BYRON AS REVEALED IN CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

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PREFACE

The purpose of this thesis is to show the extent to which Byron revealed himself as the hero of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage and the extent to which that hero was an original creation. It is difficult to distinguish between fancy and fact in Byron's verse, for to Byron, poetry became life and life became poetry. It is impossible to read Byron impersonally; the facts interwoven in his verse are as absorbing as the fancy.

The true Byron is found in his prose -- chiefly his letters and journals and notes -- and in the authentic biographies. Byron's letters are filled with clear and frank acknowledgments of the casual as well as the intimate events of his life. It is mainly by comparison of Byron's prose with Childe Harold's Pilgrimage that the similarities and differences between Byron and the hero are determined.

Since Byron wrote much of his autobiography into the poem, only the years in the author's life not covered by the hero's travels are reviewed in the chapters on biography. These were the years in the author's life preceding the time covered by the first two Cantos of the poem and the four intervening years between the composition of
the second and third Cantos. These biographical data furnish a part of the background for the poem.

In this thesis the writer gives an unbiased portrayal of Byron as revealed in Childe Harold and in his letters. An attempt has been made not to exaggerate the sensational side of Byron, an error into which many critics and biographers have fallen. Some repetition is unavoidable because the author repeated in the poem.
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CHAPTER I

BYRON'S YOUTH

George Gordon Byron, destined to be the greatest English poet of his day, was as proud of his Norman name and his title as he was of the honors that his pen bestowed on that name. On the paternal side, one of his heroic progenitors, Ralph de Burun, whose name is mentioned in the Doomsday Book, followed William the Conqueror into England. On the maternal side, Byron could have claimed with equal pride his descent from the greatest of the English Stuarts. His mother, the proud Catherine Gordon of Gight, was only four generations removed from James I of Scotland; but Byron held no esteem for his lofty Saxon ancestry and never boasted of it.

Noble and ignoble blood from both sides of his ancestry flowed in the veins of the illustrious George Gordon, who later became the sixth Lord Byron. His father, Captain Jack Byron, known in his youth as "Mad Jack Byron," had lived so profligately that his father disowned him. He climaxd his bad reputation in 1778 by scandalously eloping to the Continent with a wealthy heiress who was the wife of the Marquis of Carmarthen. After she obtained a divorce,
they were married and Captain Byron's extravagance soon exhausted her fortune. It is said that his conduct toward her was execrable and that she died of grief a few years after their marriage. The fruit of this unhappy marriage was a daughter, Augusta, whom Captain Byron brought to England and left with relatives to be reared.

Captain Byron soon began looking for another heiress because he needed to clear up some debts he had incurred. This time he married the arrogant Catherine Gordon of Gight, who had "a respectable fortune for a Scottish heiress." For family reasons, he took his wife's name; and he disposed of her fortune with as much alacrity as he had the fortune of his first wife. Their marriage proved a stormy, unhappy situation and they separated shortly before the arrival of their only son. George Gordon was born on January 22, 1878, at Holles Street in London. Mrs. Gordon always cherished a deep affection for her reprobate husband; and upon learning of his death two years later, she became hysterical and her anguish almost became distraction.

Wild blood flowed in the veins of George Gordon, who had inherited the fatal good-looks of the Byrons. From both parents, he inherited unbridled passion, strong self-will, and arrogance. On the mother's side there were attempts of suicide and poisoning; and on the father's side, there were shameful deeds of murder, daring, and recklessness.
The poet's grandfather, Admiral John Byron, was known as "Foul-weather Jack," because of the perilous storms he had encountered and the daring voyage on which he circumnavigated the globe.

The Byron temperament showed itself in its worst form in the person of William, the fifth Lord Byron, and the grand-uncle of the poet. He gained the title of the "Wicked Lord" and was hated and shunned by all the people in the country around him. He won his greatest notoriety by killing his neighbor, Mr. Chaworth, in a heated argument in a tavern. People came from far and near to hear the trial of the "Wicked Lord," who escaped hanging on the plea that he was a peer. Upon another occasion, in a fit of anger, he stabbed to death his coachman, nonchalantly pitched the body into the carriage beside his wife, and mounted on the coach's box himself. He was thereafter deserted by his wife, and the unhappy Lord secluded himself at Newstead with a few faithful servants. He spent the remainder of his life morosely feeding and training crickets. Horrible and exaggerated stories about the "Wicked Lord" circulated among the people of the neighborhood, and tales about the "Wicked Lord" are repeated even today.

Mrs. Byron, the mother of the poet, having been left in poor circumstances, took her young son to reside in the beautiful Scottish Highlands at Aberdeen. In contrast with the beauty of the natural surroundings was their menial,
gloomy home life which was far beneath the environment becoming to a future Lord.

At a very early age, little George demonstrated a violent temper which terminated often in sullen, silent rages. Upon one occasion, after his nurse had scolded him for soiling his dress, he turned very pale, seized the frock with both hands, and tore it from top to bottom without speaking a single word. Mrs. Gordon did nothing to help stabilize the violent temper that her son possessed; for she, too, was emotionally unbalanced. She would smother him with kisses and endearments one moment and abuse him the next moment. On account of an accident that occurred at the time of his birth, George Gordon had a foot injury that made him somewhat club-footed. The gross, unattractive mother would become angry with the crippled boy and chase him about the room trying to catch him. She would throw anything from china to a poker at him and revile him by calling him a "lame brat," to which he once replied, "I was born so, mother." ¹ These scenes made an indelible

¹One of Byron's dramas, The Deformed Transformed, has as its principal character a hunchback. The drama contains the same statement that is quoted above. In this drama Byron may have pictured the mental agonies that he suffered because of his own deformity. Mary Shelley, the wife of the poet, Shelley, knew Byron quite well the last eight years of his life. She said of him, "No action of Lord Byron's life -- scarce a line he has written -- but was influenced by his personal defect." Quotation from Mary Shelley in The Poetical Works of Lord Byron, complete in one volume, collected and arranged with Illustrative notes by Thomas Moore and others, p. 300, n. 1. Hereafter this edition will be referred to as Works.
impression on the mind of this highly emotional child, and he formed a morbid and gloomy outlook on life that he was never able to overcome. His mother tried to teach him to be extremely proud of his noble Scottish ancestry, but he was more proud of his Norman ancestry and insisted on being called George Byron Gordon, even at an early age. Young Byron found an escape from his penurious home life and his termagent mother in the near-by beautiful mountains and down by the roaring sea, where he spent many hours sitting alone upon high cliffs watching the sea and the sky. It was there that he acquired his intense feelings for the mountains, the sea, the firmament -- nature in her gigantic forms.

Byron attended the grammar school for boys and girls in Aberdeen. Soon after he learned to read, he developed "a grand passion for history" and for travel books. He read the Bible, especially the Old Testament, and memorized a great number of the Psalms. His mother dragged him to church each Sunday, where he amused himself by sticking his mother with pins. Nevertheless, it was this early Calvinistic training that remained the backbone of Byron's religion throughout his entire life, for he could never shake off his belief in fatalism and the existence of a Supreme Being.

When Byron was ten years old, Fortune smiled on her "fated Child" with the lame foot and gloomy home life.
The "Wicked Lord Byron" died, leaving "the little crippled boy at Aberdeen" heir to his peerage and the massive Gothic Abbey at Newstead. The grandson and would-be heir of the "Wicked Lord" had been killed in the Continental war, and it was by chance that Byron became the heir. Upon being told what had happened, young Byron ran to his mother and asked if he looked any different since he had become a lord. From that day on, he felt different even though the inheritance did not improve their financial circumstances at the time. The title of "lord" implied great political and social influence. The nobility proper of England consisted then, and now, of about four hundred persons. The position of a lord corresponded with that of a prince or princess in other countries.

Mrs. Byron and the new heir to Newstead left Scotland and visited the old Abbey, which was run down, neglected, and greatly in need of repair. It spoke of desolation. Mrs. Byron and her son spent the summer near Newstead, living in a little cottage in the neighborhood. They moved to London in the fall, and Byron was placed in a school recommended by Lord Carlisle, a distant relative who was the young peer's guardian. Augusta, Byron's half-sister, eight years older than he, was living under the hospitality of this same Lord Carlisle.

Byron's London school days were among the first happy days that the unfortunate child had experienced, for he
went home only on week-ends. Mrs. Byron was eternally interfering with his studies and making scenes at school. She would keep Byron out of school for a week or more because she disapproved of the teacher, Dr. Glennie. One of Byron's classmates once bluntly stated, "Byron, your mother is a fool," to which Byron replied, "I know it." Lord Carlisle tried to intervene and persuade Mrs. Byron not to interfere with the boy's education. She flew into such a rage at Lord Carlisle that he withdrew and refused ever to do any further favor for Byron. Dr. Glennie consoled himself by writing the following after battling for two years with Mrs. Byron and her interferences:

Mrs. Byron was a total stranger to English society and English manners; with an exterior far from prepossessing, an understanding where nature had not been more bountiful, a mind almost wholly without cultivation. . . . I trust I do not /sic/ great prejudice to the memory of my countrywoman, if I say Mrs. Byron was not . . . endowed with powers to retrieve the fortune, and form the character and manners, of a young noble man, her son. ²

The above quotation confirms information from other sources that Byron's early environment was indeed discouraging. Dr. Glennie said of Byron that he was "playful, good-humoured, and beloved by his companions."

From 1801 to 1805 Byron attended Harrow, which was one of the larger public schools in England. It catered to the aristocracy, and the method of instruction was classical, pedantic, and uninteresting to Byron; therefore, he

²John Drinkwater, The Pilgrim of Eternity, p. 100.
studied little in the required fields but read broadly on subjects of his own choice.\(^3\) A conception of Byron's Harrow days can be gained by some excerpts from his Detached Thoughts, dated 1821. "I read eating, read in bed, read when no one else reads; and had read all sorts of reading since I was five years old . . . "\(^4\) "At school, I was . . . remarked for the extent and readiness of my general information; but in all other respects idle . . . "\(^5\) "As a school boy out of school, I was always in scrapes."\(^6\) The prodigy of Harrow was George Sinclair, Byron's friend, who did not like to fight. Byron said of him, "I fought for him, or thrashed others for him, or thrashed himself to make him thrash others, whom it was necessary, as a point of honour and stature, that he should so chastise."\(^7\) Byron continued, "My school friendships were with me passions (for I was always violent) . . . "\(^8\) Thus Byron's days at Harrow seem to have been happily and profitably spent.

Byron spent most of his summers in the vicinity of Newstead with his mother, but their relationship was becoming almost unbearable. He wrote to his sister, Augusta,

\(^3\) See Byron's remarks on Horace in this thesis, p. 106.

\(^4\) The Works of Lord Byron, Letters and Journals, edited by Rowland E. Prothero, V, 452. All references to Byron's prose, unless otherwise stated, will be made to this edition, hereafter called Letters.

\(^5\) Ibid., p. 453. \(^6\) Ibid., p. 454. \(^7\) Ibid.

\(^8\) Ibid., p. 455.
in the summer of 1804 that his mother's "diabolic disposition" seemed "to increase with age, and to acquire new force with time." He "longed to escape the maternal bondage." He wandered about "hating everything" that he beheld. The story was told that, upon one occasion, each went secretly to the apothecary after a violent outburst to find out whether poison had been purchased, and each warned the apothecary not to sell poison to the other. There was only one consoling phase to Byron's summer visits. He became attached to the golden-haired Mary Chaworth, daughter of the Mr. Chaworth whom his grand-uncle had killed. Byron was extremely jealous of Mary when he was fifteen. She was two years older than he and was engaged to be married to someone else. Byron happened to overhear her ask, "Do you think I could care anything for that lame boy?" This stung him very deeply; nevertheless, his passion for her remained the unrequited love of his life. Thirteen years later, with tears streaming from his eyes, he wrote The Dream, commemorating his love for her.

During his Harrow days, Byron had begun a correspondence with Augusta. His mother and Augusta's guardian, Lord Carlisle, did not favor their correspondence and friendship, because Mrs. Byron and Lord Carlisle had come to blows over Byron's school problem in London. Augusta and Byron each had a love and devotion for the other that nothing ever

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9 Ibid., I, 30-31.
deterred -- not even the worst accusations that could possibly be made. She was the only woman who truly understood Byron. Augusta made an unhappy and unfortunate marriage with a Captain Leigh in 1807. She was forced to live in poor circumstances and was the mother of seven children, most of whom died at birth.

Byron proceeded from Harrow to Trinity College, Cambridge. He received his Master of Arts degree from the University of Cambridge in 1808. Cambridge did not offer the interests and sobering influences that Byron had received at Harrow. Dandyism started showing up in the young peer and he began dissipating. He elaborately furnished his rooms with red leather upholstered furniture that exhibited more show than good taste. He kept his cabinet filled with wines and claret, and his den was the place for many a gathering of his college friends. He kept a horse and a servant and overspent his allowance. He quarreled violently over money matters with Hanson, who managed his affairs; and he quarreled with his mother over the same things. Later he hired more servants, whom he could not afford, and bought a carriage. Mrs. Byron debated whether to send him back to Cambridge in 1807, for she believed "he did nothing but drink, gamble, and spend money" while he was there. She continued, "I wish to act for the best, but God knows what is for the best." 10 Byron, without the

10 Mrs. Byron's letter to Hanson, March, 1807, quoted by the editor in Letters, I, 128-129.
knowledge of his mother, had resorted to money-lenders in order to have some of the things that he wanted; but he did not live extravagantly, considering his position. His mother did not favor a trip abroad that he was planning to make as soon as he finished the University. Byron was no worse than the average college youth, who studied rarely and dissipated frequently. He summed up his studies in a letter.

As to my reading, I believe I may aver, without hyperbole, it has been tolerably extensive in the historical department; so that few nations exist, or have existed, with whose records I am not in some degree acquainted, from Herodotus down to Gibbon. Of the classics, I know about as much as most school-boys after a discipline of thirteen years; of the law of the land as much as enables me to keep "within the statute" — to use the poacher's vocabulary. I did study the "Spirit of Laws" and the Law of Nations; but when I saw the latter violated every month, I gave up my attempts at so useless an accomplishment: -- of geography, I have seen more land on maps than I should wish to traverse on foot; -- of mathematics, enough to give me the headache without clearing the part affected; -- of philosophy, astronomy, and metaphysics, more than I can comprehend; and of common sense so little, that I mean to leave a Byronic prize at each of our "Almae Matres" for the first discovery, -- though I rather fear that of the longitude will precede it.11

Byron repaired a part of Newstead and opened it the year before he finished school. He spent part of his time at Newstead and occasionally entertained some of his college friends there. They led almost a maniacal life in their youthful search for diversion and excitement. But beneath all this frivolity, Byron was oppressed and melancholy;

11 Ibid., pp. 172-173.
this was an inescapable result of his inheritance and his upbringing. On his coming of age, he used borrowed money to give his tenants at Newstead a ball and to roast the customary ox for them. No long stream of carriages brought visitors of high degree to the door at Newstead on January 22, 1809; neither mother, sister, guardian, nor relative appeared. This day, which should have been one of the most happily remembered days in Byron's life, was spent alone in a London hotel. He confessed in a letter written in 1822:

Did I ever tell you that the day I came of age I dined on eggs and bacon and a bottle of ale for once in a way? They are my favourite dish and drinkable; but as neither of them agree with me, I never use them but on great jubilees -- once in four or five years or so.\(^2\)

Humiliation and loneliness drove Byron, the young aristocrat, to a decision which might have been otherwise had his finances permitted him to occupy himself with the pursuits and ideas of his class and kin. To escape from himself and his surrounding privations, while living in the little town of Southwell, in the summers of 1806 and 1807, he made a decision that shaped his destiny. He turned to poetry as a solace and produced *Hours of Idleness*, his first volume of poems, which he published in 1807. There was nothing remarkable about these poems; they were rather schoolboyish and monotonous; but they were indicative of

\(^{12}\)Ibid., VI, 147-148, letter to Murray.
Byron's future personality and style in writing. When he published the poems, he added to the preface, the explanation, "A Minor."

Byron dedicated *Hours of Idleness* to Lord Carlisle, who had attained some recognition in the field of poetry. Upon receipt of the poems, Lord Carlisle responded with a handsome letter; but he admitted that he had not read the poems, nor did he bother ever to make known his opinion. Byron was piqued at this rude neglect and wrote to his friend, Elizabeth Bridget Pigot: "Perhaps the Earl 'bears no brother near the throne,' -- if so, I will make his sceptre totter in his hands."13

The *Edinburgh Review* pounced on this budding author of *Hours of Idleness* with the viciousness of a lion. The reviewers made no allowance or consideration for his youth and his immaturity as a writer. Part of their criticisms were just; part of them unjust. The reviewers' advice, that the juvenile writer give up poetry and spend his leisure otherwise, struck the spark in Byron and those "paper bullets of the brain" taught him "to stand fire."

About a year later, he retaliated with *English Berds* and *Scotch Reviewers*, a biting satire in which he attacked the impeccable reviewers themselves and most of the recognized bards of the day. He did not overlook Lord Carlisle's

13Ibid., I, 138.
insult by failing to respond with his opinion of Hours of Idleness. Byron was not justified in his attacks on Scott, Moore, and several other poets; hence, he had sown seeds of antagonism which he had to face in the future. Byron realized that he had been wrong in some of his attacks, and later, he confessed that he was haunted by "the ghosts of wholesale assertions" that were the products of youthful egotism. English Bards brought a bombshell of both favorable and unfavorable criticisms. In the second edition of the poem, Byron made known that he was planning a trip abroad, but that he would be ready to answer any charge that might be made when he returned. He was the subject of much criticism during his two years abroad. The literary circle realized that a writer with a future had entered the field of satire, and they rather admired the courage of one so young to stand alone against them all.

In March of 1809, Byron took his seat in the House of Lords. He had requested Lord Carlisle to introduce him; Lord Carlisle declined and snubbed his young charge a second time. Byron had no friend or relative among the peers who should, according to custom, introduce him. Another day that should have been one of the most happy days in Byron's life proved to be one of the most humiliating. Dallas, a friend who happened by, went with him and witnessed the scene. He observed that Byron was very pale and appeared inwardly agitated. The Chancellor tried to
be friendly and put Byron at ease. He offered his hand, but Byron made a stiff bow and extended only his finger tips to the Chancellor. Byron carelessly seated himself on one of the Opposition benches to indicate his party choice and then left the hall. "I have taken my seat," he said to Dallas, "and now I will go abroad." 

