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Byron and the Orient

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# BYRON AND THE ORIENT

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# BYRON AND THE ORIENT.

## Introductory Remarks.

In regard to Lord Byron it is difficult to make positive assertions. In life, in religion, in literature, he is somewhat of a paradox. He was fiercely proud of his aristocratic descent; he was also an exponent of universal equality. He wrote odes to Napoleon; he died in Greece for the cause of liberty. He has been called a deist, an atheist, and a Christian; in Manfred he exclaims, "A mind which is immortal makes itself requital." He eulogized Newstead Abbey one day; the next he desecrated it with bacchanalian revelry. He had few traits of character that were not entirely reversible.

To the student of literature Byron is somewhat of an enigma. In his earlier poetry we find translations and imitations from Tibullus, Catullus, Horace, and Anacreon, interspersed with addresses to young ladies and imitations of Ossian. In a distinctly romantic age we find him writing a typical Augustan satire. In the midst of scenes that almost unconsciously produced Childe Harold, we find him engrossed with Hints From Horace. Throughout his entire life he upheld classical ideals, was an admirer and defender of Pope; from his birth to his death, in his life and in his poetry, he was distinctly the antithesis of the eighteenth century man and poet. Walter Scott's romantic tendencies found inspiration in the past: Byron, on the contrary, lived

essentially in the present. Shelley built his hopes on the future. The means of escape that Scott found in the Middle Ages,that Shelley found in metaphysical speculation,Byron found in the gorgeous splendor and easy sentimentality of the East.Theoretically he retained his reverence for classical rules and ideals;practically he shattered every ideal and principle of classicism. Certainly this is true in regard to his Oriental poetry,nor is there much of his work that has not acquired the Eastern glow. It is eminently fair to call him a classical romanticist.

It is with the romantic side,or rather with the Oriental side of his romanticism,that we are at present concerned. Of necessity appreciation must overshadow analysis. In his lifetime Byron was admired, condemned,loved,and hated;he was never understood. The cement of a hundred years has but rendered more impervious this coating of intangibility. In a discussion of this man we need make no apology for error;indeed we shall be content with conclusions that are only reasonable. Byron could not say with Rousseau, "I know myself." More futile,then,for us to say,"We know Byron." Byron can best be approached in the subjective mood. We are not studying Byron;we are studying ourselves under the Byronic spell. We may mirror falsely,but at least

the image will be our own. And it is the picture from our own glass that most completely approaches truth--to us.

Byron was not the first by any means to introduce the Oriental tale into England. For a long time Englishmen had been hearing of the delightfully mysterious East.[1] Previous to the appearance of Vathek in 1784,however,about all that could be said of Oriental literature was that it was delightfully mysterious. It was "superficial,unimpassioned,colourless. Beckford was the first to introduce much picturesque detail,and in so doing anticipated the methods of Moore,Southey,Byron and their successors."[2] Byron's nature and genius were such that he seemed to absorb the Oriental spirit and to breath it forth again a thousand times more glowing. He appeals to us because he gives us something we can see and feel. His Tales,Chiefly Oriental are neither dreamy nor visionary. They carry us through the entire gamut of human emotions. The fundamental passions of men,love,hate,ambition,revenge, are the strings on Byron's harp. And he played upon them with wondrous power because he knew his notes. It is because his poetry deals with men and women intensely alive that Byron is Byron. We like his descriptions:we live his characters. Byron's genius was in the bud when he went abroad. In the foggy atmosphere of England it would have

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1. See Martha Pike Conant's The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century.

2. Oriental Tale in England p. 236.

developed into a sickly,repulsive weed;the Eastern sun,infusing new life,gave us the brilliant flower that reached full bloom under the smiling skies of Italy.

