

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Maupassant Schiller
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Cotton Dostoyevsky Kipling Doyle Willis
Baum Leslie Henry Flaubert Nietzsche Turgenev Balzac Crane
Dumas Stockton Vatsyayana Verne
Burroughs Tocqueville Gogol Busch
Curtis Homer Tolstoy Darwin Thoreau Twain Plato
Potter Zola Lawrence Stevenson Dickens Harte
Kant Freud Jowett Andersen London Descartes Cervantes Voltaire Cooke
Poe Aristotle Wells Burton Hesse
Hale James Hastings Shakespeare Chambers Irving
Bunner Richter Chekhov da Shaw Wodehouse
Doré Dante Swift Pushkin Alcott
Newton



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**Life of Lord Byron, Vol. 4 With
His Letters and Journals**

Thomas Moore

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LETTERS AND JOURNALS OF LORD BYRON, WITH NOTICES
OF HIS LIFE, from
April, 1817, to October, 1820.

NOTICES

OF THE

LIFE OF LORD BYRON.

LETTER 272. TO MR. MURRAY.

"Venice, April 9. 1817.

"Your letters of the 18th and 20th are arrived. In my own I have given you the rise, progress, decline, and fall, of my recent malady. It is gone to the devil: I won't pay him so bad a compliment as to say it came from him;—he is too much of a gentleman. It was nothing but a slow fever, which quickened its pace towards the end of its journey. I had been bored with it some weeks—with nocturnal burnings and morning perspirations; but I am quite well again, which I attribute to having had neither medicine nor doctor thereof.

"In a few days I set off for Rome: such is my purpose. I shall change it very often before Monday next, but do you continue to direct and address to *Venice*, as heretofore. If I go, letters will be forwarded: I say '*if*,' because I never know what I shall do till it is done; and as I mean most firmly to go set out for Rome, it is not unlikely I may find myself at St. Petersburg.

"You tell me to 'take care of myself;'—faith, and I will. I won't be posthumous yet, if I can help it. Notwithstanding, only think what a 'Life and Adventures,' while I am in full scandal, would be worth, together with the 'membra' of my writing-desk, the sixteen beginnings of poems never to be finished! Do you think I would not have shot myself last year, had I not luckily recollected that Mrs. C * * and Lady N * *, and all the old women in England would have been delighted;—besides the agreeable 'Lunacy,' of the 'Crown's Quest,' and the regrets of two or three or half a dozen? Be assured that I *would live* for two reasons, or more;—there are one or two people whom I have to put out of the world, and as many into it, before I can 'depart in peace;' if I do so before, I have not fulfilled my mis-

sion. Besides, when I turn thirty, I will turn devout; I feel a great vocation that way in Catholic churches, and when I hear the organ.

"So * * is writing again! Is there no Bedlam in Scotland? nor thumb-screw? nor gag? nor hand-cuff? I went upon my knees to him almost, some years ago, to prevent him from publishing a political pamphlet, which would have given him a livelier idea of 'Habeas Corpus' than the world will derive from his present production upon that suspended subject, which will doubtless be followed by the suspension of other of his Majesty's subjects.

"I condole with Drury Lane and rejoice with * *,— Pg 3that is, in a modest way,—on the tragical end of the new tragedy.

"You and Leigh Hunt have quarrelled then, it seems? I introduce him and his poem to you, in the hope that (malgré politics) the union would be beneficial to both, and the end is eternal enmity; and yet I did this with the best intentions: I introduce * * *, and * * * runs away with your money: my friend Hobhouse quarrels, too, with the Quarterly: and (except the last) I am the innocent Isthmus (damn the word! I can't spell it, though I have crossed that of Corinth a dozen times) of these enmities.

