothing but an imperfect reflection from the original, and generally substituted for it by ignorance or knavery. Real political
truth can result only from the admission of universal right.

Right also is essentially connected with nature and universality; for, unless independent and universal, it does not exist: right is lost in the idea of gift or compromise.

Nature is the law and condition of being: by natural necessity or the nature of things, is to be understood spontaneous result, or the order necessarily resulting from universal license; or nature's *universal suffrage*: this natural condition of things ought never to meet a direct opposition, but may be moderated on universal and fairly ascertained grounds: such is the legitimate *expediency* of the civilised state.

Moral nature includes reason as an integral part: human reason is, past all possibility of dispute, the paramount principle in this sphere; since every question, physical or metaphysical, must of necessity be submitted
to its tribunal: metaphysics are mere nonentities, but as they exist in the human mind or human invention.

The vanity of the ancients, and the shame of their inability to solve the natural and moral phenomena, which could be effected only by the aggregated mental labour and experience of ages, first led them to invention of suppositional causes; whence they deduced effects or conclusions in opposition to truth, and inimical to the liberty, morality, and happiness, of mankind. Not perceiving that the scheme of nature was founded on general harmony or perfect liberty, they began with erecting an imaginary tyranny in the clouds, which, once established, administered most conveniently, in their ideas, to all kinds of useful purposes below. Thus authority first usurped and fixed itself upon the seat of reason and truth.

Ever yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.
LETTER XV.

TO WILLIAM GODWIN, ESQ.

MARLOW, Wednesday, August, 1817.

MY DEAR SIR,

I enclose you a copy of the master’s report on the subject of my children which, I am sorry to say, is against me. Longdill is taking the necessary proceedings to bring the question before the Lord Chancellor, and it will come on for his decision sometime next week, or at any rate before he rises, which is the 23rd inst. One comfort is that there could not be a weaker case against me than this is. The only support of Mr. Kendall is Dr. Parr, who is himself open to a great deal of observation, and who, except as a Greek
scholar, does not stand high in any one's opinion. The report in itself does the master but little credit. He talks of the children having a "better chance" of a suitable education with Mr. Kendall than with Longdill—if he thought proper to use such a phrase, he ought to have said whether the odds were five to four or ten to one. Although Longdill distinctly stated in the plan of education, which he submitted to him, that "the Lord Chancellor having intimated that he should, until after the master had made his report, suspend his judgment as to how far and in what degree he would in this case interfere against parental authority, Mr. Longdill can only say that, while he had the care of the children, if it should be confided to him, he would feel it his bounden duty implicitly to obey the order and directions of the Lord Chancellor, with respect to the intercourse and interference of Mr. Shelley with the
children, whatever that order or those directions might be”—yet the master intimates that they had been proposed to be educated under *my direction*. When the Lord Chancellor had determined that I should not have the *direction* of the children’s education, when that very determination was the ground-work of the proceedings in the master’s office, when Longdill had undertaken to obey the Chancellor’s *directions*, even in opposition, if necessary, to mine, the master intimates that my *proposal* was that they should be brought up under *my direction as to their education*, and "therefore" he says he approves Mr. Kendall in preference to Longdill. The master is directed to inquire what would be "*a proper plan for the education*" of the children, and no plan of education is produced. A mere proposal is brought in that the children should be affiliated to Mr. Kendall, who is to act, forsooth, "*in all respects in the place of a*
parent," until they arrive at twenty-one. The master, therefore, in the first place omits to inquire what would be a proper plan for the education of the children, though ordered by the Chancellor to do so, and then he goes on to approve a proposal that Mr. Kendall should in all respects be loco parentis, when the Lord Chancellor himself says that he has not yet made up his mind as to how far he would interfere against parental authority.

I should think that the Westbrooks will find it a difficult matter to prevail on the Chancellor to confirm this unnatural proposal of abandoning the infants to the care of a stranger, of whom nobody, interested in the welfare of the children, know anything; who lives at a considerable distance from all the family; who from his ignorance of all the family can have no object but to make the most of the children as a pecuniary transaction; and, in short, who has nothing to
recommend him but the affidavit of the venerable bridegroom, Dr. Parr.

Having heard that this same Dr. Parr made a fool of himself at a meeting at Warwick, some short time ago, I sent down for a paper, which I have forwarded for your perusal by the post. You will see by it that the speech of Mr. Canning, equal in absurdity to anything uttered by that itinerant vagabond patriot, Huntley, is eulogised by Dr. Parr as the most "luminous" argumentation,—"powerful," constitutional, and patriotic speech that ever was delivered. When we have this speech of the Doctor's "excellent friend" before us, with the Doctor's eulogies on it, have we not a measure for the value of the Doctor's eulogies on Mr. Kendall? I dare say Mr. Kendall was one of the fifty patriots who dined at the Black Swan!