To do justice to Byron the Orientalist in so brief a discussion as this,makes it difficult to give sufficient consideration to Byron the poet. And yet,whether we deal with man or poet,we shall be continually face to face with Byron. All that is hoped for is to show the possibilities of more complete and more intelligent study. The present attempt consists of three chapters which almost inevitably present themselves. In connection with the Orient,Byron's career naturally shows two stages of development,before and after his Eastern visit. Of the first stage,the stage of formative influences,we shall speak in our first chapter;of the second stage,the stage of result and culmination,we shall speak in the second chapter. The interim belongs to both stages. The discussion of the first two chapters leads us naturally to the third,Byron's Oriental Romanticism. Throughout the discussion stress will be laid upon Byron's indebtedness to Oriental literature,which in its final sense means the indebtedness of Oriental literature to Byron.

It seems superfluous to define Orient and Oriental. In this essay,

however,it is important that we at least attempt it. In exact terms, the Orient Byron visited was Turkey. As we are to consider the Orient Byron knew,it is necessary to take a more comprehensive definition. By Orient we mean "Those countries immediately east of the Mediterranean or of southern Europe,the countries of southwestern Asia,or of Asia generally."[1] Defining Oriental is like defining Romanticism,a rather voluminous task,and would probably result as successfully. To escape ambiguity we shall accept the definition given by the authority quoted above,"belonging to,found in,or characteristic of" those countries included in the Orient. The added meaning and connotation of the word,suggesting gorgeousness,strangeness,luxury,life,magic and the like,will become more apparent as this discussion proceeds.

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1. Oxford Dictionary.

Chapter One.

## FORMATIVE INFLUENCES
## 1788--1811

A close study of the life and writings of Lord Byron serves only to deepen our regret that we can only meet him through the rather uncertain medium of books. Could we but rend the veil of almost a century and see the real man, the man whose genius and personality brought Europe to his feet, it would be comparatively easy to settle some questions that now at least can only be a matter of conjecture. Even Byron's contemporaries, however, in much judged him incorrectly. Most of his countrymen were especially incapable of estimating him consistently. The idol of the English literary public, he became the object of popular detestation.[1] Yet, notwithstanding his exile and the audacity of his poetry, he continued to be read almost universally even in England.

In face of such conflicting sentiment it is not strange that biographers and critics often differ in regard to Lord Byron. Especially does this difference of opinion manifest itself in regard to his marital troubles. Happily we can almost entirely disregard this aspect of his life. In one respect, however, all critics and biographers are agreed; namely, that Byron is a child of the Orient. Indeed this opinion has been so general that comparatively few have attempted to trace the numerous circumstances and influences that destined him to find inspiration in the East. To do this with any degree of

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1. Moore's Life (1830 edition) pp. 652-655 contains an interesting account of the abuse and calumny heaped upon Byron in the year 1816.

success it is necessary to introduce the biographical element to a certain extent. Indeed Byron's poetry is an excellent autobiography. It shall be our first task to show that when Byron in 1809 started on his travels,he was simply yielding to the magnetic Eastern spell to which he was by inclination,temperament and circumstances so highly susceptible.

If there is anything in heredity,Byron came honestly by his remark-interest in "lands beyond the sea."[1] His ancestors were a rather restless,unsettled,turbulent crew.[2] He inherited a rebellious spirit. "For unbridled passions,defiant self-will,arrogant contempt of the received order of things and of the world's opinion,associated with high endowments and much resolute energy of character,formed the inauspicious inheritance,which in full measure,accumulated on the head of the poet."[3] Nor was there anything in his life as child, youth,or man,to soften or assuage this discontent. He was born in London January 22,1788.[4] From the very first his home life was unhappy. His father after a rather questionable career died in France in 1791. His physical deformity rendered him singularly sensitive.[5] His mother by alternate outbreaks of love and rage lost both the

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1. See Byron,a Study in Heredity by C. Kassel.Arena vol. 36 p.175.

2. For account of Byron's ancestry and the circumstances of his birth see Elze's Life pp.1-12;Moore's Life pp.1-8;Roden Noel's Life (1890 edition) pp.24-29;Galt's Life of Byron pp. 1-5.

3. Elze's Life p.1.

4. Moore. The date of Byron's birth has received much discussion,for account of which see Elze's Life p. 438.

5. All biographies of Byron contain accounts of his club-foot.

child's affection and respect.[1] The boy became more attached to his nurse, May Gray,[2] than to his mother, and it was from her that he received his first instruction and training.