Byron had finished the University in the spring of 1809 and had set about planning a trip abroad, which was the conventional mode of furthering a peer's education. The Napoleonic wars had closed the Western countries of Europe to travel except for Spain and Portugal. These countries were of special interest to him because the peninsula was the English military base in their operation against Napoleon, who was sweeping over Europe and threatening it with a world-wide Empire. Byron also planned to study in the East because he wanted to study the governments, and the Orient had fascinated him since his early childhood. The trip abroad was the next important occurrence in the life of the young author.

CHAPTER II

CHILDE HAROLD, CANTOS I AND II

The first and second cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* are a travel-verse account of Byron's first trip abroad. To distinguish between fact and fancy in Byron's portrayal of himself as the melancholy hero of the *Pilgrimage* makes an interesting study, which can best be accomplished by comparing and contrasting the thoughts and deeds of Childe Harold, the hero, with those of Byron, his creator.

Byron's true thoughts and emotions cannot always be judged by his outward actions, for he was often pensive and deeply melancholy when he appeared to be gay. An intimate acquaintance with Byron's true emotions and deeds can be gained by prying into his letters in which he unreservedly recounted his true responses and actions.

Byron had lived riotously during his college days, but beneath the surface he was often pensive and gloomy. His last year at the University in 1809 had required his residence for only a short time, as the conferring of a Master of Arts degree on a nobleman in those days was a mere formality. Since he did not have to study for his degree, he spent a greater part of his last year at the
University living alone at Newstead, where he was truly lonely. It was impossible for him and his mother to live together, because of their highly emotional temperaments. He maintained a separate establishment in London for her, and his infrequent visits necessitated embarrassing explanations to his mother and to his friends.

Upon several occasions, Byron wrote from Newstead to his sister about his difficulties with his mother and his unhappy solitary life at Newstead. In a letter dated November 30, 1808, he wrote:

I am living here alone which suits my inclinations better than society of any kind. Mrs. Byron I have shaken off for two years, and I shall not resume her yoke in the future. ... I am a very unlucky fellow, for I think I had naturally not a bad heart; but it has been so bent, twisted, and trampled on, that it has now become as hard as a Highlander's heelpiece.1

In another letter to Augusta dated December 14, 1908, he wrote:

I live here much in my own manner, that is alone, for I could not bear the company of my best friend, above a month; there is such a sameness in mankind upon the whole, and they grow so much more disgusting every day, that were it not for a portion of Ambition, and a conviction that in times like the present we ought to perform our respective duties, I should live here all my life, in unvaried Solitude. I have been visited by all our Nobility and Gentry; but I return no visits.2

In his reminiscence thirteen years later, Byron accounted for the melancholy which he had experienced at a very early age. In his Detached Thoughts he recalled:

1Letters, I, 203.  
2Ibid., p. 204.
My passions were developed very early -- so early, that few would believe me, if I were to state the period, and the facts which accompanied it. Perhaps it was one of the reasons that caused the anticipated melancholy of my thoughts -- having anticipated all my life.

My earlier poems are the thoughts of one at least ten years older than the age at which they were written: I don't mean for their solidity, but their Experience. The first two Cantos of Cce. Hd. were completed at twenty two, and they were written as if by a man older than I shall probably ever be.\(^3\)

The trip abroad that Byron was planning offered a possible escape from his troubles other than his domestic difficulties. He had not forgotten his recent chilling experience in the House of Lords. His shattered fortune would not permit him to take his place properly among the peers in his own country. He could, however, take his place as an English lord on the Continent or in the East where living conditions were less expensive.

Byron had a keen interest in the governments of the past and of the present, having read broadly on this subject before he finished the University. He had long held the conviction that he should study the governments of other nations and have first-hand information before he assumed the responsibility in his own country that his rank placed upon him. He explained this attitude in a letter written to his mother in November, 1906:

All men should travel one day or other . . . when I return I may possibly become a politician. A few years' of other countries than my own will not

\(^3\)Ibid., V, 450.
incapacitate me for that part. If we see no nation but our own, we do not give mankind a fair chance; it is from "experience," not books, we ought to judge them. 4

After making the necessary arrangements, Byron sailed with his friend, John Cam Hobhouse, as a traveling companion in the later part of June, 1809. Byron took a retinue of servants that was more in accordance with his position than with his fortune. He planned to travel more widely in the East than on the Continent, as travel in the East was less expensive than on the Continent and the East held more interests. The romance of the East had always haunted him; it offered danger and adventure. He also wanted to make a study of the policy and manners of India and other Asiatic countries. 5 Byron did not know that the things he did on this tour would provide a source of material, not for a political career but for a poetical career.

When Byron left England, he had known more troubles and disappointments than the average young English nobleman who set out on his first trip abroad. Byron wrote to his friend Hodgson from Falmouth on June 25, 1809, while waiting to sail:

I leave England without regret -- I shall return to it without pleasure. I am like Adam, the first convict sentenced to transportation, but I have no Eve, and have eaten no apple but what was sour as a crab; -- and thus ends my first chapter. Adieu. 6

In his travels, Byron attempted to free himself of his

4 Ibid., I, 195. 5 Ibid., pp. 199-200. 6 Ibid., p. 230.
melancholia, and on the surface, he was often jubilant; for he was stimulated by the new scenes, new faces, and new adventures that he met. Beneath all of his frivolity, Byron's letters and Childe Harold evidence the fact that a feeling of solitariness pervaded his spirit. He felt a deep concern for the freedom of enslaved nations. He was concerned and inquisitive about religions. His deep responses to nature and to historic places were recorded in his letters and in the poem.

Byron's letters are the index of his nature; he had a dual personality which could instantly change from happiness to seriousness, but the serious side of his personality was more deeply rooted than the happy side. Perhaps Byron's dual personality can be best understood by the explanation that Lady Byron made some years later. She said to Byron, "At heart you are the most melancholy of mankind, and often when apparently gayest."7

Drinkwater has said that Byron's two years abroad were the equable years in the author's tempestuous life, the years spent in observation without vexation.8 Some thirty letters that Byron wrote, most of them to his mother, and the first two Cantos of Childe Harold tell "all that we need to know of Byron's only springtime."9

Oliver Elton has characterized Childe Harold as being

7Ibid., V, 446. 8Drinkwater, op. cit., xii.
9Ibid., p. 147.
"less and more than Byron." He was less, for the Byron of the letters was "a satirist, a buck, and an ex-dandy." He was more than Byron in that he posed as a traditional "Satanic" hero, harried by folly, sorrow, and perhaps crime; but the posing should not be over-estimated. Childe Harold was like Byron in being pulled between his love for solitude and his love for the motley world.  

Byron began the first Canto of Childe Harold in Albania on the last day of October, 1809, calling it Joannini in Albania. This was a diary of his travels through Portugal and Spain, along the Mediterranean, and into Albania. He returned to the Continent by way of Missolonghi and stopped in Athens. He concluded the second Canto soon after he left Athens in March, 1810. Byron had composed this account of his travels with no thought of publishing it. He maintained that he had given the poem a hero for the sake of having a thread to the story; Harold was purely "a child of the imagination."  

In spite of Byron's denial that he was the hero, there are many parallels between Byron and Childe Harold. In the original manuscript, Childe Harold was called Childe Burun.  

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10 Oliver Elton, A Survey of English Literature, II, 141-143.  
11 The Works of Lord Byron, Poetry, edited by E. H. Coleridge, II, 3-8. All references to Byron's poetry will be made to this edition, hereafter called Poetry. References to Childe Harold will be made by canto and stanza numbers.  
12 Ibid., p. 17, n. 1.
the archaic version of the Byron name. Childe Harold's family, like Byron's family, had a long and noble lineage and "had been glorious in another day." Childe Harold's hereditary home, a massive old monastic dome shrouded in superstition, was the same as Byron's. Newstead had been in the hands of the Puruns since the dissolution of the monasteries. The oldest part of the Abbey dated back to 1170. Superstition clung to Newstead and Byron encouraged the belief in it. Washington Irving gave a vivid description of the medieval and fantastic architecture of Newstead and a fascinating account of the superstition that hovered about the Abbey when he visited it.

Childe Harold was "sore sick at heart." He had filled his halls with revellers, yet nothing quenched his longing for one that he loved but who could "ne'er be his." So drugged was he with pleasures that he longed for distant climes; "he almost longed for woe." Byron, in youthful antipathy, had revelled at Newstead with some of his college friends in an outlandish fashion. They vested themselves in monks' dresses and masqueraded about the place.

13Canto I: 3.

14See Byron's "Elegy on Newstead," Poetry, I, 116. Also see Don Juan, Canto 13.

15See the story of the "Black Friar," Don Juan, Canto 26: 36-41.


17Canto I: 2-6.
at untimely hours. They drank burgundy and champagne from a skull-cup and did all sorts of carousing. They breakfasted at two in the afternoon and retired at two or three in the morning. A visitor was greeted by a bear on one side of the hall and a fox on the other. If the visitor did not make himself known, he might be greeted with pistol shots, for they wore their pistols and fired them upon the slightest provocation.\textsuperscript{18}

Stories about Byron's dissipation had been rumored. In a letter written in 1808, Byron stated, "I have already been held up as the votary of licentiousness, and the disciple of infidelity. . . . I am made worse than I really am."\textsuperscript{19} Byron's entertainments at Newstead were not so lavish nor so Satanic as Harold's revelries described in the opening stanzas of the poem.\textsuperscript{20} Byron might have entertained in Harold's fashion had his finances permitted.

Childe Harold had a mother that he had not forgotten, but he did not grieve over pertaining with her. The same was true of Byron. Childe Harold left only "a sister whom he loved but saw her not" to grieve his absence. Byron left only a sister to grieve his absence; he loved her, but he did not see her. Byron's corresponded with his sister in 1808 and 1809 revealed that he had not seen her for a long

\textsuperscript{18}Matthew's letter quoted by the editor, \textit{Letters}, I, 153-155.

\textsuperscript{19}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 170.

\textsuperscript{20}Canto I: 8-13.
time before he left on the tour. Byron, like the Childe, loved one that "could ne'er be his." Byron was thinking of Mary Chaworth to whom he wrote Stanzas to a Lady on Leaving England. The idealized suffering that Byron expressed in Stanzas is comparable with Harold's sufferings.

And I will cross the whitening foam,
And I will seek a foreign home;
Till I forget a false fair face,
I ne'er shall find a resting-place;
My own dark thoughts I cannot shun,
But ever love, and love but one.

The little page to whom Childe Harold called, "Come hither, hither," and whose tears he dried away, was Robert Rushton, the son of one of Byron's tenants. Childe Harold's "staunch yeoman" was William Fletcher, who for twenty years was a faithful valet to Byron and was at Byron's side in his last illness. After Byron's death, Fletcher said that "his Lord was more to him than a father." Childe Harold's "Good Night" song expressed the same thoughts that a young misanthrope would have upon leaving his native land for the first time.

Childe Harold grieved at parting with his dog.

21Ibid., 5.
22See Mary Chaworth, p. 9 in this thesis.
25Canto I: 13; also see Works, p. 5, n. 1.
26Canto I: 13, "Good Night."
Byron reflected a characteristic of his period in mentioning the dog, for there was an intense interest in animals and pets at that time. Byron's most beloved dog, Boatswain, had died in November before Byron left on his trip. The death of his dog threw Byron into a state of deep gloom. In memory of his dog, Byron wrote the famous inscription that is engraved on Boatswain's monument, which remains a conspicuous ornament in the garden at Newstead today. The last two lines of the inscription on the marker read:

To mark a friend's remains these stones arise;
I never knew but one, -- and here he lies.\(^{27}\)

Byron, in his will executed after his return from the Continent, requested that his own body be buried beside that of his dog.\(^{28}\) Later he had this request revoked.

The places Childe Harold visited were identical with those that Byron visited and the adventures of Childe Harold correspond a great deal with the adventures of Byron. Hobhouse, who later became Lord Broughton, gives a full and graphic account of the places they visited in his Recollections of a Long Life.

Childe Harold disembarked at Lisbon. He was distressed at finding in Portugal a once free people degenerated to "poor paltry slaves." Napoleon and the Turks had depleted


the nation so that the people lived in filth and slovenliness:

A nation swoln with ignorance and pride,  
Who lick yet loathe the hand that waves the sword.\textsuperscript{29}

To Harold, Cintra was a relief from the squalid conditions at Lisbon.

\textit{Lo! Cintra's glorious Eden intervenes,}
In variegated maze of mount and glen.\textsuperscript{30}

Byron's description of Cintra in a letter is almost poetic:

It contains beauties of every description, natural and artificial. Palaces and gardens rising in the midst of rocks, cataracts, and precipices; convents on stupendous heights -- a distant view of the sea and the Tagus. ... It unites in itself all the wildness of the western highlands, with the verdure of the south of France.\textsuperscript{31}

In another mood, Byron wrote to Francis Hodgson about the joys of a traveler. He had found the convents interesting and the monks amusing, and the trip was going well. Purposely using bad grammar, he wrote a ludicrous account, to which he added the touch of "sober sadness."

\begin{quote}
I am very happy here, because I loves oranges, and talks bad Latin to the monks, who understand it, as it is like their own, -- and I goes into society (with my pocket-pistols), and I swims in the Tagus all across at once, and I rides on an ass or a male, and swears Portuguese, and have got ... bites from mosquitoes. But what of that? Comfort must not be expected by folks that go a pleasing. ... How merrily we lives that travellers be! -- if we had food and raiment. But, in sober sadness,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{29}Canto I: 16. \hfill \textsuperscript{30}Ibid., 16.
\textsuperscript{31}Letters, I, 237.
anything is better than England, and I am infinitely amused with my pilgrimage so far as it has gone.\textsuperscript{32}

After spending ten days in Cintra, Byron sent part of his baggage and some of his servants by sea to Gibraltar. He and the remainder of the party rode on horseback to Seville, a distance of almost four hundred miles, according to Byron's own account. In spite of the summer heat and the discomfort of travel, he arrived in Seville in good health. The party had ridden excellent horses and traveled seventy miles a day. The roads were good, even better than in England; and they had received all the accommodations on the road that could be offered "an English nobleman, in an English uniform, --- a very respectable personage in Spain."\textsuperscript{33}

From Cintra, the Pilgrim made "his way in solitary guise." As he traveled along, he meditated and "conscious reason" whispered to him to despise his misspent youth; but his eyes grew dim as he thought on the past. Harold's sufferings were more idealized than Byron's, for Byron's eyes did not grow dim as he looked upon his past although he was sad and melancholy. When Harold's agonies were not so intense, his pilgrim's cloak that covered his satiate soul, was thrown back and the gloomy side of Byron could be

\textsuperscript{32}Ibid., p. 233.

\textsuperscript{33}Ibid., p. 235, letter to Hodgson, 1809.
found beneath the Pilgrim's cloak. Harold expressed Byron's disgust with the people of Spain for being lethargic and cowering. Vice was everywhere; "young-eyed lewdness walks her midnight rounds." Harold, like Byron, admonished: "Awake, ye Sons of Spain! Awake! advance!" Harold scoffed at the English victory of Talavera. He hated the war-hounds who promoted wars for personal gains and left conquered nations bowed and dejected. Byron had a vigorous and obstinate hatred of war that enslaved nations. At this particular period, he hated Napoleon, who was conquering nations and making the people destitute. Harold asked:

And must they fall? the young, the proud, the brave, To swell one bloated chief's unwholesome reign?

On the streets of Seville, Byron saw the honored maid of Saragosa. Harold was forgotten while the narrator, or the poet, told the story of the beautiful Spanish maiden who took her slain lover's place on the field of battle to avenge his ghost. She gallantly led the Spanish troops against the enemy, who turned and fled, "foiled by a woman's hand."

35Canto I: 46. 36Ibid., 37.
37In the battle of Talavera, July 27 and 28, 1809, the British lost 260 officers and 5,000 men and did the French little harm. This stanza was written at Newstead after Byron's return home. Letters, I, 241, n. 1.
38Canto I: 40-45.
39A few years later his attitude toward Napoleon had changed. See Canto III: 36-40.
40Canto I: 53. 41Ibid., 55-58.
The society of women excited Byron's attention during the three days he spent in Seville. He wrote his mother that he had lodged in the house of two beautiful, unmarried ladies. One of the ladies was very much attracted by this "handsome, young Lord." His "virtue" induced him to accept only her light affections. Her last words were "Adieu, you pretty fellow! You please me much." She gave him a lock of her hair, about three feet long, which he sent to his mother to preserve for him.42

From "Cadiz, sweet Cadiz," Byron wrote the following description of Spanish women:

Long black hair, dark, languishing eyes, clear olive complexions, and forms more graceful in motion than can be conceived by an Englishman used to the drowsy, listless air of his countrywomen, added to the most decent dress in the world, render a Spanish beauty irresistible.

I beg leave to observe that intrigue here is the business of life; when a woman marries she throws off all restraint, but I believe their conduct is chaste enough before.43

Harold saw the beauty of Cadiz. He was not unaware of the voluptuous grace and beauty of the Spanish women, but he did not mingle with the throng. He had buried his hopes long ago; he did not view them "with misanthropic Hate."44 Only once did Harold speak and that was to pour out his song of woe to the Spanish beauty, Inez.45 The

42Letters, I, 238-239.
43Ibid., p. 239. See all letters, pp. 234-243.
44Canto I: 84.
45Ibid., 85. Inez was a girl Byron had met in Cadiz.
fated Pilgrim voiced his dark mood in these lines from the
song:

It is that weariness which springs
From all I meet, or hear, or see.\(^{46}\)

These were the serious thoughts of Byron as he observed
the tragic state of Spain and the other countries that he
visited.

On the Sabbath, Harold followed the throng to the arena
where the wild crowd yelled and shouted as:

\[
\text{Foiled, bleeding, breathless, furious to the last,}
\text{Full in the centre stands the Bull at bay,}
\text{Mid wounds, and clinging darts, and lances trast,}
\text{And foes disabled in the brutal fray:}
\text{And now the Matadores around him play,}
\text{Shake the red cloak, and poise the ready brand;}
\text{Once more through all he bursts his thundering way --}
\text{Vain rage! the mantle quits the conyng hand,}
\text{Wraps his fierce eye -- 'tis past -- he sinks upon}
\text{the sand!}\(^{47}\)
\]

Harold could not help but think, ironically, on a Sabbath
in London where Londoners "gulp their weekly air," and
both rich and poor make merry and parade their best car-
riages instead of going to church.\(^{48}\)

The weary Pilgrim, doomed to wander on, left the land
of "War and Crimes" and embarked again on the "dark blue
sea." Night, the time for meditation, came, and Harold
thought on more happy days when he had loved and had been
loved. How different from the present gloom with none to

\(^{46}\text{Ibid. See "To Inez" inserted between stanzas 84 and 85, Canto I.}\)

\(^{47}\text{Ibid., 78.}\)

\(^{48}\text{Ibid., 69-70.}\)
care for him, none to bless him. "This is to be alone. This, this is Solitude." Even the life of a hermit would be more happy, for he could watch the ocean in the evenings and catch the enchantment of "a witching scene" before he turned again "to hate a world he had almost forgot." One of Byron's chief delights was, he stated in one of his journals, to climb upon the rocks high above the sea and watch the waters and the sky for hours. The turmoil of the sea always held a fascination for him whose spirit was as turbulent as the waters in the time of storm. Harold sailed through "Calpe's straits" and landed on Calypso's isle. There he discovered -- not the immortal goddess -- but a "mortal sovereign," sweet Florence. She tried with all her skills and charms to touch Harold's hardened heart. She did not realize that this silent, unresponsive traveler "was not unskillful in the spoiler's art." She did not know that Harold knew the technique of love making. He knew that a lover should not be too humble in another's eyes lest he be despised. He knew that if he would win, he must "pique and soothe in turn"; but time had proved that too often when the sought-for prize was won, it was not worth the winning, and youth and honor were wasted. "These are thy fruits, successful Passion! These!"