As I objected to Mr. Westbrook's taking liberties with my income, you will observe
that the proposal is altered, and Mr. Westbrook undertakes to supply the 120l. a-year.

I have heard nothing lately respecting the offer made for the Shipley farm. Part of it is comprised in the settlement of 1782, of which no recovery has been suffered; besides which, it is affected by the mortgage to Nash, so that I am afraid it would be impossible to make out a satisfactory title, even if a satisfactory offer were made.

Ever yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

As it is uncertain whether I may not want the newspaper in the course of the week, I do not send it, but will send it by Saturday's post, and would thank you to send it back by return of post.
Between

Eliza Ianthe Shelley and Charles Bysshe Shelley, by John Westbrook, their maternal grandfather and next friend. 

and

Eliza Westbrook, Spinster; John Higham, Esq.; Percy Bysshe Shelley, Esq.; Sir Timothy Shelley, Bart.; and John Westbrook, Esq.

In pursuance of an order bearing date the 27th day of March, 1817, made in this cause, on the petition of the infant plaintiffs, by which order it was, among other things, referred to me to inquire what would be a proper plan for the maintenance and education of the said infants; and also to inquire with whom and under whose care they should remain during their minority, or until the further order of this Court, I have been attended by the solicitors for the plaintiffs and defendants, and have in their presence proceeded in the aforesaid matter; and I find that the infant plaintiff Eliza Ianthe Shelley is now of the
age of three years and upwards, and the infant plaintiff Charles Bysshe Shelley of the age of two years and upwards, and that they are the only children of the defendant, P. B. Shelley, by his late wife Harriet Shelley, formerly Harriet Westbrook, spinster, now deceased. And I find that the said infant plaintiffs are not entitled to any fortune, nor have they any provision made for their maintenance other than the provision made for them by their maternal grandfather, the defendant, John Westbrook, in and by the indenture bearing date 2nd day of January, 1817, in the pleadings of this cause particularly mentioned, under and by virtue of which indenture the said infant plaintiffs are entitled to 2000£. Four per Cent. Annuities, now standing in the names of the said defendants, Eliza Westbrook and John Higham, Esq., upon certain trusts, declared by the said indenture. And I certify the
following proposals for the education of these children, and for a proper person, with whom and under whose care they would be placed, have been laid before me—that is to say, a proposal on the behalf of their father, the defendant, P. B. Shelley, whereby he proposed that the said infants should be placed under the care of Pynson Wilmot Longdill, of Gray’s Inn, in the county of Middlesex, Gentleman, solicitor of the said defendant, and Selina, his wife, by whom a plan for the education of the infants was also laid before me; and a proposal on behalf of the said plaintiffs, whereby it was proposed that the said plaintiffs should be placed in the family of the Rev. John Kendall, of the town of Warwick, and Clergyman of the Church of England, to be brought up under his care until the further order of the Court; and that the sum of 200l. per annum should be allowed to the said John Kendall for the education, maintenance, and support of the
said plaintiffs, he having consented to receive them into his family, provide them with clothes and everything necessary to their situation, instruct them so far as they are capable of receiving instructions, and take the charge of them in all respects in the place of a parent, for an allowance of the said sum of 200L. per annum, such allowance to be paid in manner following—that is to say, the sum of 80L. per annum, part thereof, with the dividends to which the said plaintiffs are entitled from the 2000L. Bank Four per Cent. Annuities, set apart for their benefit, pursuant to the aforesaid indenture of the 2nd day of January, 1817; and the residue of the said annual sum of 200L. to be made good by the said John Westbrook, the maternal grandfather of the said plaintiffs. And I further certify that, having proceeded to consider the said proposals, the latter of which laid before me on behalf of the said infants is supported by
an affidavit of the Rev. Samuel Parr, of Hatton, in the county of Warwick, Doctor of Laws, made in this cause on the 6th day of July, 1817, by which affidavit the said Dr. Parr made oath that he knew, and was intimately acquainted with, the said John Kendall, who was the Master of the Earl of Leicester's Hospital in the town of Warwick, and Vicar of Budbrooke, near to the said town; and also with Martha, the wife of the said John Kendall, and so known them for twenty years last past; and further, that the said John Kendall was of the age of fifty years, or thereabout, and the said Martha, his wife, of the age of fifty-three years, or thereabout, and that the family of the said John Kendall consisted of three daughters, and no other children, which daughters were of the respective age of twenty-two years, twenty years, and eighteen years, or thereabout. And further, that the said John Kendall was
of a moral and upright character, and a man of good talents and learning, and that the said Martha, the wife of the said John Kendall, was a lady of high character and amiable manners, and that the daughters of the said John Kendall were all possessed of superior attainment in literature. And further also, that in the judgment and opinion of him, the said Dr. Parr, and which judgment and opinion was formed from long and intimate knowledge and acquaintance with the parties, there could not be a family better calculated by their integrity, knowledge, and manners, to have the care and education of children than the said Mr. and Mrs. Kendall and their daughters. And I humbly certify that in my opinion the said infants will have a better chance of receiving such an education as will contribute to their future welfare and happiness in the family of the said John Kendall than if they were brought up accord-
ing to the proposal, and under the direction of the said Percy Bysshe Shelley; and upon consideration therefore of both proposals, and of the aforesaid affidavit, I approve of the said proposal laid before me, in the name and on the behalf of the plaintiffs, all which, &c.