It is with a feeling of pleasure mixed with pain that we picture to ourselves the little boy sitting on his nurse's lap, listening to tales and legends, and learning to repeat passages from the Bible. At this its most receptive state, the boy's mind was filled with all sorts of tales of adventure and travel. The stories about his Grandfather, "Foulweather Jack," appealed strongly to his childish imagination. That he was familiar with the details of the celebrated admiral's life is evidenced by the lines in his Epistle to Augusta:

> A strange doom is thy father's son's, and past
> Recalling, as it lies beyond redress;
> Reversed for him our grandsire's fate of yore,
> He had no rest at sea, nor I on shore.

It has also been asserted that the description of the shipwreck in the second canto of Don Juan is based on a similar experience of his grandfather.[3] The trend of the boy's mind at an early age is indicated by the fact that he attended a little party in the summer of 1803 dressed "in the costume of a Turkish boy with a diamond crescent in his turban." [4]

Of Byron's schooling either in childhood or youth we will say but little. He was somewhat deficient in love of study and perseverance.

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1. Elze in his Life of Byron p. 15 gives an interesting sketch of the character of the poet's mother.

2. Moore's Life p.9.

3. See biographical sketch of Byron p. XI of Cambridge Edition of Byron's poetical works. In a letter to Murray, his publisher, Byron says that this description was taken not from one wreck but from the facts of several wrecks. Letters and Journals vol V. p. 346.

4. Jeaffreson's Real Lord Byron Vol. I. p. 115.

His tendency was at all times to interest himself in what pleased him best. Learning to read put a new world at his command. He became an almost insatiable reader. Books of history and travel he devoured greedily and either by choice or chance he became most deeply interested in the life and literature of the East.

It is not difficult to perceive the tremendous influence the Arabian Nights and other Turkish tales must have had upon him. In 1807 he made from memory a list of books he had read.[1] This remarkable list is singularly comprehensive, embracing the more important works in history, biography, law, geography, poetry, eloquence, divinity, and the like. Particularly suggestive is his comment upon his knowledge of Turkey; "I have read Knolles,[2] Sir Paul Rycaut,[3] and also Prince Cantemir;[4] besides a more modern history, anonymous. Of the Ottoman

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1. Moore's Life vol. I, pp. 95-101.

2. Richard Knolles (1550-1610) in 1603 published his Generall History of the Turks. He spent twelve years in writing it and when finished it consisted of 1200 pages. The book ran through six editions and in 1687 a seventh edition was revised and continued by Sir Paul Rycaut. Dr. Johnson (Rambler 122) commends the freshness and fidelity of Knolles's work but declares the subject foreign and of no value, "A remote and barbarous nation, of which none desire to be informed."

3. Sir Paul Rycaut (1628-1700) was a celebrated traveler and author. He was for a long time attached to the Porte in Turkey. In 1663 he published The Capitulations and Articles of Peace between England and The Porte, and in 1688 published in a three-volume edition, The Present State of the Ottoman Empire.

4. Prince Cantemir was an eminent writer born at Constantinople in 1709. He was educated in Russia. He died in 1744 leaving a high reputation as a poet, diplomat and man. It is quite possible that Byron refers to Demetrius Cantemir (1673-1723). He was a celebrated Historian and Orientalist. Among other things he wrote a History of the Origin and Decay of the Ottoman Empire.

History I know every event from Tangralopi,and afterwards Othman I,[1] to the peace of Passarowitz in 1718,-the battle of Cutzka in 1739, and the treaty between Russia and Turkey in 1790." After enumerating the various poets of Europe,ancient and modern,with whom he is familiar,he goes on with his list to other parts of the globe:[2]

"Arabia,Mahomet whose Koran contains most sublime passages,far surpassing European poetry.

Persia,Ferdousi,[3] author of the Shah Nameh,the Persian Illiad,--Sadi[4] and Hafiz,[5] the Oriental Anacreon. The last is revered beyond any bard of ancient or modern times by the Persians,who resort to his tomb near Shiraz,to celebrate his memory. A splendid copy of his works is chained to his monument."