49 Ibid., II: 16-26.  50 Ibid., 26.  51 Ibid., 27.  52 Ibid., 22. These were the Straits of Gibraltar.  53 Ibid., 30-35.  54 Ibid., 35.
The same appeared to be true in most of Byron's love affairs. The women who remained important in his life were those whom he pursued, or those who piqued him. Prizes easily won were carelessly cast aside by Byron. Mary Duff and Mary Chaworth were two of Byron's unrequited loves. Clare Clairmont and Lady Caroline Lamb were two who threw themselves upon Byron, and he discarded them when he tired of them.

In Gibraltar Lord Byron did not have Childe Harold's resistance to the charms of "sweet Florence," who was in reality Mrs. Spencer Smith. She had taken part in a conspiracy and was subjected to persecution by Napoleon. Her beauty and eccentricity captivated Byron, and he celebrated her in several poems. 55 This was not a serious love affair, and Byron forgot her almost as quickly as Harold would have after he left Calypso.

Childe Harold sailed past Calypso to the land of Albania, "rugged nurse of savage men."

Here roams the wolf -- the eagle whets his beak --
Birds, -- beasts of prey -- and wilder men appear. 56

55 Byron wrote the following poems honoring Mrs. Spencer Smith: To Florence, Lines Written in an Album, Stanzas Composed During a Thunder Storm, Stanzas Written in Passing the American Gulf.

56 Canto II: 42.
Here Harold came

To greet Albania's Chief, whose dread command
Is lawless law; for with a bloody hand
He sways a nation, turbulent and bold. 57

Childe Harold's pensive mood changed; he thrilled to the
adventure in Albania as much as did Byron. The palace
nestled in the mountains and presented a striking spec-
tacle as Harold approached it in the late afternoon. The
rich trappings of the horses and the elaborately embroidered
dresses of every hue were as magnificent as the appearance
of the palace itself. Childe Harold marvelled as he beheld
Ali in all of his pomp and glory. Harold did not take part
in the evening revelry in which these bandits from every na-
tion danced a wild, barbaric dance with swords flashing and
kirtles flying. 58 Childe Harold described the scene:

In marble-paved pavilion, where a spring
Of living water from the centre rose,
Whose bubbling did a genial freshness fling,
And soft voluptuous couches breathed repose,
Ali reclined, a man of war and woes;
Yet in his lineaments ye cannot trace,
While Gentleness her milder radiance throws
Along the aged venerable face,
The deeds that lurk beneath, and stain him with
disgrace. 59

Byron wrote in letters:

The next day I was introduced to Ali Pacha.
I was dressed in full suit of staff uniform, with
a very magnificent sabre, etc. The vizier [sic]
received me in a large room paved with marble: e

57 Ibid., 47. 58 Ibid., 55-72.
59 Ibid., 62.
fountain was playing in the centre; the apartment was surrounded by scarlet ottomans.

His highness is sixty years old, very fat, and not tall, but with a fine face, light blue eyes, and a white beard; his manner is very kind, and at the same time he possesses that dignity which I find universal amongst the Turks. He has the appearance of anything but his real character, for he is a remorseless tyrant, guilty of the most horrible cruelties, very brave, and so good a general that they call him the Mahometan Buonaparte. . . . He told me to consider him as a father whilst I was in Turkey, and said he looked on me as a son. Indeed, he treated me like a child, sending me almonds and sugared sherbet, fruit and sweets, twenty times a day.60

The beautiful song "Tambourgi, Tambourgi!" in Childe Harold was inspired by a Pyrrhic war dance to the accompaniment of song that Byron heard one night before retiring to a cave in which he slept on his leaving Albania.61 Byron had ventured farther into Albania than any other Englishman except one. The country was rarely penetrated because of the savagery of the natives.62 Childe Harold and the poet gradually became indistinguishable in the poem. Harold's experiences were Byron's experiences in Albania. Byron's account of the venture given in his letters and journals are superior to the poetic account in Childe Harold.63 Byron fell under the glamor of Oriental splendor. Secundrelism was the normal ethics in the near East. Ali had established himself by organizing his rival bandits

60Letters, I, 250-251.  61Ibid., p. 264.
62Brandes, op. cit., p. 272.
63Compare Canto II: 40-72 with Letters, I, 243-257.
out of existence. Upon one occasion, when his son's wife complained about the son's giving too much attention to others, Ali had fifteen Greek and Turkish beauties drowned. Byron saw, in Ali and the barbaric Turks, a valor and courage that he could not fail to admire. From his travels in Albania, Byron gained a vast source of material for several of the poems he wrote in the next two years.

Byron, dynamic in his emotions, loved nature in her gigantic aspects. Nature offered a companionship which nothing else could offer; it offered solace to him whose spirit was as violent as nature in her wrath. The poet said:

Dear Nature is the kindest mother still! Though always changing, in her aspect mild; From her bare bosom let me take my fill, Her never-weaned, though not her favoured child. Oh! she is fairest in her features wild, Where nothing polished dares pollute her path: To me by day or night she ever smiled, Though I have marked her when none other hath, And sought her more and more, and loved her best in wrath.

It pleased Childe Harold's soul to watch the rushing cataract leap between "hanging rocks, that shock yet please the soul" in the wilds of Albania. Harold loved to sit high above the ocean and look out where sea and sky made a

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65 Lara, Corsair, Bride of Abydos, Parisina, Siege of Corinth, and Don Juan, V, 45-159.

66 Canto II: 37.

67 Ibid., 48.
"witching scene." To sit on rocks or in the shade of the forest and "converse with Nature's charms and view her stores unrolled" was another favorite pastime of the Pilgrim.

The first two Cantos of Childe Harold reflect chiefly the first two periods in Byron's religious thinking. He was influenced by Calvinism in his early years. He clung to his early belief in immortality, the original sin and its consequences, a personal curse and predestination. Childe Harold believed he was a fated child, destined never to be happy; Byron also believed that he was fated. He wrote in 1807: "Nature stampt me in the Die of Indifference. I consider myself as destined never to be happy, although in some instances fortunate. I am an isolated Being on Earth."

Byron's second period was one of skepticism and doubts about the nature of being. He was always wondering, doubting, questioning about religion. He expressed this skepticism in the first nine stanzas of Canto II, which are a part of the dramatic prologue. Before the author returned to Harold and his pilgrimage, he invoked the goddess Athena to look down upon her glorious ruins. Imagining he was in Athens among her sacred ruins, the poet asked, "Where are thy men of might? thy grand in soul?" These were sought

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68 Ibid., 27. 
69 Ibid., 25. 
71 Canto II: 2.
in vain, for they could be seen only through "the mist of years." Byron, in his fancy, implored an Oriental, possibly a Moslem or "light Greek," a "Son of the Morning," to spare "yon defenseless Urn," which was "a nation's sepulchre" where the ashes of past heroes had been deposited. Byron expressed his own bewilderments and doubts as he imagined he viewed this sepulchre, this "Abode of Gods, whose shrines no longer burn."72 Was it true that

Even Gods must yield -- Religions take their turn:
'Twas Jove's -- 'tis Mahomet's -- and other Creeds
Will rise with other years, till Man shall learn
Vainly his incense soars, his victim bleeds;
Poor child of Doubt and Death, whose hope is built
on reeds.73

Byron became the child of doubt as he asked, "Is it enough to know 'Thou art'?' Will one's soul and body mingle with the earth and sky. Will there be a place of future joy and woe as holy men have deemed?" The wise Athenian had spoken well when he said, "All that we know is, nothing can be known." This child of doubt concluded that Fate or Chance would proclaim what was best.74 Byron was referring to someone he had known when he expressed in stanza nine the hope that he and the departed one would meet again and love each other, "If aught of young Remembrance remained."75

72 Ibid., 3. 73 Ibid. 74 Ibid., 4-8.
75 Ibid., 9. Byron added this stanza after he returned to England. It was dated October 14, 1811. He explained that the stanza alluded to an event which had taken place since his return and did not refer to "any male friend." Poetry, II, 104, n. 1.
When Harold left the land of Christian tongues, he entered a land where there was no pampered priesthood, a land where churchmen and votary were despised. Harold expressed Byron's views when he said:

Foul Superstition! howsoever disguised, 
Idol -- Saint -- Virgin -- Prophet -- Crescent --
Cross --
For whatsoever symbol thou art prized, 
Thou sacerdotal gain, but general loss!
Who from true Worship's gold can separate thy cross?\(^{76}\)

The philosophical doubting, questioning of Byron in the poem and of Harold coincided with Byron's expressions in his letters. In 1811 he wrote to Francis Hodgson, his intimate friend, who became a clergyman in the Church of England:

I will have nothing to do with your immortality; we are miserable enough in this life, without the absurdity of speculating upon another. If men are to live, why die at all? and if they die, why disturb the sweet and sound sleep that "knows no waking"?\(^ {77}\)

From the land of Albania, the Pilgrim arrived in the land of his heart's desire.

Fair Greece! sad relic of departed Worth! Immortal, though no more; though fallen great.\(^ {78}\)

This was the land of friendship and adventure to which the poet gave his heart and his life. Harold's responses to Greece were Byron's responses. Upon visiting the Marathon for the first time, Byron breathed the reverie, "Where'er we tread 'tis haunted, holy ground."\(^ {79}\) He felt a sublime sense of the infinite melancholy of history. He lamented

\(^{76}\text{Canto II: 44.}\)
\(^{77}\text{Letters, II, 19-21}\)
\(^{78}\text{Canto II: 73.}\)
\(^{79}\text{Ibid., 88.}\)
her lost freedom and past glory, but Greece, even in her woe, was still lovely to him. He challenged the enslaved Greeks to shake off their hereditary shackles and become free men again:

Hereditary Bondsmen! know ye not
Who would be free themselves must strike the blow? 80

The narrator was grieved and indignant because Greece was being robbed of her monuments and art. Surely, a nation that was free, a nation that was queen of the sea, would not permit one of her nobles, a Lord Eld, 81 to plunder in the treasure-house of a defenseless nation. Surely, a nation that would "rarely swerve from law, however stern," would not stoop to plunder a "bleeding land," and take the few remnants of past glory that tyrants had let stand. 82

Harold Spencer has said that the second Canto of Childe Harold contained Byron's sublimest presentation of the case for modern Greece as a cradle of our freedom and our treasure-house of art. He raised the battle cry that swept over Greece within ten years; this was the battle cry that is linked with Byron's own tragic end at Missolonghi. "It produced over Europe something of that same magical awakening which came, six centuries before, from Peter the Hermit's

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80 Canto II: 76. 81 Lord Elgin. 82 England was sanctioning the plundering of the Parthenon on the score that the monuments would be an inspiration to contemporary English artists. It might be interesting to note that Byron salvaged four Athenian skulls that he brought home with him. Letters, I, 318.
appeals for the enslaved Holy Land."\textsuperscript{83}

After a short tour of Athens, Hobhouse returned to England and Byron remained ten weeks in Athens. He lived in the home of the widow of the English Vice-consul. She had three pretty daughters about whom Byron wrote: "I am dying of love for three Greek girls . . . Theresa, Mariana, and Katinka are the names of these divinities, -- all of them under fifteen."\textsuperscript{84} While Byron was living with this family, he lived a disorderly and care-free life with "riots from noon to night," and as he expressed it, he was "very childish and happy." Theresa was the Maid of Athens whom Byron celebrated in his poem by the same name. She was visited by English people traveling through Athens long after her beauty had faded. Byron spent much of his time while he was in Athens on this visit riding over the battlefields and visiting the ancient monuments. He made daring excursions far into Attica, and once he barely escaped a band of robbers.

Byron left Athens on March 5, 1810, for a visit in Smyrna and Constantinople. Soon after leaving Athens, he completed the second Canto of \textit{Childe Harold}, and with this date the account of the tour given in the \textit{Pilgrimage} ended. He returned to Athens during July and from there made a tour of the Morea. In January, 1811, Byron took up residence

\textsuperscript{83}Harold Spender, \textit{Byron in Greece}, pp. 10-11.

\textsuperscript{84}Letters, I, 269. Also see Hobhouse's account quoted from Hobhouse's \textit{"Travels in Albania,"} \textit{ibid.}
at a Franciscan Convent, where he lived a very settled and sober existence with three Greek Catholics and three Roman Catholics. He was not the jocund traveler who had written from Cintra almost two years ago, "How merrily we live that travellers be!" Byron had seen something of the world, and the part that he had seen was not bright. He had witnessed the suffering of people who were enslaved by their conquerors. He had become "a citizen of the world" and he was profoundly concerned about the conditions he had seen. He wrote to Hodgson from the convent that he was sick of vice and very cynical and prone to moralize.\textsuperscript{85}

Byron returned to his own country with a settled melancholy. If things were too difficult for him, he planned to return to Europe and join a foreign fighting force. He felt that he had, as he said,

little prospect of pleasure at home, and with a body a little shaken by one or two smart fevers, but a spirit yet unbroken. My affairs, it seems, are considerably involved, and much business must be done with lawyers, colliers, farmers, and creditors. Now this, to a man who hates bustle as he hates a bishop, is a serious concern.\textsuperscript{86}

Mr. Dallas, a friend of Byron's who had helped nurse the satire through its various stages, was anxious to see what Byron had written while he was away. Byron showed him Hints from Horace and some other poems he had composed while he was living at the convent. Dallas was greatly

\textsuperscript{85}Ibid., pp. 272-273. \textsuperscript{86}Ibid., pp. 313-314.
disappointed in these. After much prodding, he discovered that Byron had written a great number of "stanzas in Spenser's measure, relative to the countries he had visited." Byron explained that he had "scribbled" these for his own amusement. He reluctantly handed the travel-verses to Dallas and remarked: "They're not worth troubling you with, but you shall have them all if you like." Dallas breathlessly read this unusual narrative written in the conventional Spenserian stanza, but containing a new and original quality, for Byron's oratorical style had emerged. He exclaimed to Byron when he saw him:

You have written one of the most delightful poems I have ever read. . . . I have been so fascinated with Childe Harold that I have not been able to lay it down. . . . I would almost pledge my life on its advancing the reputation of your poetical powers and on its gaining you great honour and regard . . .

This enthusiasm made little impression on the weary pilgrim, who left the manuscript with Dallas and proceeded to Newstead. He had written instructions to his mother to make ready his rooms, as he planned to retire into seclusion. He did not want "to be pestered with visiters [sic]," for he was never fond of society and he was less so after his trip abroad.

Before Byron reached Newstead, he was greeted with sad news that threw him into a new and bitter experience.

87 Karl Elze, Lord Byron, pp. 116-117.
88 Letters, I, 312.
His mother had died on the day before his arrival at Newstead, and one of his most intimate Cambridge friends, Matthews, had been drowned a few days earlier. Although Byron had resented his mother's violence and her uncouthness, death was a reconciling power and he realized that it was their likenesses that had placed the gulf between them while she lived. He was heard to lament, "Oh, Mrs. By, I had but one friend in the world, and she is gone." He was very careful to see that all debts or obligations of his mother were paid, for he did not want a stain on her memory. He felt the truth of the statement "that we can only have one mother."

Matthews was, perhaps, the best friend that Byron had made thus far in his life. Matthews was somewhat like him in that he was not good tempered. Byron thought Matthews so superior a man that he made concessions to his humors, which were amusing and at the same time provoking.

Byron had concluded *Childe Harold* before leaving the Continent. After he returned home and faced new experiences, he added the last three stanzas and stanza nine, which have as their theme his personal loss and sorrow. In

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89 Death took six of Byron's friends and relatives between May and the end of August, 1811. *Works*, p. 17, n. 2.

90 *Letters*, I, 321.

91 Ibid., pp. 323-324.

92 Letter to Murray in which Byron recalled his recollections of Matthews, Ravenna, 1820. Ibid., V, 121-128.
the *Pilgrimage* Byron attributed these misfortunes to Harold, who had returned to his native land to find new grief. "Would that he had ne'er returned to find fresh cause to roam." "Stern death" had already claimed his beloved one, and more recently, death claimed the little joy that life had left -- parent, friend, and more than friend.\(^3\) Death had taken Byron's mother, his intimate friend, Matthews, and later, Edleston, a Cambridge chorister, who was more than a friend.

Edleston's death was an acute grief for Byron. He had once saved Edleston from drowning and had celebrated him as the hero in the poem *The Cornelian*. Several years before his death, Edleston had given Byron a cornelian heart and Byron had passed it on to their mutual friend, Miss Elizabeth Bridget Pigot. Since the cornelian was the only memorial that Byron had received from Edleston, he requested Miss Pigot to return it to him if she still possessed it. The cornelian, of course, was returned. Moore added, ironically, that Lord Byron was reminded that he had left the cornelian with Miss Pigot as a deposit, not as a gift.\(^4\)

In the last stanza of *Childe Harold*, Canto II, the poet asked:

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\(^3\)Canto II: 95.

\(^4\)Letters, I, 131. Also see Letters, II, 251-252.
What is the worst of woes that wait on age?
What stamps the wrinkles deeper on the brow?
To view each loved one blotted from life's page,
And be alone as I am now.\textsuperscript{95}

These lines were highly personalized. The same day that
Byron wrote the above lines, he wrote a letter to Dallas.
The letter expressed the same feeling of loneliness as the
poem.