W. ALEXANDER.
LETTER XVI.

Marlow, December 11th, 1817.

My dear Madam,

I hasten to send you the work on botany; may you derive from it the information you desire. The cultivation of flowers excites to the contemplation of nature more than the care of animals, since the animal, as endowed with a sort of will, and moved by desires, has not in the same degree the repose of nature. I reckon two advantages of a taste for flowers. The first is produced by the culture of them, which, since it excludes all wilfulness, haste, and impatience, quiets the mind, cheers it by ever-cherished hope,
and, since this seldom deceives, gladdens it with quiet joy. But the second and chief advantage consists in this—that every flower is in miniature the image of entire nature, and contains all its security, order, peace, and beauty. The flower unfolds itself silently according to necessary laws, and under necessary conditions; and if those fail, it cannot flourish. Like a child upon the mother’s bosom, so it hangs upon and sucks the sun and air, the earth and water; it is but a part of the great whole of nature, from which it cannot live separated. It is fairest in blossom, but in every stage of development it has peculiar charms. How fair the tender plant, which creeps forth to the light! how lovely the juicy green! how mysterious and full of intimations the swelling bud! Some flowers are fairer than others, but only a few are odious, and none without some property. And how manifold their beauty! Thereby
they are the truest image of nature, which spreads itself before our view in infinite variety, and thus unveils the unfathomable riches of the Creator. Partial florists may prefer the fragrant hyacinth, or the showy auricula, or the rich carnation, or any others; but who can say which is fairer than the other? and what feeling friend of nature will not love even the less fair? All are the lovely children of nature; and, as a mother fondly presses all her offspring to her heart, because she discovers in all the beloved features of the father, so the true lover of nature fondly embraces all she brings forth, because her life is exhibited in all, however diverse. Who can say what colour of the rainbow is the fairest, since all are born from the same ray of light? As nature is without evil, so are flowers the image of innocence and harmlessness, and the sight of them soothes and calms, like the countenance of a
conscientious man, who is without reserve and guile. The abode of the first man, in his innocence, was a garden: in a garden, among the lovely children of spring, we again find paradise; here we dream of the bliss of innocence, here soothe tumultuous desires, and a gentle longing fills the heart. The lake-rose swims and bathes in the moist element, which, fertilising, pervades the earth, and lifts up its crown to the sun, like a clear, calm eye. Who thus can swim in the fulness of universal life, washed pure from all selfishness, and thus look up, unshrinking, with pure eye?

Lovely, bright, radiant flowers! are ye not like stars, which the Creator has scattered to illumine and adorn the dark earth? Are ye not as heavenly messengers, who have come down upon the sunbeams, to bring us tidings of a world in which all blooms in beauty, rapture, peace? Therefore is it that the
children, who, too, have come from heaven, and still retain their innocence, play with you so like sisters; therefore is it that woman loves you, who bears in her feeling heart intimations of heaven; therefore we deck with you the graves of the beloved, because you point upward, when they have gone to rest. With my best wishes for your success, I am, my dear madam,

Yours very sincerely,

P. B. SHELLEY.
LETTER XVII.

TO J. H. GRAHAM, ESQ.

DEAR GRAHAM,

Venice, August 25th, 1818.

Let me thank you for your kind letter, which reached me at the very moment of starting from the Bagni di Lucca for Florence, and only to-day could I find leisure to scribble a line in reply, dating it from the city of the Doges. I am just returned (half past one o'clock A.M.) from the Piazza and the quay; to walk on which is a favourite pastime of the dwellers at Venice. In clear moonlight nights, when the dark blue of the heavens confounds itself with that of the
Adriatic, when the twinkling reflection of the stars bespangles the phosphorescent lustre of the sea, when gondolas laden with singers and guitar players are gliding across the lagunas, and the tepid night-wind wafts ashore the sweet Venetian melodies, when the silence of the listeners is often attracted, or interrupted by lenesque sub noctem susurros, the quay of the Piazzetta deserves that enthusiasm of admiration, with which it has so often been hailed. I have seen Lord Byron, who took me to the Lido, across the lagunas, in his gondola. He is changed into the liveliest and happiest looking man, who has thrown melancholy overboard, while writing "Don Juan"—a thing in the style of "Beppo"—of which he read me the first canto, and which will vastly amuse you and the world at large. My stay in this wonderful city being a short one, I will abstain from giving you a description of it. We shall probably
spend the winter at Naples, the air of which place agrees with me.