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1. Othman I. founded the Turkish Empire about 1300.

2. Moore's Life vol. I,p. 100.

3. Ferdousi was a celebrated Persian poet born about 940 A.D. He was the author of the Shah Nameh,Book of Kings,a rhymed history of Persia consisting of about 60,000 couplets.

4. Sadi was a noted Persian poet (1184?-1291.)

5. Hafiz,probably the greatest of Persian poets,was born at Shiraz about 1300. Love and wine were said to be his favorite subjects for poetry. He is especially known for his lyrics. His works, collectively entitled The Divan,were published in Persian at Calcutta in 1791. Portions have been translated into English by J.Richardson (1774) and J.H. Hindley (1800.) He died in 1390. See lines 707-708 English Bards and Scotch Reviewers,and note.

At the close of the list Byron writes; "All the books enumerated I have taken down from memory. I recollect reading them,and can quote passages from any mentioned. I have,of course,omitted several in my catalogue;but the greater part of the above I perused before the age of fifteen. I have also read(to my regret at present) above four thousand novels,including the works of Cervantes,Fielding,Smollet, Richardson,Mackenzie,Sterne,Rabelais,Rousseau etc." [1]

One fails to appreciate the significance of this reading unless he examines the list himself. As Moore comments, "The list is,unquestionably,a remarkable one;-and when we recollect that the reader of all these volumes was,at the same time,the possessor of a retentive memory,it may be doubted whether,among what are called the regularly educated,the contenders for scholastic honors and prizes,there could be found a single one who,at the same age,has possessed anything like the same stock of useful knowledge." [2] Moreover,as we shall have occasion to observe,Byron continued to be throughout his life an indefatigable reader. In his letters and journals we are continually finding reference to some book he has read or is about to read. [3] At present,however,we are more concerned with determining the influence of his earlier reading in directing his attention toward the East. No

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1. Moore's Life vol. I, p. 98.

2. Moore's Life vol. I, p, 95. Moore's comment on Byron's reading is extremely interesting. To the early development in Byron of this taste for books,he ascribes much of the poet's later success.

3. Unless otherwise stated all references to Byron's letters and journals will be found in Rowland E. Prothero's 6 volume edition, 1898. In vol. VI,p 500,begins a long list of books and authors that Byron refers to in his letters. In the same volume,p. 579, begins another list of authors he has quoted.

better witness is available than Byron himself:

"Old Knolles," he said at Missolonghi,a few weeks before his death, "was one of the first books that gave me pleasure when a child;and I believe it had much influence on my future wishes to visit the Levant, and gave, perhaps,the Oriental coloring which is observed in my poetry."[1] He again remarks,"Knolles,Cantemir,DeTott,[2] Lady M.W. Montagu,[3] Hawkin's Translation from Mignot's History of the Turks,[4] the Arabian Nights,[5]-All travels or histories,or books upon the East,I could meet with,I had read as well as Rycaut,before I was ten years old." [6] In

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1. Count Gamba's Narrative.

2. DeTott,Francois (1733-1793) was connected with the French embassy at Constantinople. He resided many years in Turkey. His Memoirs of the Turks and Tartars,1784,obtained great popularity and was translated into many languages.

3. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1699-1762) for a time resided at Constantinople. Her letters describing the scenes and customs of the Turkish city,possessed such charm and vividness that even Alexander Pope was inspired to write a"wild Eastern tale." Pope says,"After reading the Persian Tales (and I had been reading Dryden's Fables just before them) I had some thoughts of writing a Persian Fable;in which I should have given full loose to description and imagination. It would have been a very wild thing if I had executed it,but might not have been unentertaining." (Spence's Anecdotes,Observations and Characters of Books and Men, a Selection,edited by John Underhill,London, p. 168.)

4. Mignot,Vincent,a French writer,was born in 1725. In 1771 he published a History of the Ottoman Empire from its Origin to the Peace of Belgrade in 1740.