"I will tell you something about Chillon.—A Mr. *De Luc*, ninety years old, a Swiss, had it read to him, and is pleased with it,—so my sister writes. He said that he was *with Rousseau* at *Chillon*, and that the description is perfectly correct. But this is not all: I recollected something of the name, and find the following passage in 'The Confessions,' vol. iii. page 247. liv. viii.:—

"De tous ces amusemens celui qui me plût davantage fut une promenade autour du Lac, que je fis en bateau avec *De Luc* père, sa bru, ses *deux fils*, et ma Thérèse. Nous mimes sept jours à cette tournée par le plus beau temps du monde. J'en gardai le vif souvenir des sites qui m'avoient frappé à l'autre extrémité du Lac, et dont je fis la description, quelques années après, dans la *Nouvelle Heloise*'

"This nonagenarian, *De Luc*, must be one of the 'deux fils.' He is in England—infirm, but still in Pg 4 faculty. It is odd that he should have lived so long, and not wanting in oddness that he should have made this voyage with *Jean Jacques*, and afterwards, at such an

interval, read a poem by an Englishman (who had made precisely the same circumnavigation) upon the same scenery.

"As for 'Manfred,' it is of no use sending *proofs*; nothing of that kind comes. I sent the whole at different times. The two first Acts are the best; the third so so; but I was blown with the first and second heats. You must call it 'a Poem,' for it is *no Drama*, and I do not choose to have it called by so * * a name — a 'Poem in dialogue,' or — Pantomime, if you will; any thing but a green-room synonyme; and this is your motto —

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.'

"Yours ever, &c.

"My love and thanks to Mr. Gifford."

LETTER 273. TO MR. MOORE.

"Venice, April 11. 1817.

"I shall continue to write to you while the fit is on me, by way of penance upon you for your former complaints of long silence. I dare say you would blush, if you could, for not answering. Next week I set out for Rome. Having seen Constantinople, I should like to look at t'other fellow. Besides, I want to see the Pope, and shall take care to tell him that I vote for the Catholics and no Veto.

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"I sha'n't go to Naples. It is but the second best sea-view, and I have seen the first and third, viz. Constantinople and Lisbon, (by the way, the last is but a river-view; however, they reckon it after Stamboul and Naples, and before Genoa,) and Vesuvius is silent, and I have passed by Ætna. So I shall e'en return to Venice in July; and if you write, I pray you to address to Venice, which is my head, or rather my *heart*, quarters.

"My late physician, Dr. Polidori, is here on his way to England, with the present Lord G * * and the widow of the late earl. Dr. Polidori has, just now, no more patients, because his patients are no

more. He had lately three, who are now all dead—one embalmed. Horner and a child of Thomas Hope's are interred at Pisa and Rome. Lord G * * died of an inflammation of the bowels: so they took them out, and sent them (on account of their discrepancies), separately from the carcass, to England. Conceive a man going one way, and his intestines another, and his immortal soul a third!—was there ever such a distribution? One certainly has a soul; but how it came to allow itself to be enclosed in a body is more than I can imagine. I only know if once mine gets out, I'll have a bit of a tussle before I let it get in again to that or any other.

"And so poor dear Mr. Maturin's second tragedy has been neglected by the discerning public! * * will be d—d glad of this, and d—d without being glad, if ever his own plays come upon 'any stage.'

"I wrote to Rogers the other day, with a message for you. I hope that he flourishes. He is the Pg 6 Tithonus of poetry—immortal already. You and I must wait for it.

"I hear nothing—know nothing. You may easily suppose that the English don't seek me, and I avoid them. To be sure, there are but few or none here, save passengers. Florence and Naples are their Margate and Ramsgate, and much the same sort of company too, by all accounts, which hurts us among the Italians.

"I want to hear of Lalla Rookh—are you out? Death and fiends! why don't you tell me where you are, what you are, and how you are? I shall go to Bologna by Ferrara, instead of Mantua: because I would rather see the cell where they caged Tasso, and where he became mad and * *, than his own MSS. at Modena, or the Mantuan birthplace of that harmonious plagiarist and miserable flatterer, whose cursed hexameters were drilled into me at Harrow. I saw Verona and Vicenza on my way here—Padua too.