The news you sent me are by no means encouraging. It is impossible to subdue the human mind by making war against opinions; it may succeed for a season, but the end thereof is death. Milton has truly said that a forbidden book is a spark of truth that flies up in the face of him who seeks to tread it out, and that a government which seeks its safety in the suppression of the press, by sanguinary penalties, is like the gentleman who heightened the wall of his park to keep out the crows. The human mind cannot be imprisoned, it is impassive and immortal: reform, therefore, the abuses which obscure the constitution, and I will answer for its safety. Above all other things let men feel and enjoy the impartial protection of mild and equal laws. It would be a most useful and patriotic undertaking, essential to the
acceleration of the progress of that light which is gradually diffusing itself among us, if some one would publish a succinct and connected history of the massacres, tortures, wars, imprisonments, and restraints upon the conscience, on religious pretences, from the earliest records unto the present times, in consequence of the horrible supposition that the God of mercy and of justice delights in the blood of human victims, and in the mental and corporeal slavery of the greater portion of the human race—now that, ashamed of the absurdity of the ancient motives, or pretences, we have shifted the ground of persecution to a question of political expedience.

Let me hear from you soon, and direct as before.

Ever most affectionately yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.
LETTER XVIII.

TO WILLIAM GODWIN, ESQ.

MY DEAR GODWIN, Venice, August 28th, 1818.

Your novel is in great request in this country. A very pretty Miss Bingham sat up reading it all night, and her attention was so great, that she suffered her cap to take fire, but said, that she quenched it with her tears. Mary, too, dreamt, as she says, a witty dream—all about that same novel. Is there not such a superstition as that when folks become witty in dreams, they are near their end? But there is perhaps a natural reason for this, that when people are about taking leave of their senses they become all intellect.
of course: you will not take this instance, however, I hope, for a very mortal symptom; but you will allow it to be equivocal at least.

I have called on Lord Byron, who was delighted to see me. We went in his gondola across the laguna to the Malamocco, a long sandy island, a sort of breakwater, which shelters Venice against the inroads of the Adriatic. On disembarking we found his horses waiting. During our ride along the sands of the sea he kept up a lively conversation, consisting in histories of his grievances, his wounded feelings, Lady Byron, his daughter, his sister, his prospects, intentions. He seemed to take great interest in my own affairs, and assured me, that if he had been in England at the time of the chancery business, he would have moved heaven and earth to have prevented Lord Eldon’s decision. Byron’s ways are so winning, as to make it impossible to resist his agaceries: no wonder if women,
the dear butterflies, cannot approach him without some danger. Venice, at present, is in a state of absolute decay; the descendants of her ancient great men promenade its purlieus with profound indifference. Surrounded with the monuments of their ancestors, those monuments seem no part of their inheritance. The explication of their singular character may be found in the apartments of the *Ten*; in the terrific passages that lead from these to the *pozzi*, or dungeons, and to the *piombi*; also in the chamber where strangling without noise was too common a practice; and in the window or iron grate, through which the dead bodies of the victims of tyranny were hurled by night into the canal. By such sanguinary modes, public opinion and public spirit, which are the soul of nations, were exterminated. The tyrants have justly fallen in the way of retribution for such enormous turpitude; a warning may it prove
to all that seek to imitate the wisdom, so highly vaunted, of the senate of Venice. I have been well received by the Hoppners; the most amiable people I ever knew. Mary is to join me shortly. More in my next. Adieu!

Yours most affectionately,

P. B. SHELLEY.
LETTER XIX.

TO J. H. GRAHAM, ESQ.

MY DEAR GRAHAM, Rome, April 8th, 1819.