5. Those who have read the Arabian Nights --And who has not?--will readily understand how Byron must have treasured it.

6. Byron wrote these few words on the margin of his copy of Mr. Disraeli's essay on The Literary Character.

1784 Beckford's Vathek appeared. Vathek is,as an Eastern tale,a masterpiece unrivalled in European literature. In one of his diaries Byron says of it;[1]"Vathek was one of the tales I had a very early admiration of. For correctness of costume,beauty of description,and power of imagination,it far surpasses all European imitations. As an Eastern tale even Rasselas[2] ;must bow before it:his 'Happy Valley' will not bear a comparison with the 'Hall of Eblis.'[3] As we shall see later in The Giaour,The Siege of Corinth,Manfred,and in Don Juan, Byron owes very much direct inspiration to Vathek. In line 275,canto I. of Childe Harold he refers to Beckford in the passage beginning,

There thou too,Vathek! England's wealthiest son.

Having considered some of the positive influences,we shall now concern ourselves with some of the negative influences that resulted in Byron's coming in actual contact with the East;negative influences in the sense that they made England distasteful to him.

Up to the time he attained his majority,Byron's life had been a mixture of gaiety and grief;nor was there much change for the better in later years. Augusta Leigh [4] seemed to be his only confidante. He could not endure the presence of his mother.[5] The disastrous term-

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1. See 1832 edition in 14 volumes of Works of Lord Byron by Thos. Moore,note on line 22,Canto I,of Childe Harold.

2. Dr. Johnson's Rasselas had appeared in 1759.

3. Byron's comment is that Beckford gives the air of reality to his production. Johnson's knowledge of the East had been acquired from books as Rasselas sufficiently indicates.

4. Augusta Byron was the poet's half-sister,afterwards married to Col. Leigh.

5. See letters to Augusta Byron August 6,1805.vol. I, p. 72 and Nov. 6,1805,vol. I. p. 81. Also see letter to John M.B. Pigot, Aug. 9,1806,vol. I,pp. 159-163.

inations of various love affairs had wounded him deeply. His first appearance in the House of Lords was anything but auspicious.[1] His dislike,we might say his contempt,for Cambridge is too well known to require comment.[2] Add to all this the inadequacy of his income to support him in the style he wished and you will not be surprised that the young poet desired a change.

Byron first speaks of completing his education abroad in a letter to his mother,Feb. 26,1806; "I can now leave it (Cambridge)with Honour,as I have paid everything,and wish to spend a couple of years abroad,where I am certain of employing my time to far more advantage and at much less expense,than at our English seminaries." [3]From then on until his actual departure in 1809 this idea steadily grew. His dislike for England in general and Cambridge in particular did not abate. In October,1808,we find him writing to his mother of "my departure for Persia in March (or May at farthest.)"[4] A little later he expresses his purpose more plainly in a letter to John Hanson;[5]"I am (As I have already told you)going abroad in the Spring; for this I have many reasons. In the first place I wish to study Asiatic policy and manners." He then proceeds to express his dislike of his present mode of living and explains how a tour in the East

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1. Moore's Life vol. I, pp. 159-163.
2. Read Granta;a medley in Hours of Idleness
3. Letters and Journals vol. I, p. 96.
4. Letters and Journals vol. I, p. 193.
5. Letters and Journals vol. I, p. 199. John Hanson was his business administrator.

would be cheaper. In another letter to Hanson, May 15, 1809, he directs him to adopt any means to furnish some money and adds, "Allow me to depart from this accursed country and I promise to turn Mussulman rather than return to it."[1] On the eve of his departure he wrote his mother that he thought [redacted] of entering the Turkish service.[2]

Byron's dislike for England reached its height when the Edinburgh Review published the since famous criticism of his earlier poetical efforts. This antipathy never left him. English Bards and Scotch Reviewers came from the heart. While waiting at Falmouth for his ship he wrote Hodgson, "I leave England without regret--I shall return to it without pleasure."[3] Later in life, during his residence in Italy, he reechoed this sentiment more forcibly in a letter to Thos. Moore; "I do not see an Englishman in half a year, and when I do, I turn my horse's head the other way."[4] And yet Byron counted some true friends among his countrymen. That he did not leave England without at least a temporary feeling of regret, the following lines bear witness:

> I can't but say it is an awkward sight,
> To see one's native land receding through
> The growing waters; it unmans one quite. [5]

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1. Letters and Journals vol. I, p. 272.
2. Letters and Journals vol. I, p. 225.
3. Letters and Journals vol. I, p. 230.
4. Letters and Journals vol. V, p. 230.
5. Don Juan Canto II, Stanza 12. Byron expresses a similar sentiment in the little poem in the first canto of Childe Harold beginning, "Adieu' Adieu' my native shore."