"I go alone,—but alone, because I mean to return here. I only want to see Rome. I have not the least curiosity about Florence, though I must see it for the sake of the Venus, &c. &c.; and I wish also to see the Fall of Terni. I think to return to Venice by Ravenna and Rimini, of both of which I mean to take notes for Leigh Hunt, who will be glad to hear of the scenery of his Poem. There was a devil of a review of him in the Quarterly, a year ago, which he an-

swered. All answers are imprudent: but, to be sure, poetical flesh and blood must have the last word—that's certain. I thought, Pg 7 and think, very highly of his Poem; but I warned him of the row his favourite antique phraseology would bring him into.

"You have taken a house at Hornsey: I had much rather you had taken one in the Apennines. If you think of coming out for a summer, or so, tell me, that I may be upon the hover for you.

"Ever," &c.

LETTER 274. TO MR. MURRAY.

"Venice, April 14. 1817.

"By the favour of Dr. Polidori, who is here on his way to England with the present Lord G * *, (the late earl having gone to England by another road, accompanied by his bowels in a separate coffer,) I remit to you, to deliver to Mrs. Leigh, *two miniatures*; previously you will have the goodness to desire Mr. Love (as a peace-offering between him and me) to set them in plain gold, with my arms complete, and 'Painted by Prepiani—Venice, 1817,' on the back. I wish also that you would desire Holmes to make a copy of *each*—that is, both—for myself, and that you will retain the said copies till my return. One was done while I was very unwell; the other in my health, which may account for their dissimilitude. I trust that they will reach their destination in safety.

"I recommend the Doctor to your good offices with your government friends; and if you can be of any use to him in a literary point of view, pray be so.

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"To-day, or rather yesterday, for it is past midnight, I have been up to the battlements of the highest tower in Venice, and seen it and its view, in all the glory of a clear Italian sky. I also went over the Manfrini Palace, famous for its pictures. Amongst them, there is a portrait of *Ariosto* by *Titian*, surpassing all my anticipation of the power of painting or human expression: it is the poetry of portrait, and the portrait of poetry. There was also one of some learned lady, centuries old, whose name I forget, but whose features must always be remembered. I never saw greater beauty, or sweetness, or wis-

dom:—it is the kind of face to go mad for, because it cannot walk out of its frame. There is also a famous dead Christ and live Apostles, for which Buonaparte offered in vain five thousand louis; and of which, though it is a capo d'opera of Titian, as I am no connoisseur, I say little, and thought less, except of one figure in it. There are ten thousand others, and some very fine Giorgiones amongst them, &c. &c. There is an original Laura and Petrarch, very hideous both. Petrarch has not only the dress, but the features and air of an old woman, and Laura looks by no means like a young one, or a pretty one. What struck me most in the general collection was the extreme resemblance of the style of the female faces in the mass of pictures, so many centuries or generations old, to those you see and meet every day among the existing Italians. The queen of Cyprus and Giorgione's wife, particularly the latter, are Venetians as it were of yesterday; Pg 9 the same eyes and expression, and, to my mind, there is none finer.

"You must recollect, however, that I know nothing of painting; and that I detest it, unless it reminds me of something I have seen, or think it possible to see, for which reason I spit upon and abhor all the Saints and subjects of one half the impostures I see in the churches and palaces; and when in Flanders, I never was so disgusted in my life, as with Rubens and his eternal wives and infernal glare of colours, as they appeared to me; and in Spain I did not think much of Murillo and Velasquez. Depend upon it, of all the arts, it is the most artificial and unnatural, and that by which the nonsense of mankind is most imposed upon. I never yet saw the picture or the statue which came a league within my conception or expectation; but I have seen many mountains, and seas, and rivers, and views, and two or three women, who went as far beyond it,—besides some horses; and a lion (at Veli Pacha's) in the Morea; and a tiger at supper in Exeter Change.