I have been again shocked with a death, and
have lost one very dear to me in happier times; but
"I have almost forgot the taste of grief," and "sup-
pelled full of horrors" till I have become callous, nor
have I a tear left for an event which, five years ago,
would have bowed my head to the earth. It seems as
though I were to experience in my youth the greatest
misery of age. My friends fall around me, and I shall
be left a lonely tree before I am withered. Other men
can always take refuge in their families; I have no
prospect here or hereafter, except the selfish satis-
faction of surviving my betters. I am indeed very
wretched, and you will excuse my saying so, as you
know I am not apt to cant of sensibility. . . . \textsuperscript{96}

In reference to the above lines in the poem, a Profes-
sor Clark said to the author of The Pursuits of Literature:
"Surely Lord Byron cannot have experienced such keen an-
guish as these exquisite allusions to what older men may
have felt seem to denote." "I fear he has," answered
Matthias; "he could not otherwise have written such a poem."\textsuperscript{97}

Byron spent almost two months at Newstead after his
mother's death, living in gloom and introspection. He
tried to shake this feeling by writing, rising early, sitting
late, and numerous other activities, but he remained

\textsuperscript{95}Canto II: 98. \textsuperscript{96}Letters, II, 52-53.
\textsuperscript{97}Works, p. 27, n. 1.
"wretched." His morbidness was expressed in another letter that he wrote to Dallas:

> I am already too familiar with the dead. . . . Peace be with the dead! Regret cannot wake them. With a sigh to the departed, let us resume the dull business of life, in the certainty that we also shall have our repose. 98

Fortunately, the publication of *Childe Harold* necessitated Byron's going to London, where he gradually started taking part in social activities. He did not return to the dissipated haunts of his Cambridge days. He began making connections in the literary circles and making his appearance in the upper realm in society. It was not an easy task for a "poor Lord" to try to keep up with other peers in the days when money flourished among most of the upper class.

Byron delivered his Maiden Speech in the House of Lords shortly before the appearance of *Childe Harold* in March, 1812. His speech was truly representative of him. He pleaded the cause of the poor, downtrodden factory workers. They were destroying the new and wider frames that had been introduced. The use of these frames would cut down labor and deprive many of their jobs. A bill was to be introduced to make frame-breaking punishable by death. Byron came to their defense:

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98 *Letters*, I, 325.
I have traversed the seat of war in the Peninsula; I have been in some of the most oppressed provinces of Turkey; but never, under the most despotic of infidel governments, did I behold such squalid wretchedness as I have since my return, in the very heart of a Christian country. . . .

Byron received a great deal of attention and recognition for this brilliant speech; and as he expressed it, there could be no better advertising for Childe Harold. The next sensation that Byron furnished England was the advent of Childe Harold two days later, whose hero was immediately identified by the public as the author himself.

In the first two cantos of the Pilgrim's song, there was a faint strain of the music with which the poet held the world spellbound in later years. The poem revealed Byron's love of nature in its wildest aspects, his reverence for history, his love of Greece, his hate of cant and hypocrisy, his contempt for England's foreign policy, his views on religion, and last, but not least, his egoism. These faint strains swelled into the music of a mighty organ ten years later.

From the discussion of the first two Cantos of Childe Harold and the citations from Byron's own letters, journals and notes, and the opinions of others, it is evident that, beneath the cloak, the Pilgrim in Childe Harold represented one side of Byron's dual personality. Perhaps Byron revealed only the serious and melancholy side of his personality.

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99 Ibid., II, 424-430, "The Frame Work Bill."
because of his immaturity as a poet. Byron, at that period, was not experienced and capable enough to give a complete picture of himself. The narrator stated that had Harold done more and spoken less, it would have been easier to portray him. This might be interpreted as a confession from the author himself that he did not attempt to reveal all of Harold. Often a person enjoys magnifying his poverty or his woe in order to sympathize with himself; likewise, Byron enjoyed letting his imagination play on his melancholia. Childe Harold was an index to the sober, serious thinking side of Lord Byron during that period in his life.

"Roll on vain days! full reckless may ye flow." 100

Harold, like his creator, plunged again into the crowd with a recklessness that well characterized each of them. In the "Additions to the Preface" of the first two Cantos the author explained that he left Childe Harold "to live his day," such as it might be. The song of the Pilgrim was not heard again for more than four years.

100 Canto II: 98.
CHAPTER III

BYRON'S YEARS OF FAME

Fortune had smiled a second time on her "fated child" and Byron's world changed overnight. The appearance of Childe Harold brought immediate and unparalleled fame. Byron became the idol of the day, and London "lay at the feet of the youth of three-and-twenty." The first edition of the poem was exhausted in three days, and his literary position was unquestionably decided, for with Childe Harold Byron's fame and after-fame commenced.

There were several reasons that accounted for the decisive success of Childe Harold. Melancholia was in vogue, for high society had indulged so heavily in the satiety of pleasure that weariness was prevalent. Macaulay has said, "To people who are unacquainted with real calamity, 'Nothing is so dainty sweet as melancholy.'"¹ Wordsworth had become tiresome, and the people had already heard too much about virtue, and religion, and the soul. Byron was the first to portray in verse the Satanic hero, an adaptation from the Radcliffian novelist "school of terror."

¹Works of Lord Macaulay, V, 417.
The Oriental theme was already popular in literature. Byron presented the English love of liberty in a stimulating manner, and his expression of dissatisfaction with England's foreign policy was felt and approved by a large part of the serious thinking people of the nation. With a string of opinions on politics, religion, and philosophy, the poet blended the mysterious, veiled personality of the hero, who was identified as the poet himself. The people were fascinated with the author, the brave young aristocrat, who had dared to strike at the most powerful literary critics in England and had dared to penetrate far into the wild land of Albania. There were questionable and romantic stories which were whispered about his private life at home and abroad.

An atmosphere of mystery and strangeness surrounded Lord Byron, the newly crowned hero. He stood aloof from the throng with a brooding expression of preoccupation on his face. He could, however, be very gentle, and his voice was musical and engaging when he chose to speak. The cast of his features was subtly disturbing, and the pallor of his skin gave him an almost "ethereal" look. He exercised vigorously and dieted rigidly, fearing that he would become heavy-set. His hands and ears were small and delicate; Ali Pacha assured him that he knew he was of noble birth because his hands and ears were small. Byron glided into a room on tiptoe in a gait that almost amounted to a shamble
on account of his deformed foot. His walk always made his entrance a dramatic one and people secretly watched to see which foot was deformed. ²

On May 4, 1812, the Duchess of Devonshire wrote a friend that Lord Byron "continued to be made the greatest fuss with," and on May 12:

He continues to be made the greatest attraction at all parties and suppers. The ladies, I hear, spoil him, and the gentlemen are jealous of him. He is going back to Naxos, and then the husbands may sleep in peace. ³

A little later, the Duchess wrote that Childe Harold

is on every table, and himself, courted, visited, flattered and praised whenever he appears. He has a pale, sickly, but handsome countenance, a bad figure, animated and amusing conversation, and in short, he is really the topic of almost every conversation -- the men jealous of him, the women of each other. ⁴

Byron usurped the fame of his contemporary, Sir Walter Scott, and borrowed from his verse-craft for later poems. He transferred the setting from Britain to the East and South. Byron's rise to fame caused Scott to turn from narrative poetry and take up the Waverly novels, for he believed Byron the superior in the field of poetry. Scott was not jealous of Byron as were most of Byron's contemporaries on whose glory he had infringed. Scott, in his

²There are differences of opinion among his biographers as to which foot was deformed. Trelawney gave two versions on the extent of the deformity when he examined Byron's body after his death.

³Samuel G. Chew, Byron in England, p. 5. ⁴Ibid.
own delightful manner, gave the following account of Byron and his fame:

The first and second cantos of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage produced, on their appearance in 1812, an effect upon the public, at least equal to any work which has appeared within this or the last century, and placed at once upon Lord Byron's head the garland for which other men of genius have toiled long, and which they have gained late. He was placed pre-eminent among the literary men of his country, by general acclamation. It was amidst such feelings of admiration that he entered the public stage. Everything in his manner, person, and conversation, tended to maintain the charm that his genius had flung around him... The predominating expression was that of deep and habitual thought, which gave way to the most rapid play of feature, when he engaged in interesting discussion... The flashes of mirth, gaiety, indignation, or satirical dislike, which frequently animated Lord Byron's countenance, might, during an evening's conversation, be mistaken, by a stranger, for the habitual expression, so easily and so happily was it formed for all; but those who had an opportunity of studying his features for a length of time, and upon various occasions, both of rest and emotion, will agree that their proper language was that of melancholy. Sometimes shades of gloom interrupted even his gaiest and most happy moments.5

Between June, 1813, and August, 1814, Byron drew from the vast source of material that he had gathered on his tour and entranced the public with Turkish romances. "He created for the tale in rhyme a new variety in which he has not been excelled."6 The hero of these tales, an exaggerated shadow of the author, gained the distinction of being called the Byronic hero. He was a proud and lonely

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5Quoted from Sir Walter Scott, Works, pp. 28-29, n. 6.

6Elton, op. cit., p. 145.
soul in revolt; he manifested great hatred for despots and
deep love of freedom. He was exempt from petty hypocrisies.
Usually, the hero had personal beauty and was of high and
noble lineage. His clouded face suggested great suffering
and perhaps secret crimes. He was tortured by love, and
his constant and redeeming virtue was tenderness toward
his lover, who was always beautiful, and pure and constant
in her love. Byron confessed in his journal,

There is to me something very softening in the presen-
tence of a woman, -- some strange influence, even if
one is not in love with them . . . I always feel in
better humour with myself and everything else, if
there is a woman within ken.7

Four poems, The Giaour, The Bride of Abydos, The Cor-
sair, and Lara, appeared at intervals of several months.
The Giaour, a romantic episode in Turkish harem life, de-
picted idealized passion. Byron kept adding to the poem
while it was in press. He was not quite sure whether he
had finished it. He called it "this snake of a poem which
has been lengthening its rattles every month." The Giaour
was ill-jointed and in "foolish fragments," but it merited
fourteen editions within three years.

The Corsair appeared next. The hero was a sullen,
mysterious pirate chieftain to whom none dared speak except
his lover. Byron cultivated the idea that he had pirated

7Letters, II, 389.
in the Greek Archipelago in 1810 and that he was the original Corsair. He did meet numerous pirates in Greece, for pirating was "the proudest of all professions" among the Greeks, who were under Turkish rule. The Corsair swept over England like a whirlwind; 13,000 copies were sold in three days. Concerning The Corsair, Byron wrote in his journal that Hobhouse had told him an odd report -- the people thought he, Byron, was the original Conrad, or "the veritable Corsair," and that part of his travels were supposed to have been passed in piracy. To this Byron commented, "Um! -- people sometimes hit near the truth, but never the whole truth." E. C. Mayne said that the blazing success of The Corsair was not due so much to its excellence as to the "unmistakable self-portraiture of the hero, Conrad, who with his later development, Lara, 'is the very quintessence of Byronism.'

Scott said the stanzas in Lara that described the hero's misspent youth, with none to guide him and point out wrong paths, was Lord Byron's own story partly told. Byron claimed that he wrote Lara while undressing after coming home from balls and masquerades, in 1814, a year of revelry. Upon its first publication, the sale of Lara amounted to

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8Spender, op. cit., p. 121. 8Letters, II, 399.

9E. C. Mayne, Byron, pp. 185-186.

10Ethel Colburn Mayne, Byron, pp. 185-186.

11Works, p. 120, note.
6,000 copies. Byron's own age read into his poems a significance that is not seen in them today. Macaulay, a contemporary of Byron, said of him, "He was himself the beginning, the middle, and the end of all his own poetry, the hero of every tale, the chief object in every landscape."\(^{12}\)

Byron threw *The Bride of Abydos* together in four nights in order to distract his dreams, to apply his mind to something -- anything besides reality. He stated that all convulsions with him ended in rhyme. Within a month, 6,000 copies of *The Bride* were sold and Byron's fame was spreading abroad, especially in Germany.\(^{13}\)

In the height of his fame, Byron was not happy. In his dedication of *The Corsair*, he announced that his poetical career was to terminate, and in March, 1813, he threatened to suppress all that he had written and go abroad. He wrote Augusta that he was "not happy nor even comfortable." He hated the way he was living and resolved not to "strut another hour" upon the stage. He concluded his letter with a confession that he was a fool and deserved all the ills he had met.\(^{14}\) In November, 1813, Byron recorded in his journal the following:

> I wish I could settle to reading again, -- my life is monotonous, and yet desultory. I take up books, and fling them down . . . because the


\(^{13}\) Elze, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

\(^{14}\) Letters, II, 198-199.
scene ran into reality; -- a novel for the same reason. In rhyme, I can keep more away from the facts ... 15

Again in January, 1814, he wrote in his journal:

The more I see of men, the less I like them. If I could say so of women too, all would be well. Why can't I? I am now six-and-twenty; my passions have had enough to cool them; my affections more than enough to wither them, -- and yet -- and yet -- always yet and but -- "Excellent well, you are a fishmonger -- get thee to a nunnery." -- They fool me to the top of my bent. 16

In April, 1814, he wrote that he believed he was happiest when he was alone; he had not stirred from his room for four days. "I never am long in the company of her I love, (God knows too well, and the devil probably too,) without a yearning for the company of my lamp and my utterly confused and tumbled over library." 17

Byron, like the Childe Harold of Cantos I and II, was torn between his love for the motley world, his love for solitude, and his longing for Greece. He was planning to take another tour or to take up permanent residence abroad; but business matters detained him at first, and later his engagement kept him from carrying out his plans. His popularity, at this time, had not declined; but the rich food with which it fed his vanity was insufficient to bring him happiness. He did not, however, have the willpower to get

15 Ibid., p. 323.  
16 Ibid., p. 385.  
17 Ibid., p. 410. Byron was referring to Lady Caroline Lamb.
out of the rushing current that was sweeping him along in
the whirlpool of society.

This was the hey-day of dandyism under the auspices
of the Prince Regent, who became King George III in 1820.
The follies of fashion and licentious and luxurious living
in this period were unparalleled since the reign of Charles
II. The Prince Regent was known to have had liaisons with
numerous women; he was drunk at his own wedding, hiccupping
during the whole ceremony. He mistreated his wife, the
Princess Caroline of Brunswick, who soon became disgusted
and left him. She traveled over Europe with her former
footman, whom she had promoted to a high position. Then
came the scandalous royal divorce case of 1820, upon which
the eyes of the world turned.\(^1\) Byron admitted in one of
his journals that he liked the dandies. Yes, he was among
them, and he was "so young, so handsome, and so wicked;"
He was introduced to the Prince Regent at his royal High-
ness' request and flattered and praised by the Prince.
Byron was transformed into the Don Juan of the drawing
room. He depicted in Don Juan, in masterful strokes, Beau
Brummel as the typical English nobleman.\(^2\) This life,
crowded with triumphs and empty pleasures, was not satis-
fying to Byron.

The first love affair that seriously engrossed Byron,

\(^1\)Byron took his satirical cut at English society in
Don Juan, XI-XVI.

\(^2\)Don Juan, XI, 73-75.
after he became famous, was with Lady Caroline Lamb, the wife of William Lamb, afterwards the celebrated statesman, Lord Melbourne. She was extremely attractive, with light hair and large dark eyes. She was of a wild, fantastic, restless and rebellious nature, which made her a kindred spirit with the poet. (She was among the first to read Childe Harold and was determined to meet this romantic author whose conduct was of dark repute.) After being presented to him at a ball in March, 1812, she confided to her journal that evening, her impression, "mad, bad, and dangerous to know ..." and later she completed it with "that beautiful pale face is my fate."  

Byron called on Lady Caroline at Melbourne House the morning after he met her, and from that moment, for almost nine months, he practically lived at Melbourne House, where Caroline and her husband were living with his mother, Lady Melbourne. The Melbournes were very aristocratic Whigs to whom fortune had been kind for the last hundred years. Melbourne House was "the center of all gaiety, at least, in appearance. ... All the bon ton of London assembled here every day. There was nothing so fashionable, Byron contrived to sweep them all away."  

William Lamb, being a good and a most indulgent husband, refused to be ruffled or concerned about Caroline's morals. The scandal about her

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20 Peter Quennell, Byron, the Years of Fame, p. 87.

21 Quoted from Lady Morgan's "Memoirs" in Brandes, op. cit., p. 281.
and Byron became so great that Lady Caroline's mother felt that it should end. Because of anxiety and worry, her mother became dangerously ill and Caroline was persuaded to go to Ireland for an extended visit with her mother.

Lady Melbourne also felt that the affair should end, for it might injure her son's political position. She did not disapprove of intrigue, but she did disapprove of its being carried on as openly and boldly as this between Caroline and Byron. Byron was very fond of Lady Melbourne and respected her highly. She exacted a promise from him to put an end to the affair, and in keeping with his promise to Lady Melbourne, he wrote Caroline a farewell letter, which has become a classic.\footnote{See farewell letter to Lady Caroline Lamb, \textit{Letters}, II, 135-139.} Byron's love had been only a sort of reflected love that was bright and glowing for the moment.

Caroline's love for Byron was more than an infatuation. Feeling wronged and neglected, she sought revenge by seizing her pen and writing the novel, \textit{Glenarvon}, which came out at a most inopportune time in Byron's life. It was one of the most powerful influences on public disapproval of Byron after his separation. Using for a motto the last two lines of \textit{The Corsair},

\begin{quote}
He left a name to all succeeding times
Link'd with one virtue and a thousand crimes,
\end{quote}
Caroline painted Byron in the darkest colors possible. She was avenged, but she did not find the repose and satisfaction she had hoped for in giving vent to her anger. She never completely mastered her mixed feelings of love and hatred for Byron. She was partly mad and troubled with fits the rest of her life, but her husband forgave her and cared for her. She happened to be riding along the highway when Byron's body was returned to England for burial. On learning whose funeral procession she was meeting, she fell in a faint from her horse.

At the time Byron wrote his farewell letter to Lady Caroline, he was having another liaison with a Lady Oxford in the country. She was more than twice his age and the mother of several children. Her autumnal beauty attracted him and he felt that a woman was only grateful for "her first and last conquest." After staying in the country with the Oxfords eight months, Byron returned to London ready for another conquest, or perhaps it would be better to say, ready to be conquered again. Byron was justified in his depiction of women in Don Juan, for he revealed them as he knew them.

During his whirlwind of fame, Byron had been seeing his sister, Augusta Leigh, who made several visits to London. It will be noted later that their assumed relationship played a fatal part in Byron's reputation so far as England was concerned.
Besides the questionable "high life" Byron led in society, he was more or less intimate with many of the intellectual people of the day. He was a friend of James Mackintosh, a statesman and historian; Sir Humphry Davy, an inventor; Kean, an actor; and Madame de Staël, a distinguished literary personage with whom he renewed his acquaintance in Venice. Among his literary friends in England were Sheridan, Coleridge, and Coleman; but Scott was the most beloved of them all.