Byron's English Bards served effectually to silence his critics. Though in later life he regretted much of it and even had it suppressed, yet at that time it at once secured for him recognition as a poet. It was a thoroughly Popeian production and we shall only pause over it long enough to note one or two things. In a note on lines 707-708 Byron pays tribute to Hafiz, "The Persian Anacreon."[1] He says, What would be the sentiments of the Persian Anacreon, Hafiz, could he rise from his splendid sepulchre at Sheeraz (Where he reposes with Ferdousi, the Oriental Homer and Catullus,) and behold his name assumed by one Stott of Dromore."[2] The following lines are also rather significant in this discussion:

> Then let us soar today; no common theme
> No eastern vision, no distempered dream
> Inspires.[3]

In 1816 Byron said of these lines, "This must have been written in a spirit of prophecy."[4] On the 2nd of July, 1809, with his friend, Hobhouse, he sailed from England. His state of feelings at this time is best described in the opening stanzas of Childe Harold.[5]

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1. As for the smaller fry, who swim in shoals, (Poetical Works of Lord Byron by E.H.Coleridge, 1905 ed. p.101, note 1.)
   From silly Hafiz up to simple Bowles.
2. This man had written under the name of Hafiz. For reference to the Persian poets mentioned, Sadi, Ferdousi and Hafiz, see p. 5.
3. English Bards lines 23 and 24.
4. Coleridge's Works of Lord Byron vol. I, p. 299.
5. Coleridge's 1905 edition of Byron's Poetical Works in one volume, pp. 145-146.

## Chapter Two. *

## RESULT AND CULMINATION.

### 1811---1824.

Byron returned to England rather unexpectedly in July, 1811.[1] He had intended to spend at least another year in the East. It is probable that financial troubles brought him home. That he was completely charmed by the exotic life of the East his numerous letters written at that time testify. In his last letter to his mother before returning he expressed some intention of making his future home among such pleasant scenes.[2] Many years later speaking of his attach-

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* Byron had only been abroad two years, but in that time he had acquired much. With Hobhouse he sailed from England July 2, 1809. They arrived at Lisbon July 7th and on the 5th of August were at Gibraltar after riding 500 miles on horseback through Spain. On the 19th of August they sailed from Gibraltar for Malta. On the 29th of September we find Byron at Prevessa, he having spent the interim visiting various parts of Albania. November 13th he set out through Aetolia toward the Morea and on the 21st was at Missolonghi where fifteen years later he was to die. Going on to Patras they stopped there two weeks. Patras was left Dec. 4th and three weeks later, on Christmas day, the two travellers arrived at Athens. They stayed in the Greek capital ten weeks and on March 5th(1810) set out for Smyrna. Here on the 28th Byron completed the second canto of Childe Harold. He had begun the poem at Yanina, in Albania, on the previous 31st of October. April 11th they set out for Constantinople where they arrived May 14th. Here the two friends parted, Hobhouse going back to England. Byron remained in Constantinople two months and then went back to Athens. This was in July, 1810. Byron was in Athens and the surrounding neighborhood almost a year, although just where he was and what he was doing the latter part of the time is not definitely known. On June 3, 1811, he was at Malta and starting for England. He arrived home early in July. (For more complete itinerary see Coleridge 1905 ed. p141-3)

1. In a letter to his mother dated Athens, Feb. 28, 1811, he speaks of visiting Egypt in the spring. His next letter to her is written on board ship for home, June 25th.