"When you write, continue to address to me at *Venice*. Where do you suppose the books you sent to me are? At *Turin*! This comes of '*the Foreign Office*' which is foreign enough, God knows, for any good it can be of to me, or any one else, and be d—d to it, to its last clerk and first charlatan, Castlereagh.

"This makes my hundredth letter at least.

"Yours," &c.

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TO MR. MURRAY.

"Venice, April 14. 1817.

"The present proofs (of the whole) begin only at the 17th page; but as I had corrected and sent back the first Act, it does not signify.

"The third Act is certainly d— —d bad, and, like the Archbishop of Grenada's homily (which savoured of the palsy), has the dregs of my fever, during which it was written. It must on *no account* be published in its present state. I will try and reform it, or rewrite it altogether; but the impulse is gone, and I have no chance of making any thing out of it. I would not have it published as it is on any account. The speech of Manfred to the Sun is the only part of this act I thought good myself; the rest is certainly as bad as bad can be, and I wonder what the devil possessed me.

"I am very glad indeed that you sent me Mr. Gifford's opinion without *deduction*. Do you suppose me such a booby as not to be very much obliged to him? or that in fact I was not, and am not, convinced and convicted in my conscience of this same overt act of nonsense?

"I shall try at it again: in the mean time, lay it upon the shelf (the whole Drama, I mean): but pray correct your copies of the first and second Acts from the original MS.

"I am not coming to England; but going to Rome in a few days. I return to Venice in *June*; so, pray, address all letters, &c. to me *here*, as usual, that is, to *Venice*. Dr. Polidori this day left this city with Pg 11 Lord G * * * for England. He is charged with some books to your care (from me), and two miniatures also to the same address, *both* for my sister.

"Recollect not to publish, upon pain of I know not what, until I have tried again at the third Act. I am not sure that I *shall* try, and still less that I shall succeed, if I do; but I am very sure, that (as it is) it is unfit for publication or perusal; and unless I can make it out to my own satisfaction, I won't have any part published.

"I write in haste, and after having lately written very often. Yours," &c.

LETTER 276. TO MR. MURRAY.

"Foligno, April 26. 1817.

"I wrote to you the other day from Florence, inclosing a MS. entitled 'The Lament of Tasso.' It was written in consequence of my having been lately at Ferrara. In the last section of this MS. *but one* (that is, the penultimate), I think that I have omitted a line in the copy sent to you from Florence, viz. after the line —

"And woo compassion to a blighted name,

insert,

"Sealing the sentence which my foes proclaim.

The *context* will show you *the sense*, which is not clear in this quotation. Remember, I write this in the supposition that you have received my Florentine packet.

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"At Florence I remained but a day, having a hurry for Rome, to which I am thus far advanced. However, I went to the two galleries, from which one returns drunk with beauty. The Venus is more for admiration than love; but there are sculpture and painting, which for the first time at all gave me an idea of what people mean by their *cant*, and what Mr. Braham calls 'entusimusy' (*i.e.* enthusiasm) about those two most artificial of the arts. What struck me most were, the mistress of Raphael, a portrait; the mistress of Titian, a portrait; a Venus of Titian in the Medici gallery — *the Venus*; Canova's Venus also in the other gallery: Titian's mistress is also in the other gallery (that is, in the Pitti Palace gallery): the Parcæ of Michael Angelo, a picture: and the Antinous, the Alexander, and one or two not very decent groups in marble; the Genius of Death, a sleeping figure, &c. &c.

"I also went to the Medici chapel—fine frippery in great slabs of various expensive stones, to commemorate fifty rotten and forgotten carcasses. It is unfinished, and will remain so.