Byron was still doing some writing. The Siege of Corinth and Parisina appeared early in 1816. The Siege contained plenty of fighting and history and local color. In Parisina, the hero faced a love of forbidden degree. These two tales were not so popular as the other narratives, and Byron realized that he had exhausted his much-used Turkish theme.

Byron's giddy and hectic London career was arrested by his unfortunate marriage to Miss Anna Bella Milbanke, a niece of Lady Melbourne, who encouraged the match. Miss Milbanke was the only child of Sir Ralph Milbanke, a wealthy baronet. Byron was attracted by Anna Bella's simplicity of manners and dress, which almost amounted to quaintness. She was intellectual, being a student of theology and Greek, together with mathematics. She was governed by what she called "fixed rules and principles." After Miss Milbanke returned to her home at Kirby Mallory, quite a distance
from London, she and Byron kept up a friendly correspondence. In his journal in 1813, Byron wrote:

What an odd situation and friendship is ours! without one spark of love on either side, and produced by circumstances, which in general lead to coldness on one side, and aversion on the other. She is a very superior woman, and very little spoiled, which is strange in an heiress -- a girl of twenty -- a peeress that is to be, in her own right -- an only child, and a savante, who has always had her own way. She is a poetess -- a mathematician -- a metaphysician, and yet, withal, very kind, generous, and gentle with very little pretensions.23

Half in jest and half in seriousness, Byron wrote Anna Bella a proposal of marriage. After all, she was a "golden dolly" and her fortune would help to repair Newstead. She refused his first proposal, but their correspondence continued. Having a feeling of piqued pride, mingled with some admiration for her, and a great necessity to improve his finances, Byron made a second proposal by letter more than a year later. Miss Milbanke, after giving the proposal much consideration, decided she would be doing the right thing to accept Byron, for she had a "strong confidence in God and man." She probably loved him as much as her cold nature would allow her to love any one. To a friend she wrote about her engagement:

I suppose you will hear me well canvassed since I have become so notorious by the reflected light of fame, and I assure myself with thinking how many good sort of people will pity me -- "Poor thing! Well, I did not think she would have been dazzled at last by Talent. But they say she always had a romantic

23 Ibid., p. 357.
turn for poetry herself." So they will conclude it to be an alliance of the Muses, whilst others think that Vanity has been the Match-maker.24

Byron's mood was gay and cheerful during the early part of his engagement. He wrote numerous letters announcing his engagement and in one of them he confessed, "I am very much in love, and as silly as all gentlemen be in that sentimental situation." But it was with fear and misgivings that Byron approached the wedding day. He expressed his doubts in a letter to Miss Milbanke, dated October 14, 1814. He wished he had been a different and better being. He hinted that there were things that she did not know about his past that might make her turn from him. He hoped that he would make her happy and could conceive of no greater misery if he failed.25

And so they were married on the second of January, 1815. The two-month "treacle moon," as Byron called it, was rather smooth. They spent most of the time with her family; Byron was bored with listening to her father's "monologue which elderly men call conversation." The young couple came to London and lived in grand style; these were rather happy days until Byron's creditors started pouncing on him. His wife's money soon disappeared and Byron was forced to sell his library and to move to Newstead.

Lady Byron, the spoiled young heiress, never dreamed

24 Ibid., III, 148-149. 25 Ibid., 151.
such would be in store for her. She had learned of her husband's many amours before his marriage and suspected that he had not reformed a great deal. Jealousy of her famous husband and of his connections with Drury Lane Theater crept in. Lady Byron had a habit of interrupting Byron by speaking to him when he was in deep thought or trying to write, and at these interruptions he would fly into a temper fit. Once he threw his watch into the fire and smashed it with the poker. Another time, he, purposely or accidentally, fired a pistol in his wife's room.

Ada Augusta, a daughter, was born to the Byrons on January 6, 1816. When the daughter was about a month old, Lady Byron set out with the child for a visit with her family. There was no hint of Lady Byron's not planning to return to her husband when she left. She stopped in London and engaged a doctor to examine Byron and report to her upon his mental condition. The doctor made the examination within a week and could find no evidence of a mental derangement.

The day after her arrival at her home in Kirby, Lady Byron wrote an affectionate letter to Byron, commencing, "Dearest Duck" and closing, "Love to the good goose and everybody's love to you both from hence. Ever thy most loving -- Pippin . . . Pip . . . Ip."26 The "good goose"

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26Quoted from a letter in Drinkwater, op. cit., p. 69.
was Augusta, to whom she wrote two long affectionate letters the same day. In a few days, Byron had a letter from Lady Byron's father stating that Lady Byron would not return to him. Byron was totally unprepared for this turn of events and tried to effect a reconciliation, but Lady Byron would not return nor would she see him. She desired a separation and had "reasons for reserving a part of the case from the knowledge even of her father and mother."

Lady Byron suspected that Byron had had unnatural relations with his sister; but she never publicly declared her suspicions. She merely hinted, which was worse than coming out in the open, for it aroused more speculation.

Whether Lady Byron's suspicions were true still remains the Byron mystery. John Drinkwater, after reading everything known to have been written by Byron and examining all the original sources of information about Byron's life that he could find, which amounted to more than twenty thousand pages, concluded: "Dismissing assumptions and hearsay, there is absolutely no evidence that Augusta at any time in her life confessed that she had incestuous relations with Byron." Drinkwater's view was "that the conclusive last word of the story has yet to be revealed." Byron, after much argument, agreed to a separation; but Lady Byron

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27 Ibid., Preface, p. vii.

28 Ibid., p. 191. This writer agrees with Drinkwater on this much-debated question of Byron's life.
would never bring direct charges against him.

When the news was out that Lady Byron had separated from her husband, Byron's fickle public turned against him as quickly as it had turned toward him, and he became a social outcast. It was dangerous for him to appear on the streets, and he was ignored in the House of Lords. His world had changed again overnight; this time he awoke to a stormy and dark world. Chief among the reasons for the turn of opinion was envy, for Byron had spared none with his pen and had done little to cultivate friends. Among his worst enemies were his literary rivals whose literary positions he had minimized. He had boldly flaunted his religious views and his doubts of there being a "happy hereafter." 29 This had aroused great antagonism among the orthodox, and a book titled Anti-Byron had been published. The whole Tory party was violently against Byron because of Lines to a Lady Weeping appended to the first edition of The Corsair. In the Lines Byron attacked the Prince Regent for deserting the Liberal side in politics. Byron had also betrayed an unpatriotic sympathy for Napoleon in some of his poems. Lastly, there was the private scandal. If Lady Byron could not live with Byron, surely he was a monster. The scandal mongers were busy; journalists and caricaturists made the most of every opportunity. The

public felt it had the right to know the truth about this. Since Lady Byron would not explain, and Byron contended he did not know the reason, various persons took it upon themselves to make known the "straight of the story" as they believed it.

Macaulay, in his essay on Moore's Life of Byron, writing on this subject, said:

We know no spectacle so ridiculous as the British public in one of its periodical fits of morality. In general, elopements, divorces, and family quarrels, pass with little notice. We read the scandal, talk about it for a day, and forget it. But once in six or seven years our virtue becomes outrageous. We cannot suffer the laws of religion and decency to be violated. We must make a stand against vice... Accordingly some unfortunate man, in no respect more depraved than hundreds whose offenses have been treated with lenity, is singled out as an expiatory sacrifice. At length our anger is satiated. Our victim is ruined and heart-broken. And our virtue goes quietly to sleep for seven years more.30

In a letter written to Moore on March 8th, Byron stated that there was one point on which he wanted to set him straight, though he must say it

in the very dregs of all this bitter business -- that there never was a better, or even a brighter, a kinder or a more amiable and agreeable being than Lady B. I never had, nor can have, any reproach to make her, while with me.31

In the poem Fare Thee Well, written to Lady Byron just before Byron left England, he revealed the very depths of his shattered feelings. When Madame de Staël read it, she

31 Letters, III, 272.
commented, "How gladly would I have been unhappy in Lady Byron's place!" Others did not believe Byron was serious in the poem and numerous replies came out under the assumed name of Lady Byron. The public was jesting with something that was a very serious business and a sensitive matter to Byron. In his farewell letter to Lady Byron, he begged her to remember her promise to be good to Augusta, with whom he had just parted. She was almost the last being that Lady Byron had left him on earth to part with. He made his will in favor of Augusta and her children, for his child was already "provided for by other and better means."

The drama was concluded and it was time to go. Crowds of hostile and curious people, ladies of fashion disguised as chambermaids, thronged the streets in front of Byron's place on Piccadilly Terrace to catch a last glimpse of the poet as he left the house on the date set for sailing. The crowd was disappointed, for Byron had slipped out two days earlier with only Hobhouse and a few close friends knowing about it. Byron was attended by William Fletcher and Robert Rushton, the "yeoman" and the "page" of Canto I in Childe Harold, his physician Dr. Polidori, and a Swiss valet. Byron left England on April 25, 1816, to take up his second pilgrimage abroad, which he continued to record in Cantos III and IV of Childe Harold.

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32 Quennell, op. cit., pp. 312-314.
CHAPTER IV

CHILDE HAROLD, CANTO III

The third and fourth Cantos of Childe Harold differ in some respects from the first and second Cantos. The theme of the first two Cantos was monotonous melancholy and weariness, with only a few of the stanzas being occasionally grand. The theme of the third Canto, written in 1816, was one of intense suffering; there was a change of mood in the fourth Canto, which revealed less intense suffering. The author was more sure of himself in the last two Cantos; hence, the verse surpassed the first two Cantos in grandeur.

The same notes that were sounded in the first two Cantos of Childe Harold were heard again, but they were deeper and more resonant. They were heard by a vast audience as Childe Harold paraded his bleeding heart over Europe. The Pilgrim's cloak was almost thrown off and Harold became Byron idealized. In some instances, the two were merged into one person. Harold was more articulate and had more to say about his woes than did Byron in the letters and journals written during that period. Byron once informed a correspondent that he could not write when his passions were actively engaged; for poetry was the dream of
his sleeping passions, and he could give utterance only in their Somnambulism. Byron's sufferings recorded in these Cantos were recollected pangs of the darkest and most bitter moments of his life.

The moment Byron quitted England forever, his true greatness as a poet began. Byron, like Satan in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, had been hurled from his exalted position. At first, he was stunned amid the ruin in which he found himself. The thought of "lost happiness" and "injured pride" made him rally and strike with vengeance against society, which had cast him out. His pen became his flaming sword, with which he waged continual warfare, showing the cant and hypocrisy of society, not only in his own country, but also in Europe. The groans and pangs of the suffering hero are heard in the third and fourth Cantos of *Childe Harold*.) The chief battles were waged in *Don Juan*, a cutting satire, which was begun in 1818, but remained unfinished.

In spite of Byron's financial difficulties in 1816, he set out on his second tour of the Continent in grand style. He had ordered a specially built carriage, patterned after Napoleon's personal carriage which had been captured at Gannape. The servants and luggage followed in a smaller carriage. The fallen hero and his entourage did not fail to attract attention as they traveled through Flanders and followed the course of the Rhine through some

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1Letters, IV, 43, letter to John Murray, 1817.
of the most beautiful scenery of Europe.

Byron disembarked at Ostend and made his way to Brussels, and from that place visited the battlefield of Waterloo. He wrote in a letter to Murray, "My route through Flanders, and by the Rhine, to Switzerland, was all I expected, and more."² The low countries did not please him and he was anxious to get out of them. He wrote to Augusta, "Level roads don't suit me, as thou knowest; it must be up hill or down, and then I am more au fait."³ (The route which Byron took through Flanders and along the Rhineland can best be traced in the third Canto of *Childe Harold* in Byron's own matchless verse in which he recorded the glories of the scenes of nature and the historic places that he visited.)

(The poet opened and closed the third Canto of *Childe Harold* with stanzas to his little daughter, Ada Augusta. In the first stanza, he wrote:

Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair child! Ada! sole daughter of my house and heart! When last I saw thy young blue eyes they smiled, And then we parted, -- not as now we part, But with a hope.⁴

In one of the closing stanzas to his daughter, he wrote these lines:

²Ibid., III, 334.
³Ibid., p. 332.
⁴Canto III: 1.
My daughter! with thy name this song begun!
My daughter! with thy name thus much shall end! --
I see thee not -- I hear thee not -- but none
Can be so wrapt in thee.5

If the poet should never see his daughter again, he hoped
his song would reach into her heart and she would think of
him. He lamented that he could not watch her growth and
print a paternal kiss upon her cheek. Even if she should
be taught by one (Lady Byron) to hate him, he knew that
somehow she would love him "though the grave closed" be-
tween them. The fire in her blood would be more tempered
than his and she would have a "hope far higher" than his
hope.6 Byron did not know that he would never see his
child again when Lady Byron took her to visit her grand-
parents and never returned. Ada was ever to her father,
as he expressed it, "soul of my thought! with whom I tra-
verse the earth."7

Lady Byron, upon reading the third Canto of Childe
Harold, said that Byron's references to her regarding their
daughter were cold and cruel and that he had done this to
make her "appear so" and attract sympathy for himself.
She admitted that so long as she lived her chief struggle
would "probably be not to remember him too kindly."8

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5Tbid., 115. 6Tbid., 115-118. 7Tbid., 6.

8"Letter of Lady Byron to Anne Lindsay," extracted from Lord Lindsay's letter to the Times, September 17, 1869, in Poetry, II, 288, n. 1.
Ada's name occurred frequently throughout Byron's correspondence during the remaining years of his life. From Geneva on August 28, 1816, he requested his friend Hanson to tell him how his daughter was and how she looked but not to "allude to any other branch of that family." In another letter written the same year, Byron mentioned Ada's pedigree, which he had found when reading a book "treating of the Rhine." He wrote on the same subject from Ravenna in 1820:

If you turn over the earlier pages of Huntiondon peerage story, you will see how common a name Ada was in the early Plantagenet days. I found it in my own pedigree in the reign of John and Henry and gave it to my daughter. . . . It is short, ancient, vocalic, and had been in my family; for which reasons I gave it to my daughter.

In other letters, Byron spoke of his daughter's first birthday and inquired about her welfare. Lady Byron and her family tried to trick Byron into resigning his paternal rights over his child. Information reached him that Lady Byron intended taking Ada to the Continent to live. Byron set up a forceful objection and expressed his determination to take the necessary steps "to assume the care and personal charge" of his daughter unless she were kept in England. He had tried to avoid extremities and did not wish to separate the child from her mother; but the die

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9Letters, III, 345. 10Ibid., IV, 4.
11Ibid., V, 93. 12Ibid., IV, 33, 37, 39.
was cast, and he would act within his paternal rights. Lady Byron finally declared that she had no intentions of leaving England.13

In February, 1818, Byron confessed to Thomas Moore that he had a great love for his little daughter, "though perhaps she may torture" him.14 Byron mentioned Ada's picture in a letter to Murray in 1820. He wrote: "Ada's picture is like her mother's: I am glad of it -- the mother made a good daughter."15 From Pisa in November, 1821, Byron acknowledged, in a letter to Lady Byron, the receipt of a lock of Ada's hair, which was soft and pretty and almost as dark as his was at twelve years of age. He was disappointed that Ada's hair did not curl. He thanked Lady Byron for the inscription of the name and date, for these were the only "two or three words" of Lady Byron's handwriting that he possessed except "Household," written twice in an old account book. Byron remarked that by the time this note reached her, Ada would have reached her sixth birthday; and after about twelve more birthdays, he would have the chance of meeting her.16

In an unfinished letter to Augusta found after Byron's death in 1824, he had written that from the accounts he had

13Ibid., pp. 33, 75-76. 14Ibid., p. 196.
15Ibid., V, 67. 16Ibid., pp. 479-480.
received, Ada's indisposition and tendencies were similar to his at that age.\(^\text{17}\) The last distinguishable words that Fletcher heard Byron utter before his death were, "Oh, my poor dear child! My dear Ada!"\(^\text{18}\)

Most authorities agree that Ada did not know who her father was until several years after his death. She married the Earl of Lovelace and became the mother of three children. The Earl of Lovelace, son of Ada and grandson of the poet, wrote a book, Astarte, in 1921 in which he attempted to vindicate his grandmother, Lady Byron, of blame for Byron's unhappiness.

The Examiner, in 1852, carried the following excerpt concerning Ada:

The Countess of Lovelace was thoroughly original, and the poet's temperament was all that was hers in common with her father. Her genius, for genius she possessed, was not poetic, but metaphysical and mathematical, her mind having been in the constant practice of investigation, and with rigour and exactness.\(^\text{19}\)

There are notes and translations that remain today as evidences of her brilliance. It would seem, however, that she "wore her learning lightly as a flower." The article continued, "Her manners, her tastes, her accomplishments, in many of which, music especially, she was proficient, were feminine in the nicest sense of the word." She was

\(^{17}\)Ibid., VI, 332. \(^{18}\)Spender, op. cit., p. 314.

\(^{19}\)Poetry, II, 215, n. 1.
unlike her father in features or in the bent of her mind, but she inherited his mental vigor and intensity of purpose. Like her father, she died in her thirty-seventh year, and upon her request, she was placed beside him in the vault at Hucknall Torkard. 20

Along with the invocation to his daughter, in the third Canto, Byron analyzed other emotions that he felt. He awoke with a start and "once more" he was upon the waters. He was as a weed

Flung from the rock, on Ocean's foam, to sail Wher'er the surge may sweep, the tempest's breath prevail. 21

In his youth, the poet "did sing of One" (Childe Harold), who was a "wandering outlaw of his own dark mind." The poet essayed to sing of him again, although his heart and harp may have lost a strong; for he had grown old in this world, not in years, but in deeds. Love, Sorrow, Fame, Ambition, and Strife had cut into his heart like a keen knife. 22 Perhaps he could make a life outside reality in things that were not seen, for

'Tis to create, and in creating live A being more intense, that we endow With form our fancy, gaining as we give The life we image even as I do now. 23

This mystic world would offer a brief escape, for his


22 Ibid., 3-5.

23 Ibid., 6. The mystic element is attributed to Shelley's influence at this time; Byron professed this same faith, "life is but thought," in The Dream, stanza I, ll. 19-22, which was also written in the summer of 1816.
brain that had been too long boiling. He asked, "What am I?" The answer was that he was "nothing." Nevertheless, he must go on; he must have the strength to bear "what time cannot abate." 24 6-7

Before Byron left England in 1816, he wrote Thomas Moore:

"All the world and my wife" are at war with me, and have not yet crushed me, -- whatever they may do. I don't know that in the course of a hairbreadth existence, I was ever, at home or abroad, in a situation so completely uprooting of present pleasures, or rational hope for the future, as this same. I say this because I think so, and feel it. But I shall not sink under it the more for that mode of considering the question -- I have made up my mind. 25

The poet confessed that he had spoken too much of himself; he would say no more of himself; the seal was set on his own tragedy. 26 "Long absent Harold" at last reappeared. As a youth, Harold had known the depth of joy and of woe. He had thought he would never delight again in man or woman; but he had since drunk from "a purer fount, on holier ground" and had gained new life from this communion with nature. He had taken his part in the world again, guarding himself against temptation. Fame, which he had not sought, had found him and swept him on "with the giddy circle." 27 8-11

26Here the poet was referring to stanzas 1-7.  
27Canto III: 8-11.
But soon he knew himself the most unfit
Of men to herd with Man; with whom he held
Little in common; untaught to submit
His thoughts to others, though his soul was quelled
In youth by his own thoughts; still uncompelled,
He would not yield dominion in his mind
To Spirits against whom his own rebelled,
Proud though in desolation -- which could find
A life within itself, to breathe without mankind. 28

Thus far Byron had told his own story through Harold.