If my accounts of pictures and things please you, I am content. I keep no journal, and do not attempt to interest the many. A perception of the beautiful characterises those who differ from ordinary men, and the number of those who can appreciate it is not large enough to cover the expense of printing my observations. I wish I could devote more time to the contemplation of the works of art with which Rome abounds; but our short stay, and the state of my health, hardly admits of it. Walking through the galleries,
and looking at the pictures fatigues me, and yet with what delight does my mind drink in the spirit of their forms! Every great artist is an historian or prophet. He presents himself and gains perception in the name of a world extinct, or rather conquered, or of a world to come, foreseen and yet to conquer. But prophet or historian, the artist is a being of love; and what is love if it be not the power of sympathy with the life of another, of making it one's own, of nourishing while purifying it, while spreading its blossoms to the heavens? Whenever a man has this power he is a poet—a poet to his own conscience and that of the being beloved, though he may not have received the gift of pouring forth the stream of poesy that flows through his soul:—a poet to the world when he has received that gift, when incarnating it in visible symbols, he can communicate to his brethren his impulse and his activity. He
towers like a giant tree above the thousand little flowers, the thousand smaller shrubs, that unseen flourish in his shade. But his roots sink into the common mother; from her ascends the vital sap that circulates even to its leafy branches. Painting expresses something of the life of all, of the faith of all, of the presentiment of all. Itself a dumb Poetry, it seeks in a certain order of matter the symbols of the same feeling; it aspires to the same Ideal. More limited in the choice of materials, more definite in its process, it ranks on the scale of Art below Poetry, as the latter below Music. Yet it aids its two older sisters in their flight towards the Infinite. It may be said, that whilst it accomplishes its share in the common labour of sympathetic expression of universal life, it has the special task of refining, of transfiguring the form that imprisons it, of rendering pliant, palpitating, and luminous that
world of images and symbols from which the poet will hereafter demand the inspiration of his rhythm, and the musician of his melody. Was it not felt by Sebastian Bach, when he placed himself before one of Durer's pictures to write his Oratorio of the Passion?—by Correggio when, in his last slumber, he saw the figure of Palestrina coming to meet him at the gates of heaven? They well knew, in their holy fraternity of the initiated, that servants of the same God, they all drew their life from the same source—their illuminations from the same focus—and that notes, rhythm, tints, and forms were but varied means of giving as much as possible of body and realisation to the ideal, which is the soul of art, as it is of all society that lives or is approaching to life.

Art will never die but with mankind; when the ideal of which man is capable has been attained, and all the symbols used up, the
human race transformed, will, perhaps, in a
different life, pass on to other destinies that
we are ignorant of. Till then Art will live:
it will live and will progress, for we are
progressing. At each epoch we draw a step
nearer to that Divine Ideal whose incarnation
is the source of Art. At each epoch falls
one of the veils enrolling it, and we decipher
one syllable more of the sacred word that
contains the secret of our nature and of our
vocation. Love to you.

Most affectionately your friend,

P. B. SHELLEY.
LETTER XX.

TO G. S. MARLOW, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

LIVORNO, July, 1819.

I will not make an apology for not having answered your obliging letter sooner, because I am sure you will attribute my silence to its true cause, my incapacity to express my thoughts, which are still under the most painful pressure, and I seem in a manner benumbed with grief, and unable to exert my faculties. Though surrounded by disquietude I have not been idle. My Prometheus is nearly finished, and I am also on the eve of completing the Cenci. The story of the drama is eminently fearful, and I have
endeavoured to represent the persons in their true character, and avoided, I hope, the common error of making them actuated by my own conceptions of right or wrong. I have gathered my poetical coals at this poetical Newcastle. Solitude and beautiful scenery have always exercised great influence upon me. The original source of poetry is in the bosom of nature—in the simple elemental passions of the heart, and in the solitudes of rural scenery, those feelings are most strongly excited, which swell up in the heart, like a newly-discovered spring, and spontaneously flow into song. The literary quarrel, which has so much amused you, is at least as good as any among the English, and in point of keenness and acerbity equal to the most savage fight of literary cocks. The Della Cruscan Academy has been roughly handled. The charge, that the Tuscan people of this day speak the best Italian, and the
learned among them write the worst of any in Italy, is rather unpalatable to the Tuscan literati, and by no means flattering to the ladies tinged with bluestockingism; for Tuscany prizes itself in the fame of that noble lady, whom both Alfieri and Monti allow to have been possessed of the power of touching the inmost recesses of the soul,—

"Ai severi difficili nipoti
Di Curio e di Camillo."

And from whose lips—

"Più che mel dolci d'eloquenza i fiumi,"

led Alfieri himself to wish for the honour

"De' suoi carmi impensati andarne onusto."

Remember me affectionately to Mrs. Marlow, and accept for yourself my best wishes.

Ever most faithfully yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.
LETTER XXI.

TO WILLIAM GODWIN, ESQ.

Florence, October 12th, 1819.