"The church of 'Santa Croce' contains much illustrious nothing. The tombs of Machiavelli, Michael Angelo, Galileo Galilei, and Alfieri, make it the Westminster Abbey of Italy. I did not admire any of these tombs—beyond their contents. That of Alfieri is heavy, and all of them seem to me overloaded. What is necessary but a bust and name? and perhaps a date? the last for the unchronological, of whom I am one. But all your allegory and eulogy is infernal, and worse than the long wigs Pg 13 of English numskulls upon Roman bodies in the statuary of the reigns of Charles II., William, and Anne.

"When you write, write to *Venice*, as usual; I mean to return there in a fortnight. I shall not be in England for a long time. This afternoon I met Lord and Lady Jersey, and saw them for some time: all well; children grown and healthy; she very pretty, but sunburnt; he very sick of travelling; bound for Paris. There are not many English on the move, and those who are, mostly homewards. I shall not return till business makes me, being much better where I am in health, &c. &c.

"For the sake of my personal comfort, I pray you send me immediately to *Venice—mind, Venice—viz. Waites' tooth-powder, red, a quantity; calcined magnesia, of the best quality, a quantity; and all this by safe, sure, and speedy means; and, by the Lord! do it.*

"I have done nothing at Manfred's third Act. You must wait; I'll have at it in a week or two, or so. Yours ever," &c.

LETTER 277. TO MR. MURRAY.

"Rome, May 5. 1817.

"By this post, (or next at farthest) I send you in two *other* covers, the new third Act of 'Manfred.' I have re-written the greater part, and returned what is not altered in the *proof* you sent me. The Abbot is become a good man, and the Spirits are brought in at the death. You will find I think, Pg 14 some good poetry in this new act, here and there; and if so, print it, without sending me farther proofs, *under Mr. Gifford's correction*, if he will have the goodness to over-

look it. Address all answers to Venice, as usual; I mean to return there in ten days.

"The Lament of Tasso,' which I sent from Florence, has, I trust, arrived: I look upon it as a 'these be good rhymes,' as Pope's papa said to him when he was a boy. For the two—it and the Drama—you will disburse to me (*via Kinnaird*) six hundred guineas. You will perhaps be surprised that I set the same price upon this as upon the Drama; but, besides that I look upon it as *good*, I won't take less than three hundred guineas for any thing. The two together will make you a larger publication than the 'Siege' and 'Parisina;' so you may think yourself let off very easy: that is to say, if these poems are good for any thing, which I hope and believe.

"I have been some days in Rome the Wonderful. I am seeing sights, and have done nothing else, except the new third Act for you. I have this morning seen a live pope and a dead cardinal: Pius VII. has been burying Cardinal Bracchi, whose body I saw in state at the Chiesa Nuova. Rome has delighted me beyond every thing, since Athens and Constantinople. But I shall not remain long this visit. Address to Venice.

"Ever, &c.

"P.S. I have got my saddle-horses here, and have ridden, and am riding, all about the country."

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From the foregoing letters to Mr. Murray, we may collect some curious particulars respecting one of the most original and sublime of the noble poet's productions, the Drama of Manfred. His failure (and to an extent of which the reader shall be enabled presently to judge), in the completion of a design which he had, through two Acts, so magnificently carried on,—the impatience with which, though conscious of this failure, he as usual hurried to the press, without deigning to woo, or wait for, a happier moment of inspiration,—his frank docility in, at once, surrendering up his third Act to reprobation, without urging one parental word in its behalf,—the doubt he evidently felt, whether, from his habit of striking off these creations at a heat, he should be able to rekindle his imagination on the subject,—and then, lastly, the complete success with which,

when his mind *did* make the spring, he at once cleared the whole space by which he before fell short of perfection,—all these circumstances, connected with the production of this grand poem, lay open to us features, both of his disposition and genius, in the highest degree interesting, and such as there is a pleasure, second only to that of perusing the poem itself, in contemplating.

As a literary curiosity, and, still more, as a lesson to genius, never to rest satisfied with imperfection or mediocrity, but to labour on till even failures are converted into triumphs, I shall here transcribe the third Act, in its original shape, as first sent to the publisher:—

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ACT III. — SCENE I.