When he had returned to England in 1811, his mood was de-
spendent; he craved solitude. He did not seek fame, nor
did he know that fame would carry him on "with the giddy
circle" for four rapid, whirling years. Suddenly he found
himself "the most unfit of men to herd with Man." Byron
wrote: "I felt that, if what was whispered, and muttered,
and murmured, was true, I was unfit for England; if false,
England was unfit for me." 29 Upon another occasion, Byron
wrote a friend not to attempt to defend him, for if the
attempt were successful, "it would be a mortal or an im-
mortal offense." 30 One of the reasons for Byron's downfall
was that he had not quelled his thoughts. He had written
and spoken openly his views on religion, politics, and peo-
ple of rank and authority.

Harold withdrew into himself; he became a solitary and
turned to nature for solace. He knew too well the fickleness

28 Ibid., 12.

29 Quoted from Byron's "Reply to Blackwood's Edinburgh

30 Letters, III, 267.
of mankind, for whom he felt disgust.

Where rose the mountains, there to him were friends;
Where rolled the ocean, thereon was his home:
Where a blue sky, and glowing clime, extends,
He had the passion and the power to roam;
The desert, forest, cavern, breaker's foam,
Were unto him companionship; they spake
A mutual language. 31/

In the first two Cantos of Childe Harold, the feeling of
solitariness made Harold love nature, which was to him a
"witching scene." To be with nature was not to be alone,
for nature offered companionship. To wander, unloved and
unloving, amidst "the crowd, the hum, the shock of men" --
this was solitude. In the second Canto his feeling was
deeper, and nature offered a stronger companionship. Later,
in Canto III, Harold's mind and being blended with the
spirit or mind of nature.

Harold, like the Chaldean, could people the stars with
beings and be happy so long as he could keep above the mor-
tal realm. When he thought on realities, his fit would
come on again and eat into his very soul. 32/

In man's dwell-
ing, he became a thing "restless and worn, and stern and
wearisome." 33/ The Childe's story was the poet's story.
From Verona in November, 1816, Byron wrote that he was
"growing grey and giddy" and could not help thinking his
head would decay. "I wish my memory would, at least my
remembrance." 34 /

33 Ibid., 15. 34 Letters, IV, 4.
In stanza sixteen, the Pilgrim's cloak was entirely thrown back when Harold took up his journey with "the very knowledge that he [had] lived in vain." He had no hope, but he made "Despair a smilingness assume" which merited a cheer. Sir Egerton Brydges said of Canto III:

In the first sixteen stanzas there is yet a mighty but a groaning burst of dark and appalling strength. It was unquestionably the unexaggerated picture of a most tempestuous and sombre but magnificent soul.35

Sir Walter Scott commented as follows:

These stanzas, -- in which the author, adopting more distinctly the character of Child's Harold than in the original poem assigns the cause why he has resumed the Pilgrim's staff . . . Those scenes, ever most painful to the bosom, were rendered yet more so by the public discussion. . . . The scene may be described in a few words -- the wise condemned -- the good regretted -- the multitude, idly or maliciously inquisitive, rushed from place to place, gathering gossip which they mangled and exaggerated while they repeated it.36

Harold arrived at the battlefield of Waterloo where he stood upon an "Empire's dust," the grave of France. There was no colossal bust, no trophy to mark this place where the mighty despot had fallen. The simple moral truth spoke for itself; the grounds were as they had been,37 but the vain-glorious dead would not live again. "The Archangel's trumpet, not Glory's must awake them." The sound of fame might, for the moment, soothe those who mourn.38

35Works, p. 29, n. 1.
36Quotation from Scott, ibid., n. 2.
37Canto III: 17-20.
38Ibid., 31.
earth more free? Did nations fight "to make one nation 
submit" or did they join in league "to teach all Kings 
true Sovereignty?" Should those who struck the Lion 
down pay the Wolf homage? Here again was Byron's cry that 
was heard throughout his poetry, the cry against the use-
lessness of war that weakened and enslaved nations.

Byron shunned to celebrate the battle of Waterloo, 
but he gave a beautiful description of the ball of the 
Duchess of Brunswick, which took place on June 15th on the 
eve of the battle of Quatrebras. Scott doubted whether 
such feeling, such vigor, and such beauty of description, 
given in stanzas 21-32, could be surpassed by any other 
verses in the English language. Byron began the cele-
brated description with the famous line, "There was a 
sound of revelry by night." "Brunswick's fated chieftain" 
heard the first sounds of the enemy's approach. There were 
tears, hasty farewells, and men rushed from the ballroom 
into battle, where "gallant Howard" fell whose sire Byron 
had wronged.

The one whose father Byron had wronged was Major 
Frederick Howard, third son of the fifth Earl of Carlisle. In 
English Bards, Byron had referred to Lord Carlisle's

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41 See the quotation from Scott, Works, p. 31. n. 1.
poetry as "the paralytic puling of Carlisle," and upon being told that it was believed he alluded to Lord Carlisle's nervous disorder in this line, Byron exclaimed, "Thank heaven I did not know it; and would not, could not, if I had. I must naturally be the last person to be pointed on defects or maladies."\textsuperscript{44} This was the same Lord Carlisle to whom Byron had dedicated \textit{Hours of Idleness}. Lord Carlisle had declined to introduce Byron in the House of Lords. Byron had waited six years to make known publicly his apology for the insult he had made in \textit{English Bards}.

Byron wrote stanzas seventeen and eighteen after visiting the scene of Waterloo. Pryse Lockhart Gordon, one of Byron's boyhood friends, escorted him over the battlefield and pointed out the spot where young Howard had fallen. That evening, Byron visited in his friend's home. Mrs. Gordon begged for an autograph for her album. Byron promised he would write something in it if she would trust her album with him. The next morning, he returned it with the famous stanzas seventeen and eighteen copied in it.\textsuperscript{45}

The desolation of the battlefield brought Harold back to his own memories and misery. The hearts of those who mourned for the thousands killed in battle might break, like his own heart; but they would live on. A broken heart, like a broken mirror, would multiply the griefs a thousand

\textsuperscript{44}\textit{Works}, p. 431, n. 2. \textsuperscript{45}\textit{Poetry}, II, 226, n. 1.
times; yet the heart would live on in its shattered guise. There was a very life in despair, a vitality of poison that would not let it die.\textsuperscript{46}\textsuperscript{\textemdash}53 Byron's heart, hopes, and home had been shattered, but he lived on. He wrote to Hobhouse, who was trying to persuade him to return to England:

You must not talk to me of England, that is out of the question. I had a house and lands, and a wife and child, and a name there -- once -- but all these are transmuted or sequestered. . . . I feel no love for the soil after the treatment I received before leaving it for the last time . . . \textsuperscript{47}

Through Harold, Byron expressed his admiration for Napoleon in stanzas 36-45, which were written while Napoleon was on St. Helena Island.\textsuperscript{48} Byron did not want Napoleon victorious over England, but he could not overlook Napoleon's dauntless courage. Byron had fought for the preservation of Napoleon's bust when he was a schoolboy at Harrow. In his Ode to Napoleon, written in 1814, Byron lamented the fall of "the miscalled Morning Star." In his journal, dated April 8, 1814, Byron wrote: "Found my poor little pagod Napoleon, pushed off his pedestal . . . It is his own fault."\textsuperscript{49} Then on April 9th, Byron wrote: "I mark this day! Napoleon Buonaparte has abdicated the throne of the world. . . . But I won't give him up even now;

\textsuperscript{46}Canto III: 32-33. \textsuperscript{47}Letters, IV, 358. \textsuperscript{48}Poetry, II, 239, n. 2. \textsuperscript{49}Letters, II, 408.
though all his admirers have 'like thanes, fallen from him.' 50

Byron could not help comparing himself with Napoleon; one moment Napoleon was conqueror of the earth, and the next moment, a captive and "the jest of Fame" who had wooed him until he was a god unto himself, making monarchs' necks his footstool. Similarly, fame had wooed Byron until he was a god unto himself and made the necks of his contemporary bards his footstool. Byron, like Napoleon, had learned that "tempted fate will leave the loftiest Star." 51

While a whole host stood by to watch and mock with hatred, Napoleon smiled and endured; for

When fortune fled her spoiled and favourite child;
He stood unbowed beneath the ills upon him piled. 52

Byron had not forgotten his last days in England and his reason for not being in his native land at the time he wrote the above lines. Both Byron and Napoleon had learned:

'Tis but a worthless world to win or lose;
So hath it proved to thee, and all such lot who choose. 53

Byron was thinking of himself and of Napoleon when he wrote that "quiet to quick bosoms" was a hell; it made men a prey to high adventure which was fatal to all who ever bore it. Madmen were made of those who made men mad — conquerors and kings, founders of religious sects, bards, statesmen, all unquiet people, who were "fools to those they fool." 54

50 Ibid., pp. 409-410. 51Canto III: 38.
52 Ibid., 39. 53 Ibid., 40. 54 Ibid., 42-43.
Byron never liked quiet very long at a time. He always liked a challenge, and he usually kept one going with his unrestrained use of his pen.

Harold left the battlefield and traveled along the "majestic Rhine." He gazed upon the tenantless old feudal castles where the chieftains of Germany had fought a thousand battles with swords flashing and banners flying. The river, now clear and stainless, had run red with blood. Where were the glories for which the slain had fought? Nothing remained to mark the ground where the countless numbers had died. 55

On his journey, Harold was not insensible to the beauties of nature about him. Occasionally, a joyful expression would steal over his face at a fond recollection of a love that he had once known. 56

Byron had not heard of the criminal accusations made against him until he reached Switzerland. Evidently, he had not read the papers before leaving England. "My friends," he said, "like other friends, from conciliatory motives, withheld from me much that they could and some things which they should have unfolded . . ." 57 Byron experienced a revulsion of feeling toward Lady Byron and toward

55 Ibid., 46-51. 56 Ibid., 52. 57 Letters, IV, 479.
his fellow countrymen when he learned this information. In his mad moods, Byron had always done his best to damage his own character; he did not spare the one he loved most.

While Byron was on the Rhine bank, May 11, 1816, before he reached Switzerland, he wrote four beautiful stanzas to Augusta. At that time, he had not heard the calumnious story. Byron wrote stanzas 53-55 after he heard the story. In these stanzas, he suggested that what had been said might be true. Stanzas to Augusta and Epistle to Augusta, written in 1816, hint at the same truth. All of these added fuel to the flame of scandal that had swept over England.

(After leaving the Rhineland, Byron proceeded by way of Basle, Berne, Morat, and Lausanne to Geneva. He described this part of the journey in the third Canto of Childe Harold, in stanzas 59-68.) Byron was impressed by the "matchless heights of the Alps" above him. Their beauty expanded, yet appalled, his spirit. He paused at the battlefield of Morat, a twin name to Marathon, "true Glory's stainless victories," in which battles were fought for "no princely cause." Some of the bones of the Burgundians, who had been in the service of France, still remained on

58 See four stanzas inserted between stanzas 55 and 56, Canto III. Also see Poetry, II, 249, n. 1.
59 See quotation from Scott in this thesis, p. 80.
60 Letters, III, 342.
61 Canto III: 63-64.
the field. The years of exposure to the sun had bleached them until they were very white; Byron confessed that he ventured to bring away "as much as may have made a quarter of a hero."\textsuperscript{62} Near Morat was the tomb of Julia, who died soon after her vain endeavor to save her father, who was condemned to death as a traitor.\textsuperscript{63}\textsuperscript{64}\textsuperscript{65}\textsuperscript{66} Byron knew of no deed in history of deeper interest than this; these were the kinds of names and deeds that should not perish.

"Lake Leman"\textsuperscript{65} wooed the poet with its crystal face that mirrored the stars and the mountains. On July 20, 1816, Byron wrote of Lake Leman: "I this day observed for some time the distinct reflection of Mont Blanc and Mont Argentiere in the calm of the lake, which I was crossing in my boat; the distance of these mountains from their mirror is sixty miles."\textsuperscript{66}

At Geneva, Byron made the acquaintance of Shelley, another exile of English society. He and Byron were quickly attracted to each other and formed an intimate friendship that lasted the short span of years that remained in their lives. Byron took a villa on Lake Geneva within a ten-minute walk of Shelley's residence, where Shelley was living with Mary Godwin and Clare Clairmont, her step-sister, who had assisted Mary and Shelley in their elopement from England.

\textsuperscript{62}Works, p. 35, n. 1. \hfill \textsuperscript{63}Canto III: 66-67.

\textsuperscript{64}Works, p. 35, n. 3. \hfill \textsuperscript{65}Lake Geneva.

\textsuperscript{66}Works, p. 35, n. 4.
Shelley, Mary, Clare, and Byron spent a great deal of time together. They were kindred spirits in that they did not believe in conventionalities, and they were all interested in literature. When the weather was fair, Byron and Shelley spent many hours sailing on the lake. Brandes says that the numerous pantheistic outbursts in the last two Cantos of Childe Harold are "one and all, the fruit of conversation with Shelley." Byron's Ego was brought in contact "with a spirit that baptized with fire." Shelley was generous in his praise of Byron because he believed Byron to be a greater poet than he. Privately, Shelley described Byron as being "mad as the winds" and infected with "the canker of aristocracy"; nevertheless, they remained friends. Byron was not completely happy on placid Lake Leman, for "too much of man" was there, and he did not want to mingle "with the herd" that had penned him in their fold. Hobhouse, after a visit with Byron at Geneva, wrote that the "inquisitive moralists," the English, spied on Byron from across the lake with their "mischief making telescopes."}

Byron and Shelley made an excursion together into the heart of Rousseau's country. Their enjoyment of the incomparable scenes of nature was intense. Here Byron received his inspiration for Manfred, "a matchless Alpine

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68 See Hobhouse's letter quoted by the editor, Letters, III, 347.
landscape." He said of the third Canto of *Childe Harold*:

I was half mad during the time of its composition, between metaphysics, mountains, lakes, love inextinguishable, thoughts unutterable, and the nightmare of my own delinquencies.\(^{69}\)

Byron wrote *The Prisoner of Chillon* and completed the third Canto of *Childe Harold* while they were on this trip. He wrote to Murray on June 27th from the vicinity of Lausanne that he was making a voyage in his boat around the lake. In the letter, he continued:

I have traversed all Rousseau's ground, with the Heloise before me; and am struck, to a degree, with the force and accuracy of his descriptions and the beauty of their reality. Meillerie, Clarens, and Vevay, and the Chateau de Chillon, are places of which I shall say little, because all I could say must fall short of the impressions they stamp. Three days ago, we were most nearly wrecked in a Squall off Meillerie, and driven to shore. . . . I have finished a third canto of *Childe Harold*.\(^{70}\)

Byron recorded this excursion in the third Canto of *Childe Harold*, stanzas 89-111. The narrator in these stanzas was Byron idealized, and his sufferings became Promethean; this was at least true in their incessancy and power, although Byron's sufferings were not relieved as were those of Prometheus by his memories. The narrator felt that it was far better to be alone with nature and love her than to be with man and think over wrongs until his brain boiled and he became a wanderer "o'er Eternity."

\(^{69}\)Ibid., IV, 49.

\(^{70}\)Ibid., III, 335-336. Also see Shelley's account of the storm given in a letter quoted by the editor in *Letters*, III, 336.
The poet said:

I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me; and to me
High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
Of human cities torture; I can see
Nothing to loathe in Nature, save to be
A link reluctant in a fleshly chain. 71

He mingled his spirit with that of the sky, the ocean, and
the stars, and this was pure happiness. The mind was freed
of all sorrow and degradation, and his soul reached into
infinity and shared with the immortals. 72 73-75

The narrator's thoughts returned to reality as he re-
membered that he stood on the grounds of the wild, self-
torturing Rousseau, who knew how to "make madness beauti-
ful" and cast a heavenly beauty over erring deeds. Ideal
beauty became in Rousseau an existence. 73 74-75

With his love of associating everything as much as
possible with himself, Byron could not forget that his
mother had compared him, before he was twenty, to Rousseau;
and Madame de Staël had done so in 1813. Later, in his
Detached Thoughts written in 1819, Byron recalled that the
Edinburgh Review had something of the sort in its criticism
on the fourth Canto of Childe Harold. Byron claimed that
he could see no points of resemblance between them. 74
The reader may draw his own conclusions from the third
Canto.

71 Canto III: 72. 72 Ibid., 73-75.
73 Ibid., 76-78. 74 Letters, V, 408-409.
Byron depicted Rousseau's life as "one long war with self-sought foes." Rousseau's mind had grown to be "suspicion's sanctuary," and he had chosen self-banishment for his own sacrifice.\textsuperscript{75}

But he was phrensied, -- wherefore, who may know? Since cause might be which Skill could never find.\textsuperscript{76}

Then Rousseau became inspired, and from him came "those oracles which set the world in flame."\textsuperscript{77} They wrecked old opinions, tearing the veil from them and revealing what lay behind the veil. This he did for France, "but it will not endure nor be endured."\textsuperscript{78}

Rousseau might be called the forerunner or the inspiration, through his prose, for the leaders of the American and the French Revolutions. Byron became the inspiration and leader of the Grecian uprising in 1824. The Rousseau fever had almost died out in France and Germany at the time Byron wrote the third and fourth Cantos of Childe Harold.

Byron became more personal in the stanza in which he wrote that deep wounds could not heal without a scar, and the heart that was stabbed the deepest was the one that bled the longest. He, who had warred with his own hopes and had been vanquished, would submit in silence and wait until the time should come to strike. He would not despair, for a time for revenge "came, it cometh, and will come."