MY DEAR GODWIN,

Nous voilà! at Florence—where we have taken pleasant apartments for six months. What our destination is in April is yet undecided. It is impossible to imagine any object more lovely than the view of Florence, her palaces, her domes, her towers, from any of the heights by which the city is commanded; but when within, the epithet of "La Bella" may not appear so appropriate as many others which might have been chosen. "L'Altiera" would, perhaps, suit Florence better; for in the general aspect of the
streets and buildings, the feeling which most predominates is that of stern and sober dignity. The streets are narrow, shaded by lofty and solid palaces, all partaking more or less of a castellated type. The walls of these buildings are very frequently raised in bosses or rustic work, a mode of masonry which, if not absolutely invented by Brunelleschi, was yet so frequently employed by him and his school in these structures, as to become almost a characteristic of the Tuscan style. The pleasure which the mind receives from architecture is of a very complex nature: it is a sensation in which mere beauty of form is only one element; certainly one of great importance, yet by no means paramount. For it is as a memorial of the state and the condition of the people, as the visible embodying of the moral and physical condition of the nation, that architecture possesses its chief positive value; and it is perhaps
from these latter causes that the structures of Florence derive their principal charm. You can tell at once that they are natives; they possess appropriateness and originality, qualities which redeem almost every defect short of absolute absurdity. A profusion of iron-work adds, in my eyes at least, to the prison-like appearance of the palaces, which is again increased by the comparative scarcity of the windows and the smallness of their apertures. Many of the façades are unfinished, displaying huge uncouth masses of dingy brick; and in the species of stone and marble generally employed, the prevailing tints, though always rich, are often of very dark and almost funeral hue. Yet the bright sky conquers all semblance of gloom. There is much appearance of age, but none of decay. Modern Florence forms an irregular pentagon, unequally divided by the Arno, sometimes shallow and sluggish, sometimes rushing down
from his mountains with irresistible fury. I have read various historical accounts of Florence with considerable interest. The sarcastic phrase attributed to Talleyrand, that "history is founded upon a general conspiracy against truth,"—never, I suspect, came nearer to the fact than with respect to those who have treated upon the Medici family. When we consider the individual history of the Medici, so much praised in prose and in verse, it really becomes difficult to understand how the world has so long sat easy under the prestige of their name. The stranger usually rushes first to the Tribune—but, fair and softly—if he would appreciate the price which Florence paid for those treasures, let him first visit the huge Fortezza da Basso, which defaces the old ramparts of the republic, the castle founded by Clement VII., for the purpose of keeping the city in the obedience of his suppositious nephews, whom he declared
as its sovereigns. The first stone of this monument of tyranny was laid by the hands of the astrologer who cast its horoscope. In one year it was completed: and when you look upon this sullen pentagon, in whose dungeons the tortured Strozzi expired, you may consider whether the chains and fetters forged by the Medici did not well outweigh the toys and trinkets which they bestowed. I must conclude my letter; but in my next I will send you my more impressions of Fiorenza la Bella. Have the Quarterly men reviewed me? O—— told me they were going to cut me to pieces. As Mary is writing, I shall add no more. Believe me,

Ever yours very affectionately,

P. B. SHELLEY.
LETTER XXII.

TO HORACE SMITH, ESQ.

PISA, February 12th, 1820.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am glad you like the Cenci,—but I regret you should have formed so unfavourable an idea regarding the Italians, whom you accuse of "living for the sake of living."

Some philosophy there doubtless is in this view of the subject, but there is another and more liberal aspect under which this trait may be considered. In the first place, then, it is comparatively rare to witness excesses in Italy. The enjoyment so visible there has often about it elements truly benignant and admirable. The impressible temperament
which quickens the avenues of sensation in Southern climes, is not only the secret of much of the pleasure there afforded by mere physical life, but also of the delicate and peerless genius whose legacies delight the world. In my view, too, there is something highly consoling in the spectacle of human gratification derived from such available and natural sources. If God sends forth the breeze, and kindles the sun-set fire, bids the moon trace a silver pathway on the sea, and awakens a pensive murmur amid waves and foliage—to cheer and win the heart of man; if it is his ordination that through the beautiful we should approach the true—that the senses form a medium for the soul to commune with life—then pleasure is not a treacherous accident, but a beneficent fact. Its auspicious influence is then only bounded by justice and self-respect,—the rights of others, and
the essential dignity of man.—There are times and circumstances wherein only the stoic's principles will minister to peace; but that there is an epicurism founded on the legitimate exercise of our whole being, natural and spiritual laws alike declare. We cannot but recognise the genial as a vast means of good. I believe there are minds that are chiefly and nobly active only through the honest exercise of their sympathies, and that restraint and self-denial may blight as well as guard. Accordingly I rejoice in much of the life-enjoying spirit of Italy. I have seen it accompanied by so much moderation and good feeling that it seemed often like a sincere hymn of unconscious gratitude, a reflection of the smile of Heaven. It is not altogether and universally enervating and selfish; it is frequently accompanied by a disinterested and urbane spirit, and is, after
all, as a general rule, but the bright Episode of a severe Epic. As such, I believe it nerves for toil, and prevents the ravages of care; lends graceful buoyancy to life, and reconciles man to his destiny. Let not the puritanic mind of the North, therefore, deem its own creed applicable to all the world, or quarrel with a cheerfulness whose fountains gush from the throne of Divine beneficence. A nation's character mirrors itself in its language. The language of the Italians is a true exponent in that respect. But its copiousness, abundance of vowels, and frequent superlative phrases, as well as poetical origin, indicate only one side of its character. In the hands of Dante and Alfieri it becomes intensely vigorous, statuesque and concentrated. Indeed, the most remarkable of its qualities is this very susceptibility of expansion and conciseness; of gliding from "soft,
bastard Latin," to nervous terseness and emphatic brevity. Can you not make up your mind to cross the Alps?