A Hall in the Castle of Manfred.

MANFRED and HERMAN.

Man. What is the hour?

Her. It wants but one till sunset,
And promises a lovely twilight.

Man. Say,
Are all things so disposed of in the tower
As I directed?

Her. All, my lord, are ready:
Here is the key and casket.

Man. It is well:
Thou may'st retire. [*Exit* HERMAN.]

Man. (alone.) There is a calm upon me—
Inexplicable stillness! which till now
Did not belong to what I knew of life.
If that I did not know philosophy
To be of all our vanities the motliest,

The merest word that ever fool'd the ear
From out the schoolman's jargon, I should deem
The golden secret, the sought 'Kalon,' found,
And seated in my soul. It will not last,
But it is well to have known it, though but once:
It hath enlarged my thoughts with a new sense,
And I within my tablets would note down
That there is such a feeling. Who is there?

Re-enter HERMAN.

Her. My lord, the Abbot of St. Maurice craves
To greet your presence.

Enter the ABBOT OF ST. MAURICE.

Abbot. Peace be with Count Manfred!

Man. Thanks, holy father! welcome to these walls;
Thy presence honours them, and blesseth those
Who dwell within them.

Abbot. Would it were so, Count!
But I would fain confer with thee alone.

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Man. Herman, retire. What would my reverend guest?

Exit HERMAN.

Abbot. Thus, without prelude:— Age and zeal, my office,
And good intent, must plead my privilege;
Our near, though not acquainted neighbourhood,
May also be my herald. Rumours strange,
And of unholy nature, are abroad,
And busy with thy name— a noble name
For centuries; may he who bears it now
Transmit it unimpair'd.

Man. Proceed, — I listen.

Abbot. 'Tis said thou boldest converse with the things
Which are forbidden to the search of man;
That with the dwellers of the dark abodes,
The many evil and unheavenly spirits
Which walk the valley of the shade of death,
Thou communest. I know that with mankind,
Thy fellows in creation, thou dost rarely
Exchange thy thoughts, and that thy solitude
Is as an anchorite's, were it but holy.

Man. And what are they who do avouch these things?

Abbot. My pious brethren – the scared peasantry –
Even thy own vassals – who do look on thee
With most unquiet eyes. Thy life's in peril.

Man. Take it.

Abbot. I come to save, and not destroy –
I would not pry into thy secret soul;
But if these things be sooth, there still is time
For penitence and pity: reconcile thee
With the true church, and through the church to heaven.

Man. I hear thee. This is my reply; Whate'er
I may have been, or am, doth rest between
Heaven and myself. – I shall not choose a mortal
To be my mediator. Have I sinn'd
Against your ordinances? prove and punish! [1]
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Abbot. Then, hear and tremble! For the headstrong wretch
Who in the mail of innate hardihood
Would shield himself, and battle for his sins,
There is the stake on earth, and beyond earth eternal –

Man. Charity, most reverend father,
Becomes thy lips so much more than this menace,
That I would call thee back to it; but say,

What wouldst thou with me?

Abbot. It may be there are
Things that would shake thee – but I keep them back,
And give thee till to-morrow to repent.
Then if thou dost not all devote thyself
To penance, and with gift of all thy lands
To the monastery –

Man. I understand thee, – well!

Abbot. Expect no mercy; I have warned thee.

Man. (*opening the casket.*) Stop –
There is a gift for thee within this casket.

MANFRED opens the casket, strikes a light, and burns some incense.

Ho! Ashtaroth!

The DEMON ASHTAROTH appears, singing as follows: –

The raven sits
On the raven-stone,
And his black wing flits
O'er the milk-white bone;
To and fro, as the night-winds blow,
The carcass of the assassin swings;
And there alone, on the raven-stone [2],
The raven flaps his dusky wings.

The fetters creak – and his ebon beak
Croaks to the close of the hollow sound;

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And this is the tune by the light of the moon
To which the witches dance their round –