\textsuperscript{75}Canto III: 80. \textsuperscript{76}Ibid. \textsuperscript{77}Ibid., 81. \textsuperscript{78}Ibid., 81-83.
The time for forgiveness would be slower to come than the time for vengeance.\textsuperscript{79}\textsuperscript{80}

In the above citation, Byron was not only speaking of nations whose hearts had bled; he was also speaking of his own, which had healed somewhat. Hobhouse wrote the following to Augusta about Byron after visiting him in Geneva in 1816:

He seems . . . as happy as it is consistent for a man of honour and common feeling to be after the occurrence of a calamity involving a charge, whether just or unjust. . . . It would be a great injustice to suppose that he dismissed the subject from his thoughts, or indeed from his conversation upon any other motive than that which the most bitter of his enemies would commend. The uniformly tranquil and guarded manner shows the effort which it is meant to hide.\textsuperscript{80}

Madame de Staël, whose acquaintance Byron had renewed in Geneva, advised him: "You should not have warred with the world -- it will not do -- it is too strong always for any individual."\textsuperscript{81} Byron wrote Augusta on September 29, 1816:

I am past reproaches; and there is a time for all things. I am past the wish of vengeance, and I know of none like for what I have suffered; but the hour will come, when what I feel must be felt.\textsuperscript{82}

He wrote to Lady Byron in 1817 about his scarred heart:

It would be as well if even you at times recollected that the man who has been sacrificed in fame, in feelings, in every thing, to the convenience of your

\textsuperscript{79}Ibid., 84. \textsuperscript{80}Quoted in Letters, III, 348.
\textsuperscript{81}Ibid., IV, 480. \textsuperscript{82}Ibid., III, 365.
family, was he whom you once loved, and who -- whatever you may imagine to the contrary -- loved you.

... No one was ever even the involuntary cause of great evils to others, without a requital; I have paid and am paying for mine -- so will you.

In Don Juan, Byron won his revenge by ridiculing Lady Byron and English society, and the world at large. He was slow to forgive Lady Byron, who he felt was chiefly responsible for his injuries. It was not until 1821 that Byron forgave Lady Byron; from Pisa, he wrote:

I assure you that I bear you now (whatever I may have done) no resentment whatever. Remember, that if you have injured me in aught, this forgiveness is something; and that, if I have injured you, it is something more still, if it be true, as the moralists say, that the most offending are the least forgiving.

The poet's musings over his own deep wounds and his ponderings over revenge vanished slowly as he looked upon "clear, placid Leman." She invited him to forsake the troubled earth for a "purer spring"; a quiet sail on the lake would waft away his earthly troubles. In the silent calm of solitude, he felt "least alone" for his soul fused with the soul of Nature in an intense concenetered life.

The scene changed and the elements of nature warred with each other. The thunderbolts were hurled "from hand to hand" and the forked lightning darted about. The poet said that if he could put into one word all his thoughts and throw into one word "soul -- heart -- mind -- passions --

[83Ibid., IV, 67-68.  
84Ibid., V, 481.  
85Canto III: 85-91.]
feelings —" all that he sought or would ever hope to seek, —
that one word would be "lightning." But as it was, he
would live and die unheard. 86 87

Storms were always exhilarating to Byron. He wrote
Stanzas Composed During a Thunderstorm after being lost in
a terrible storm in the mountains of Albania on the night
of October 11, 1809. 87 Byron noted the following in the
journal which he kept while he was in the Alps a second
time: "Storm came on, thunder, lightning, hail; all in
perfection and beautiful." 88

After the storm, morning came "laughing the clouds
away," and the traveler resumed his journey. He arrived
at "Clarens! sweet Clarens, birthplace of deep Love:" 89 90
Clarens was surrounded with love in its most sublime ca-
pacity. It was "love's recess," where men could lose his
own identity and mingle with the beauty of nature. Rous-
seaux chose that ground as the place to purify his thoughts,
where "early Love his Psyche's zone unbound." 90 Byron
visited Lausanne with a feeling of poetic devotion for Gibbon,

86 Ibid., 97.
87 See quotation from Hobhouse in Works, p. 544, n. 2.
88 Letters, III, 358.
89 Canto III: 99. See Letters, III, 351-355 for Byron's
less poetic description of Clarens.
90 Canto III: 99-104.
who completed there his life's work, History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. 91

The poet often turned his thoughts abruptly from things sublime to reflection upon his own despairing existence. He thought his youthful thirst for fame had been quenched. He wrote, "I stood and stand alone, -- remembered or forgot." 92 He repeated that he had not loved the world, nor had the world loved him. He had not flattered its rank nor bowed to its idolatries. He had not been one of the crowd, for he had stood, "among them but not of them," in a shroud of thoughts which were his own. He wished to "part fair foes" with the world, from which he had learned "that Goodness is no name -- and Happiness no dream." 93

The poet devoted the last stanzas of the Canto to his daughter, Ada, to whom he spoke these closing lines:

O'er the sea
And from the mountains where I now expire,
Pain would I waft such blessing upon thee,
As -- with a sigh -- I deem thou might'st have been to me. 94

By comparing Harold's travels, his sufferings, his desire for revenge, his responses to nature and to historic

91 Ibid., 105-108. See Shelley's letter quoted in Letters, III, 334; also see Byron's letter to Murray, ibid., pp. 333-334.

92 Canto III: 112.

93 Ibid., 111-114.

94 Ibid., 118. Letters written at a later date were used as references as Byron did not write many letters between the time he left England and the composition of the third Canto; however, the letters of the later date expressed Byron's feelings at the time he wrote the third Canto.
places with Byron's letters of that period and a later period, it can be seen that there is not much difference between the hero of the poem and the author.
CHAPTER V

CHILDE HAROLD, CANTO IV

The Shelleys left Geneva to return to England at the end of August, 1816, and carried with them to England the third Canto of Childe Harold, which had just been completed. Byron remained in Geneva some time after the Shelleys departed. Madame de Staël was attempting to bring about a reconciliation between him and Lady Byron, but this proved a futile effort as Lady Byron refused to consider it. Late in September of 1816, Byron made a two-weeks Bernese Alpine tour with three of his friends from England, who were vacationing in Switzerland. He did not return to Geneva to live. He chose Venice because the loose morals of Venice suited him better than did Geneva. There were fewer Englishmen in Venice, which pleased Byron, for he preferred "hating them at a distance." Byron took up residence in the house of an Italian merchant and his pretty twenty-year-old wife, with whom he immediately fell in love. Soon after arriving in Venice, Byron wrote Thomas Moore that he found Venice a "poetical place"; but that he had not yet "sinned against it in verse," nor did he think that he would. He had been "tuneless" since he crossed the Alps.¹

¹Letters, IV, 11.
In January, he wrote Murray that he had "not done a stitch of poetry" since he had left Switzerland, and that he had "no thought of resuming it." If he wrote at all, he considered writing prose. After a three-weeks visit in Rome during May, he informed Murray that he had been in Rome "too short a time" to write and that he had no thought of recommencing *Childe Harold.*

In spite of Byron's assertions that he would not continue *Childe Harold,* he made a beginning on June 26th, and on July 9th he had completed fifty-six stanzas. The first draft of the fourth Canto, consisting of one hundred and twenty-four stanzas, was finished in less than a month. He kept adding to it throughout the month of December until it totalled one hundred and eighty-four stanzas, which made it the longest of the four Cantos. Byron announced that the fourth Canto was the concluding one, and he looked upon it as good; that is, if the three former Cantos were good. "At any rate, good or not," it was different in style from the third Canto. He had parted company with Shelley and Wordsworth and there was less metaphysics, which would be a variety. The fourth Canto shows the influence of Hobhouse, who was studying Italian literature in connection with archaeology and art at the time Byron visited in Rome. To Hobhouse, Byron owed a fresh enthusiasm for art and for numerous details used in describing the

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"dry bones . . . which he awakened into the fulness of life." \(^5\)

Byron dedicated the fourth Canto to Hobhouse, "a friend often tried and never found wanting." In the dedication, Byron acknowledged gratitude to Hobhouse for "the whole of the notes, excepting a few of the shortest," which accompanied the poem. Byron explained that it was "with a kind of regret" that he parted with the last Canto, for it was "like parting with so old a friend."

The poem, or the Pilgrim, or both had accompanied him from "first to last" during the past eight years. He explained further that less of the Pilgrim would be found in the last Canto than in the preceding Cantos. The Pilgrim would be very slightly, if at all, "separated from the author speaking in his own person." He had become weary of "drawing a line which everyone seemed determined not to perceive."

Venice and Rome are the main themes of the fourth Canto, into the context of which Byron projected his own emotions. Confessions are alternated with the historic themes. Byron's responses to ancient places were, in the main, the same -- a deep appreciation for anything historic. His confessions revealed the changes that had taken place in his own thinking and attitudes between the time of the completion of the third Canto and the final Canto of the poem.

\(^5\)Poetry, II, 315.
Byron began the fourth Canto with the subject of Venice, which, he had explained in a letter to Murray, was as much as he had expected, and he had expected much. Venice, since his boyhood days, had haunted him most "after the East." He liked the "gloomy gaiety of the gondolas, and the silence of the canals." He did "not dislike the evident decay of the city." The last Canto opened with the poet or the Pilgrim's speaking in the first person.

I stood in Venice, on the "Bridge of Sighs";
A Palace and a prison on each hand;
I saw from out the wave her structures rise,
As from the stroke of the Enchanter's wand.  

He could see the "dying glory" of a thousand years smile about him. The "songless Gondolier" rowed silently along and music could not always be heard as in the past. Those days were gone, but "beauty still" remained. If the poet chose to do so, he could re-people Venice "with the beings of the mind" from the "long array of mighty shadows" whose dim forms hung above "the dogeless city." After envisioning Venice in all of her past glory, he thought that she was "even dearer in her day of woe."

The poet's thoughts turned from Venice and her woes toward himself and his woes. He was an exile from a country where men were "proud to be" and not without cause. He could replace what he hated and make "a more beloved existence" in his own mind; but "waking Reason" deemed

6Letters, IV, 14.  
7Canto IV: 1.  
8Ibid., 1-8.
these phantasies unsound. Nevertheless, he continued in his tender thoughts: If his ashes should remain in a foreign land where he had sought a home by a "remoter sea," his spirit would return to his own land if the spirit could "unbodied choose a sanctuary." He still entertained the possibility of returning to England when he wrote these first stanzas of the fourth Canto. He had dismissed the idea of returning by the time he had finished adding to the poem in December, 1817.

The poet wrote:

I twine
My hopes of being remembered in my line
With my land's language.  
If, however, his fame should be as his fortunes had been --
"Of hasty growth and blight, and dull Oblivion," and his name barred
from out the temple where the dead
Are honoured by the Nations -- let it be --
And light the Laurels on a loftier head!

Byron did not refer directly to his meriting a grave in Westminster Abbey, but these lines might imply that he hoped for a place. Fate still marked him, even after his death; for with all of his fame, his body was denied burial in Westminster. It was placed in the family vault at Hucknell Torkard.

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9Ibid., 8-9.  10Ibid., 9.
11Canto IV: 10. In another mood Byron wrote to Murray in 1819: "I trust they won't think of 'pickling me and bringing me home . . .' I am sure my bones would not rest in an English grave or my clay mix with the earth of that country." Letters, IV, 315.
12Drinkwater, op. cit., p. 381.
The poet, or the Pilgrim, continued to explain in stanza ten that he did not seek sympathies; he would endure his fate. The thorns which had torn him and made him bleed were from the tree that he had planted. Here, Byron was partly posing. He would endure his fate, but he would not do so without seeking sympathy. He had asked for sympathy in Canto III and he continued asking for sympathy in this Canto.

All suffering doth destroy, or is destroyed, even by the sufferer -- and, in each event, Ends.\textsuperscript{13}

Some who had suffered would return with new hopes from where they had come and would start life anew. Others would grow gray and die before their time. Some would seek "devotion, toil, war, good or crime," according to the individual's disposition. "But ever and anon of griefs subdued," there would come a "token of music" or some "token" to remind one of the past and he would feel the shock renewed.\textsuperscript{14}

When Byron settled in Venice, he attempted to throw off his torture. He wrote to Augusta in December, 1816, from Venice, "I am sick of sorrow, and must even content myself as well as I can: so here goes -- I won't be woeful again if I can help it." Augusta could also tell his "moral Clytemnestra," Lady Byron, that he was recovering;

\textsuperscript{13}Canto IV: 22. \hspace{2cm} \textsuperscript{14}Ibid., 23.
and she could tell her the reason if she wanted to -- he had fallen in love again, "fathomless love."  

15  Byron was still "in love" with his Marianna, his latest attachment, when he completed the fourth Canto.  

16  Another thing which Byron did to try to shake off his suffering was to take up the study of the Armenian language. Soon after his arrival in Venice, he began this study; because "his mind wanted something craggy to break upon," and this was the most difficult "amusement" he could find. His letters indicated that he pursued this study through a part of February, 1817.  

17  Byron, try as he might to forget his griefs, was reminded by various things that made him feel a pang. In a letter to Moore, written January 2, 1817, Byron recalled that "on this day two years ago" he was married, and he would not "forget the day in a hurry."  

18  In a letter to Murray dated April, 1817, Byron wrote: "You talk of 'marriage'; ever since my own funeral, the word makes me giddy and throws me into a cold sweat. Pray don't repeat it."  

19  (To the poet, Venice was still "the garden of the world"; her decline did not efface the beauty of nature. But he must continue his pilgrimage. He came to Arqua) "where they

15  Letters, IV, 22.  

16  Ibid., pp. 7, 16, 48, 52, 66, 81.  

17  Ibid., pp. 10, 18, 36, 65.  

18  Ibid., p. 38.  

19  Ibid., p. 93.
keep the dust of Laura's lover." The poet pondered as he viewed the quiet, peaceful hamlet where the lover had dwelt:

If from society we learn to live, 
'Tis Solitude should teach us how to die; 
It hath no flatterers -- Vanity can give 
No hollow aid; alone -- man with his God must strive.²⁰

It might be that man must strive with demons who overruled man's better thoughts and made him melancholy and moody from his earliest day. His thoughts might make him dwell in darkness and deem himself predestined to a doom which he could not escape.²¹ Byron diagnosed his own malady in this case. (From early childhood he had been melancholy and moody and had always believed in fate or predestination.)

The Pilgrim moved on to Ferrara, where he lingered for a while. It did not seem that the "wide grass grown streets" of Ferrara were made for solitude. He recalled the tragic fate of the bard Tasso, who was Ferrara's glory and her shame. He passed the cell where the despised and unworthy Alfonso had imprisoned the poet because he dared to speak his thoughts.²² Byron spent a single day at Ferrara in April, 1817, on his way to Rome. He went over the castle cell where Tasso had been imprisoned and a few days later he wrote The Lament of Tasso; the manuscript was

²⁰Canto IV: 33. ²¹Ibid., 35. ²²Ibid., 36-38.
dated April 20, 1817. 23

As the Pilgrim approached Florence, he exclaimed, "Italia! oh, Italia!" The fatal gift of Italy was beauty, but present woes placed a brow of sorrow and shame upon her. 24 She was still the "Mother of Arts," "Parent of our Religion," whom "nations have knelt to for the keys of heaven!" 25 The poet gazed upon the Goddess of Love until he was "dazzled and drunk with beauty." There were no words to describe the other statues, which he had viewed in "the marble mart." These he left to more "learned finger" and he also left to them the description of "the Artist and his Ape." 26

After his visit to Florence, Byron wrote Murray that he thought Venus was more for admiration than for love. The other statues were "fine frippery" in slabs of expensive stones commemorating unworthy and forgotten persons. 27 Byron knew nothing about paintings and detested them unless they reminded him of something he had seen or might see. He wrote, "I never yet saw the picture -- or the statue -- which came within a league of my conception or expectation." 28

Leaving Florence, the Pilgrim made his way toward Rome. Along the journey, he was fascinated by "a matchless

24Canto IV: 43.  
25Ibid., 47.  
26Ibid., 49-53.  
28Ibid., p. 107.
cataract," which was "horribly beautiful." As he approached the hills outside the city of Rome, the poet recalled with "sickening memory" the dull, drilled lessons in Latin he had been forced to learn in his repugnant youth. The beautiful verses had been beyond his comprehension; it was not the fault of Horace that he did not love him. Byron alluded, in the above stanzas, to his Harrow school-days when he had had to remain in after school because he had not learned his Latin.

At last the Pilgrim reached his destination, "the Niobe of nations." He exclaimed ecstatically:

Oh, Rome! my Country! City of the Soul! The orphans of the heart must turn to thee, Lone Mother of Dead Empires!

From Rome, Byron wrote to Murray that he had been riding his saddle-horses every day and had been "to Albano, its lakes, and to the top of the Alban Mount, and to Frascati, Aricia, etc. . . . about the city, and in the city." He continued with reference to Rome:

As a whole, ancient and modern, it beats Greece, Constantinople, everything -- at least that I have ever seen. But I can't describe, because my first impressions are always strong and confused, and my Memory selects and reduces them to order, like distance in the landscape, and blends them better, although they may be less distinct.

In another letter to Murray, he wrote:

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29 Canto IV: 69-72. 
30 Ibid., 75-77. 
31 Poety, II, 387, n. 1. 
32 Canto IV: 78. 
33 Letters, IV, 119.
I have been some wonderful days in Rome the Wonderful. I am seeing sights, and have done nothing else. . . . Rome has delighted me beyond everything, since Athens and Constantinople. But I shall not remain long this visit.34

To Thomas Moore, he wrote:

Of Rome I say nothing; it is quite indescribable, . . . As for the Coliseum, Pantheon, St. Peter's, the Vatican, Palatine, etc. . . . they are quite inconceivable, and must be seen.35

Elze has said that Rome was where Byron's "poetry winged its highest flight; his spirit hovered like an eagle over the ruins, and bore aloft to the throne of the Eternal not his griefs alone but those of the world."36 The poet wandered amidst the "chaos of ruins."

The Ocean hath his chart, the stars their map, And Knowledge spreads them on her ample lap; But Rome is as the desert -- where we steer Stumbling o'er recollections.37

Near the Wolf of the Capitol, whose foster children were all dead, stood the "dread statue" where the "bloody Caesar" had lain. Caesar's fall reminded the Pilgrim of Napoleon, whose vile ambition had made him a slave among his own slaves.38 The "Arch of Triumph" had led on both Caesar and Napoleon,

and for this the tears And blood of earth flow on as they have flowed, An universal Deluge, which appears Without an Ark for wretched Man's abode, And ebbs out to reflow! -- Renew thy rainbow, God.39

38Ibid., 87-97. 39Ibid., 92.
Had not France been sick on her own blood? Nations would continue in their misery so long as tyrants ruled; and so long as the false scales of public opinion weighed the deeds of men and made "free thoughts be crimes," lest the "earth have too much light." History had but one page, and this page could best be written in Rome, where "gorgeous tyranny" had amassed "all treasures" and "all delights" that were possible.