Yours ever most affectionately,

P. B. SHEELLEY.
LETTER XXIII.

TO JOHN KEATS.

MY DEAR KEATS, PISA, July 27th, 1820.

I hear with great pain the dangerous accident that you have undergone; and Mr. Gisborne, who gives me the account of it, adds that you continue to wear a consumptive appearance. This consumption is a disease particularly fond of people who write such good verses as you have done; and, with the assistance of an English winter, it can often indulge its selection; I do not think that young and amiable poets are at all bound
to gratify its taste; they have entered into no bond with the Muses to that effect. But seriously, (for I am joking on what I am very anxious about,) I think you would do well to pass the winter abroad . . . . . If you think it as necessary as I do, and so long as you can find Pisa or its neighbourhood agreeable, Mrs. Shelley unites with myself in urging the request that you would take up your residence with us. You might come by sea to Leghorn, (France is not worth seeing, and the sea is particularly good for weak lungs,) which is within a few miles of us. You ought, at all events, to see Italy, and your health, which I suggest as a motive, might be an excuse to you. I spare declamation about the statues, and the paintings, and the ruins; and what is a greater piece of forbearance, about the mountains, the streams, and the fields, the colours of the sky, and
the sky itself. I have lately read your "Endymion" again, and ever with a new sense of the treasures of poetry it contains—though treasures poured forth with indistinct pro-
fusion. This people in general will not endure, and that is the cause of the com-
paratively few copies which have sold. I feel persuaded that you are capable of the greatest things, so you but will. I always tell Ollier to send you copies of my books. "Prometheus Unbound," I imagine, you will receive nearly at the same time with this letter. The *Cenci* I hope you have already received—it was studiously composed in a different style, 'below the good how far! but far above the great.' In poetry I have sought to avoid system and mannerism; I wish those who excel me in genius would pursue the same plan. Whether you remain in England or journey to Italy, believe that
you carry with you my anxious wishes for your health, happiness, and success, wherever you are, or whatever you undertake, and that I am yours sincerely,

P. B. SHELLEY.
LETTER XXIV.

TO HORACE SMITH, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, 

Ravenna, August 14th, 1821.

Your letter was forwarded to this place, where I am staying on a visit to Lord Byron. I rejoice I should have it in my power to interest more than one at your fireside. Italy requires to be studied. The more I see of it, the more conspicuous become the errors and the carelessness of tourists, even of those of a higher pretension. You ask what my impressions are respecting the female sex of this country? I will endeavour to convince you of a few errors
into which you seem to have been led by books of travellers, who do not appear to remember that sympathy is essential to insight. Gossip is a miserable guide whereby to explore the mysteries of character; and observation, such as the passing traveller usually enjoys in the South of Europe, displays but a tithe of the existent female beauty. Walk on a pleasant day, it has often been said, in Hyde Park, and you shall see more beautiful women than you will find in any Italian city, though you walk in it a month. This is undoubtedly a fact, nor one at all to be wondered at, when we remember that it is not the custom in Italy for ladies to promenade the streets. They are chiefly to be seen at home, and occasionally at the Corso and at the Opera. Their lives are infinitely more secluded than those of English females; and the possession of great attractions only renders them more so,
by earlier securing them permanent objects of affection, and rendering the world less essential to their happiness. It is evident, too, that the disappointment English travellers experience in regard to Italian beauty, arises from their own conception of physical loveliness, as much as from any dearth of the beautiful. Most English, when they use the phrase "beautiful women," merely intend to designate a pretty face. But this is evidently a very narrow interpretation. The more legitimate idea of female beauty refers to form and expression,—the natural language of the soul, finding utterance in the play of feature and the mould and carriage of the body. In these elements there is a charm which appeals both to the senses and the heart; they are enduring, and have relation to character; whereas regularity of feature and purity of complexion may exist in a doll. The beauty of a genuine Italian
consists in a rare union of delicacy of temperament with majesty of proportion. In northern countries, size is generally blended with coarseness; in Italy you will see a half-Amazonian form combined with a delicious voice and child-like winsomeness of manner—the soft mingled with the noble, gentleness with dignity, grace with power—a kind of beauty which Hazlitt has somewhere nicely defined as "reposing on its own sensations." Such is the peculiar charm which has made Italian beauty so famous in song. It is one admirably fitted to delight ardent and meditative natures. Its influence upon the heart is soothing as well as inspiring; and the epithet "mio bene," so often used by the Tuscan bards, justly conveys its praise. It is owing to this vivaciousness and sensitive temperament that the face and movements of a fair Italian are such an index of the soul. Indeed, perhaps the real
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attraction consists in this very consciousness we are made to feel of the vicinity of a soul. Emotion betrays itself with a readiness and truth that warms the sympathies at once. All the light and shade of thought and feeling beam from the countenance, and he who speaks—whether it be to breathe the words of genius, of wisdom, of sorrow, or of love—realises every instant that it is not to mere intellect that he unfolds himself, but to a sympathetic being, capable not only of understanding but of responding. This expressiveness—quick, confiding, and free—gives life and reality to form and feature. Eye and lip, tone and gesture, smile and glance, are all beautiful, simply because they are informed with graceful and earnest meaning, as through an exquisite vase of alabaster glows the flame that is kindled within.