'Tis but the same rehearsal of the past, First Freedom, and then Glory -- when that fails, Wealth -- Vice -- Corruption -- Barbarism at last.

The Pilgrim paused at the tomb of Cecilia Metella and mused: Had she died young? Had she survived her kindred -- her children? Had she loved her lord? It seemed to the poet that he had known the inmate of the tomb, and other days came back to him "with recollected music." The Pilgrim passed by the Palatine and the "nameless column," which was "looking to the stars" in the deep blue sky above Rome. He approached the Forum where the tree of Freedom had withered and died; "here a proud people's passions were exhaled." After passing Trajan's pillar, the Pilgrim arrived at Ergeria's Grotto, which was the "sweet creation of some heart." Water bubbled from the base of this "cleft statue," whose "cave-guarded Spring" was

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40 Ibid., 93-97.  
41 Ibid., 108.  
42 Ibid., 99-106.  
43 Ibid., 108-111.  
44 Ibid., 112-114.  
haunted by a "holy Love." 46

Thoughts on love made the Pilgrim recall that love was
a being whose shape and image were created in the mind. Love
was "youth's frenzy" in which youth created his idol and
imbued her with Worth and Beauty. He must then experience
the bitterness of watching "charm by charm" disrobe from
his idol. He could not free himself from the fatal spell
which would draw him, and the alchemy would begin its work
in his heart. He moaned:

We wither from our youth, we gasp away --
Sick -- sick; unfound the boon -- unslaked the thirst,
Though to the last, in verge of our decay,
Some phantom lures, such as we sought at first --
But all too late, -- so are we doubly curst. 47

Perhaps Byron had reference to his unrequited love for Mary
Chaworth and his lameness which made him "doubly curst."
"Love, Fame, Ambition, Avarice" -- these were all the same
meteors with different names, for they were all idle and
ill meteors. Byron had already unhappily experienced Love
and Fame, which were the products of Ambition. He was not
avaricious, but he was becoming shrewd in his business
dealings and kept a strict account of his household expendi-
tures. 48

It was "Circumstance, that unspiritual God and Mis-
creator" that helped evils along with a "crutch-like rod." 49

46 Ibid., 114-118. 47 Ibid., 124.
Our life is a false nature -- 'tis not in
The harmony of things. 50

The "uneradicable taint of Sin" from the "all-blasting
tree" plagued men with "disease, death, bondage" and with
unseen woes that filled "the immedicable soul with heart-
aches." To abandon reason or to resign the "right of
thought" would destroy man's last refuge. From the time
of man's birth, "the Faculty divine" was "chained and tor-
tured -- cabined, cribbed, confined," and man was kept in
darkness "lest the Truth should shine" through the dark-
ness. 51

Byron was never able to reconcile the "uneradicable
taint of Sin" with the goodness of God. Man's lot in this
world was not in harmony with nature. Man must suffer for
his own wrongs, and for the wrongs of his first parents.
In the drama, Cain, Byron set forth his religious views;
that is, his beliefs and doubts. He expressed the principle
of the right of reason or liberty of thought in these lines:

I speak not of men's creeds -- they rest between
Man and his Maker. 52

As the Pilgrim approached the Colosseum, he sensed that
Time had left "a Spirit's feeling" over this ancient, tower-
ing structure. Within the Colosseum was a "divinely deso-
late temple," the shrine of "great Nemesis," the goddess of
retributive justice and revenge. The poet implored:

50Ibid., 126.  51Ibid., 126-127.  52Ibid., 95.
Oh, Time! the Beautifier of the dead,
Adorner of the ruin -- Comforter
And only Healer when the heart hath bled;
Time! the Corrector where our judgments err,
The test of Truth, Love -- sole philosopher,
For all beside are sophists -- from thy thrift,
Which never loses though it doth defer
Time, the Avenger! unto thee I lift
My hands, and eyes, and heart, and crave of thee a gift.53

The poet called upon Nemesis to awake, to arise from the dust54 and accept his offerings, which were
Ruins of years -- though few, yet full of fate: --
If thou hast ever seen me too elate,
Hear me not; but if calmly I have borne
Good, and reserved my pride against hate
Which should notwhelm me, let me not have worn
This iron in my soul in vain -- shall they not mourn.55

The poet continued his supplication: Had his wound been inflicted with a just weapon, he would let it flow unbounded. His blood should not sink into the ground; he devoted his blood to Nemesis and commanded,

Thou shalt take
The vengeance, which shall yet be sought and found.56

Some day, though he "be ashes," the prophecy of his verse would be fulfilled and pile the mountain of his curse "on human heads."57 Forgiveness would be the curse. Had he not wrestled with his lot? Had he not suffered things to be forgiven? Had he not been driven to desperation? Had not his brain been seared, his "heart riven"

53Ibid., 130. 54Ibid., 132. 55Ibid., 131.
56Ibid., 133. 57Ibid., 134.
and "hopes sapped, name blighted, Life's life lied away?" Had he not "seen what human things could do?" He had seen them "from mighty wrongs to petty perfidy." A small whisper had grown into a "loud roar of foaming calumny." He had seen the subtle "venom reptile crew." There was one who had learned to lie with silence and with a "shrug" or a "sigh" make things "seem true." But he had not lived in vain. (His mind might lose its force or he might die; but there was something within him that would not expire with time.)

Between the time of the writing of the third and the fourth Cantos, Byron had changed in his attitude toward Lady Byron. In Canto III, he was shocked and suffered intensely because of his misfortunes. In Canto IV, he became hardened and revengeful. He had "considered their reunion as not impossible for more than a year after the separation," and then he "gave up the hope entirely and for ever." She had been one of the chief reasons for his downfall; he would let "time and Nemesis do that" which he "would not," even were it in "his power remote or immediate."

58 Ibid., 135. 59 Ibid., 136.
60 Glenarvon had been translated into Italian and was in the press at Venice at this time, Letters, IV, 156. This was Lady Caroline Lamb's venomous novel in which she depicted Byron as the hero.
61 This referred to Lady Byron's silence.
62 Letters, V, 480.
63 Ibid., IV, 68. Letter to Lady Byron, March, 1817.
Byron, after a severe illness, wrote to Murray in April, 1817, that he would live, for there were one or two people whom he had to put out of this world before he could "depart in peace." He would have shot himself last year, had he not luckily recollected that Lady Noel, the mother of Lady Byron, and Mrs. Clermont, who had been Lady Byron's governess, and "all the old women in England would have been delighted." 64

When Byron learned in 1819 that Sir Samuel Romilly had "cut his throat for the loss of a wife," 65 he wrote Lady Byron a jubilant letter about Romilly's suicide. Romilly had assisted in the separation proceedings between Byron and Lady Byron.

This man little thought, when he was lacerating my heart according to law, while he was poisoning my life at its [sic] sources, aiding and abetting in the blighting, branding, and exile that was to be the result of his counsels in their indirect effects, that . . . in the fullness of his professional career . . . a domestic affliction would lay him in the earth . . .

It was not in vain that I invoked Nemesis in the midnight of Rome from the awfullest of her ruins. 66

At least one of the Pilgrim's supplications had been answered. Nemesis failed to answer his prayer for Lady Byron's forgiveness; for she had learned "to lie with silence," and she remained silent. When Byron died, it was

64 Ibid., pp. 98-99.
65 Romilly's wife had died a natural death.
66 Letters, IV, 268-269.
averred that "Lady Byron's emotions stirred for a moment and were withdrawn into an inscrutable retirement." 67

As the Pilgrim turned from Nemesis, he welcomed her "dread power"; the seal was set and he would say no more. He looked upon the statue of the dying Gladiator, who leaned upon his hand. His head was bowed, but his heart was in his hut by the river with "his young barbarians." The Gladiator had been slaughtered to make a bloody circus for a holiday. Life and death had become playthings of a crowd. Rome and her ruin remained past "Redemption's skill." 68

Next the Pilgrim viewed the Pantheon, the pride of Rome. It was "despoiled yet perfect!" and glory still shone about it. 69

The Pilgrim approached Saint Peter's Cathedral, "Christ's mighty shrine." He recalled that he had seen many temples and sanctuaries on his long pilgrimage through the years, but he had not seen any place of worship comparable to this magnificent structure. 70 The poet said:

But thou, of temples old, or altars new, Standest alone -- with nothing like to thee -- Worthiest of God, the Holy and the True!
......
...... Majesty -- Power -- Glory -- Strength -- and Beauty all are ailed
In this eternal Ark of worship undefiled. 71

69 Ibid., 146-152. 70 Ibid., 153-154.
71 Ibid., 154.
As the poet entered the Cathedral, its grandeur overwhelmed him; his mind expanded. The vastness and the sacredness of Saint Peter's made him feel the presence of the Spirit of God and the mortal's aspiration to put on immortality.\(^{72}\) No better abode could be found wherein appear enshrined

Thy hopes of Immortality -- and thou
Shalt one day, if found worthy, so defined.
See thy God face to face, as thou dost now
His Holy of Holies -- nor be blasted by his brow.\(^{73}\)

The "fountain of Sublimity" had displayed its depths in the Cathedral and his mind had absorbed a part of the spirit and the glory of the Cathedral. Byron believed in the Deity, but he did not accept the plan of man's redemption from sin through Christ. At this period Byron had begun to lean toward Catholicism. In 1817, he expressed this inclination in a letter to Murray, in which he wrote, "... when I turn thirty, I will turn devout; I feel a great vocation that way in Catholic churches ..."\(^{74}\)

The Pilgrim proceeded to the Vatican, where he browsed among the statues. He was struck by the delicate beauty of Apollo, which had "a ray of Immortality."\(^{75}\) Byron wrote to Moore that the statue was "the image of Lady Adelaide Forbes"; he had never seen such likeness.\(^{76}\)

\(^{72}\) *Poetry*, II, 443-444, n. 1. \(^{73}\) *Canto IV*: 155.
\(^{74}\) *Letters*, IV, 99. \(^{75}\) *Canto IV*: 160-163.
\(^{76}\) *Letters*, IV, 122.
Byron commemorated the death of the Princess Charlotte and her infant son in stanzas 167-170. He told this story of far-reaching consequences with such touching and tragic irony that it has survived all other dirges written on the death of the Princess at that time. These stanzas were written after the death of the Princess in November, 1817. The Princess Charlotte was the only daughter of the Prince Regent.\textsuperscript{77} In a letter to Murray, Byron wrote, "The death of the Princess Charlotte has been a shock even here, and must have been an earthquake at home. ... I feel sorry in every respect -- for the loss of a female reign, and a woman hitherto harmless."\textsuperscript{78}

The Pilgrim's song had ended; his wanderings were over; and his shrine was won. Once more he and the poet would climb upon the "Alban Mount" and behold again the mighty ocean.\textsuperscript{79} Despair filled the poet and he cried out, "Oh! that the Desert were my dwelling-place!" He would forget the human race and love only Nature,\textsuperscript{80} for

\begin{quote}
There is a pleasure in the pathless woods, 
There is a rapture on the lonely shore, 
There is society, where none intrudes, 
By the deep Sea, and Music in its roar; 
I love not Man the less, but Nature more. 
From these our interviews, in which I steal 
From all I may be, or have been before, 
To mingle with the Universe, and feel 
What I can never express -- yet can not all conceal.\textsuperscript{81}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{77}Poetry, II, 450, n. 2. \textsuperscript{78}Letters, IV, 183-186. \textsuperscript{79}Canto IV: 175. \textsuperscript{80}ibid., 177. \textsuperscript{81}ibid., 178.
Byron did not have many pantheistic outbursts in this Canto. He observed the beauties of nature and responded to them, but seldom felt the intensity that he expressed in the above lines. Byron explained that this Canto would have less of metaphysics than the preceding Canto. Although nature scenes were incidental in this Canto, this does not mean that Byron's attitude toward nature had changed. He deliberately avoided nature scenes so that the Canto would be varied from the preceding one.  

It was only natural that the poet let the Pilgrim end his song and expire within sight of the mighty ocean, which they had feared in childhood and loved in maturity. The poet apostrophized, "Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean -- roll." In this stanza the poet expressed the insignificance of man, who with all of his works, does not amount to more than a drop of rain falling on the mighty ocean.

In this concluding Canto of the Pilgrimage, Byron posed very little. He explained that drawing the line had become difficult and that no one tried to perceive the difference between the author and Harold. Byron's letters written during the period of the composition of the last Canto and at later dates substantiated the author's confession that there was little difference between him and

82 Letters, IV, 150.  
83 Canto IV: 159.
Harold. Byron did not write letters giving detailed accounts of his tour of the ancient city, Rome; but the letters in which he expressed his admiration in general for Rome would lead one to believe that he was true to himself in his presentation of his visit to Rome. Byron had written enough in his letters about Venice to verify the devotion that he expressed in the fourth Canto for that city. Harold's agonizing groans of the third Canto had subsided and he longed for revenge to fall upon those who had injured him. Byron's letters, written during the year that elapsed between the writing of the third and fourth Cantos, show a close parallel to the changes that Harold experienced.

The poet had parted from the Pilgrim, the friend of his own creation, with whom he had shared prosperity and adversity for eight long years. The parting had been sad, for the poet had closed a corresponding chapter in his own life. The thoughts and the experiences of the Pilgrim, with few exceptions, had been the thoughts and the experiences of the poet. The Pilgrim had not lived so abundantly as had his creator, for he had not been endowed with all the great propensities for living that his creator possessed.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Through the character of Childe Harold, Byron unfolded many changes and developments in his own life and character and in his attitudes toward writing, toward nature, and toward religion. He reflected a constant love and devotion for history and for ancient places. His cry for freedom for the oppressed rang consistently throughout the poem.

Byron's mood, from his earliest recollections, was one of infinite melancholy, a characteristic which had been propagated from generation to generation in his family. Byron's melancholy was further increased by his environment, his early religious training, and his physical deformity. In his youth he had stood aloof from the crowd, neither loving nor hating mankind. In his later years, he disliked mankind and satirized them in his poetry.

(From a melancholy and somewhat irresponsible youth on the first pilgrimage, Byron became a full-grown man in experience and in years on the second pilgrimage. He had tasted the bitter dregs of the fickleness and injustice of mankind. His suffering from wounded pride was so great that it became choleric melancholy. He made the listening
world his confessor as he declared his agonies from the mighty stage of nature upon which he placed himself. In the course of time, his wounds healed, leaving their scars, and he became arrogant and revengeful, invoking Nemesis to inflict punishment upon those who had injured him. 

During the first pilgrimage, Byron was a dilettante, and he remained a dilettante until he began the second pilgrimage. After his downfall, poetry offered him an escape; indeed, poetry became his greatest passion. He boldly proclaimed in the concluding Canto that he had hopes of being remembered in his own land through his verse and of having a final resting place among the honored ones of the nation in Westminster Abbey. The third and fourth Cantos of Childe Harold, which are more lofty and grand than the first two Cantos, are a result of his poetic growth and his resolution to apply himself more diligently to his writing. Byron sought fame, but he did not seek it at the price of sacrificing any of his own opinions or convictions. He never feared to speak the truth, nor did he miss an opportunity to defend a persecuted cause; in fact, he was careless and weak in his own defense.

Byron was always a lover of nature in its most gigantic and sublime forms. He loved the ocean, the mountains, the leaping cataract, and the sky peopled with stars. The elements of nature at war held more fascination for him than did nature in its calm aspect. (On the first pilgrimage,
nature offered Byron solace and companionship; it was an escape from the busy city. On the second pilgrimage, he was directly influenced by Shelley and indirectly influenced by Rousseau in his pantheistic attitude. Nature became to Byron a Spirit with which his own being mingled. He became a part of the mountains and the sky, a part of the soul of the mighty universe. His own spirit could escape from all earthly taint and he could experience a delight that was pure and holy. (The metaphysical element subsided somewhat in the last Canto.) The poet ended the Pilgrimage with a grand apostrophe to the mighty ocean, his favorite of all of nature's wonders.)

(In Childe Harold, Byron recorded his own doubts, fears, superstitions, and questionings about religion. His early Calvinistic training was revealed throughout the poem. On his first pilgrimage, skepticism had entered into his religious views; however, he never departed from his belief in the Deity. During his stay in Switzerland, he became a mystic. In the concluding Canto of the poem, Byron's inclinations were toward Catholicism. He was always open to all faiths and never reached a definite acceptance of any particular faith.)

(Byron's love for the infinite melancholy of history was revealed in Childe Harold. In his own mind, he had known Athens, Venice, and Rome before he saw them. He had been an ardent reader and lover of history in his school
days. His visits to these ancient places gave wings to the poetic spirit which only a devotee of history could feel.

Byron was ever a proclaimor of freedom for nations that were oppressed and enslaved by their conquerors. He challenged Portugal, Spain, Greece, and Italy to arise and shake off their chains of bondage. Byron's challenge, raised in *Childe Harold* and in other poems, helped to arouse the people of Europe and to bring about better days that followed after his death.

Greece had won the heart of Byron on his first pilgrimage. He longed for the clear blue skies of Greece in his years of fame in England. He did not follow the dictates of his heart and turn to the aid of his beloved Greece until 1823. Byron had settled in Italy before he wrote the last Canto of *Childe Harold*. He had fallen from the pinnacle of personal fame in his own country; but his poetry, which he continued to produce with prolific genius, attained for him a higher pinnacle than he had known during his residence in England. Only the great Goethe towered above him in Europe. Byron was torn between his love for poetry and his love for Greece. He had championed freedom with his pen throughout his writings. He felt that he would have accomplished a still more worthy cause by assisting the Greeks; hence, he liquidated his assets and sailed for
Greece on July 14, 1823, and there he contributed his life and his fortune to the cause of Greek liberty. On April 19, 1824, he died of a fever while waiting at Missolonghi to gather his forces to attack the Turks.\textsuperscript{1}

With a mighty peal, the words "Byron is dead" rang around the world. When Byron put off mortality, he took on immortality. John Drinkwater, a present-day Englishman, says of his brother poet, "Byron continues to be, for a variety of reasons, as vivid a figure as any in our literature, one might almost say in our national history."\textsuperscript{2} Drinkwater adds, "Reviled or acclaimed, little poet or great poet, he has been from the first day of his fame one of the inescapable figures in English literature."\textsuperscript{3} The more one reads Byron's poetry and his letters, the more one understands and appreciates him for his true greatness.

\textsuperscript{1}This part of Byron's life was not included in Childe Harold. This addendum, briefly covering the last six years of the author's life, is for the sake of completing his biography.

\textsuperscript{2}Drinkwater, op. cit., p. 42.  \textsuperscript{3}Ibid., p. 44.
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