I must conclude my letter. I have only
a few minutes to spare, and the mail leaves only once a week. My love to all.

Affectionately yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.
LETTER XXV.

TO HORACE SMITH, ESQ.

My dearest Friend,

Pisa, August 26th, 1821.

I last wrote to you from Ravenna. Lord Byron comes to settle at Pisa, and has a plan of writing a periodical work in conjunction with Hunt. Before this you will have seen "Adonais." I am now determined to make Pisa our head-quarters, where I mean to entrench myself like a spider in a web. The climate of Italy agrees with me, and I begin to understand the Italians more every day. I cannot but give both sexes credit for that delicacy and regard for the feelings of others, so grateful and striking to
the stranger from colder latitudes. This amiable trait, which smooths away so many of the asperities incident to social intercourse, and increases so vastly the aggregate of minor but no less important sources of human enjoyment, is one no training can impart, and no system of manners secure. It is an urbanity born of feeling; it is a sympathy that comes not from observation but consciousness; it is the golden rule, exercised not according to any abstract theory of human rights, but a refined and sensitive ideal of human emotions. "He jests at scars that never felt a wound," says the lover; the same truth may be as appropriately uttered by the friend and associate. "Gentleness" and "consideration," whose coming the great poet so aptly compares to that of an angel, are usually practised by none so habitually as those who have the greatest occasion for
them. We judge of the moral needs of others by our own, and do as we would be done by, not through the intellectual perceptions, but the heart’s impulses. It is the fine organisation and quick emotions of the Italians that often renders their companionship so genial. When we go deeper than this, and inquire into those characteristics which have made their land and history the favourite materials of the dramatist, and associated even their proper names with the memorable tales of love and remorse, with the darkest crime, and the most self-devoted attachment, with all which poetry has recorded that is most terrific and affecting,—the two extremes of the awful and the tender,—we cannot but feel that an extraordinary earnestness of soul is the secret of the phenomena. The Italians, when we speak of them as a type of humanity, are the poets of the nations. They are more in
earnest—not intellectually, but naturally—not from design, but temperament—in their genius, their passions, friendships, and pursuits. Genuine feeling is, from its own law, frank, direct, and artless; it is only half-conscious, selfish, ill-defined, and fragmentary sentiment that develops itself otherwise. This sincerity has particularly charmed me in the Roman women. It carries with it a nature such as Shakspeare has copied, and every unperverted heart loves. One reason for its prevalence is that the Italian female character is infinitely more distinguished by pride than vanity. The latter quality is the prolific source of deceit, and the foe of enthusiasm; while the former preserves the original fervour of the soul, and is a noble instead of a humiliating infirmity. Accordingly, that is redeeming in the very genuineness of Italian feeling, especially when contrasted with the selfish rationalism
or frivolous tastes of other nations. It is true its moral value must depend upon the spirit it is of; and the same ardent glow may foster the reckless dissipation of an Aretino, or the pure benevolence of Borromeo, kindle the murderous purpose of Fra Diavolo, or feed the gentle and devoted love of Petrarch; yet the energy, the concentration, the motive power, is an element of character worthy of admiration; and, when directed by virtue, has created, and will ever create, the richest fruits of genius, wisdom, and love. These sentiments will explain why I chose the *Cenci* as the subject for a dramatic composition. How are you getting on? Do your plans still want success? Let me hear from you at your convenience, and believe me

Ever yours affectionately,

P. B. SHELLEY.
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