2. Letters and Journals. vol. I. p. 310.

ment for the East,he said to Medwin, "I should most likely have spent the remainder of my life in Turkey if I had not been called home." [1] Turkey made an irresistible appeal to him;impressions received there were never effaced. Years later he speaks of scenes in Turkey as if he had seen them yesterday;"But Paestum cannot surpass the ruins of Agrigentum,which I saw by moonlight;nor Naples,Constantinople. You have no conception of the beauty of the twelve islands where the Turks have their country houses,or of the blue Sympligades against which the Bosphorus beats with such restless violence."[2] Much to our regret it has been impossible to enter into the details of that memorable tour. Byron's own letters,however,and the zeal of his biographers render that task superfluous. It is more to our purpose to observe the results of that tour,to meet Byron upon his return,to trace some of the workings of that gorgeous,passionate,Eastern witchery,that enabled Byron to appear,for a time at least,almost as a demigod.

Byron wished to publish Hints from Horace upon his return. As yet he seemed unconscious of the vast power the East had awakened in him.[3] It was only upon the earnest solicitation of friends that he consented to publish the first two cantos of Childe Harold. Even then he was

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1. Medwin's Conversations p. 102,1824 edition. In a letter to Francis Hodgson on board Volgate frigate for home Byron says,"I am returning home without a hope,and almost without a desire." Letters and Journals vol. I. p. 316.

2. Medwin's Conversations p. 10.

3. See chapter V. of Recollections of Lord Byron by Dallas.

unwilling to subscribe his name to the first edition. This first edition was not published until March 1,1812. In the meantime Byron's misfortunes had not come singly. His mother had died August 11,1811, before he had left London for Newstead. A day or so later he heard of the death of one of his dearest friends,Charles Skinner Matthews.[1] He now considered himself practically alone in the world. A letter to S.C. Davies at this time is particularly expressive;"Some curse hangs over me and mine. My mother lies a corpse at this house;one of my best friends is drowned in a ditch. What can I say,think,or do?" [2] The remainder of the letter is an eulogy of Matthews;his mother is not mentioned again. August 12th we find him writing to Dallas,"Peace be with the dead;regret cannot wake them. With a sigh to the departed let us resume the dull business of life." [3] This he did.

The miraculous success of Childe Harold needs no comment. Byron awoke one morning to find himself famous. He had been slow to realize the fertility of the East for poetry;once realized there came from his pen an exhilarating,overmastering deluge of Oriental splendor.The literary world was dazzled,intoxicated. Byron appeared as a radiant sun,which,journeying over a glowing bed of fragrant fire,had absorbed the choicest sparks and was now dropping them one by one upon an inflammable world beneath. As the brightness of fire is sometimes obscured by its smoke,so was Byron's fame obscured by the clouds of calumny;the flame of his poetic genius,almost extinguished in 1816,

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1. Charles Skinner Matthews. See Letters and Journals vol. I. pp. 150-160.

2. Scrope Berdmore Davies,a classmate of Byron. Letters and Journals vol. I. p. 324.

3. Letters and Journals vol. I. p. 325.

rekindled in Sunny Italy and blazed with triumphant,mocking brilliancy until at last in Greece it sweetly flickered out.

Byron's Poetic Romances or Tales,Chiefly Oriental,[1] were written between 1812 and 1816. To us they are the most important of his writings because of their evident and avowed orientalism and because of the impetus they gave to Oriental literature. Comparatively little of Byron's later poetry is without this "Oriental Colouring,"[2] but it is principally in The Giaour,The Bride of Abydos,The Corsair,The Siege of Corinth,and in the opening cantos of Don Juan that we are introduced to Eastern life in its essentials. Studying Byron's Orientalism is like entering a vast labyrinth;seeking treasures in its intricate mazes we become lost or overloaded and never get them to the light of day. By finding too much we are apt to retain too little. Rather than lose our way in the tempting Oriental wilderness we shall confine our attention to the more conspicuous and more easily accessible landmarks,content in our hasty survey with an occasional glimpse into the depths. Before examining the Oriental Tales in detail we shall note some of their more striking characteristics.

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1. This title,Tales,Chiefly Oriental,was used later and also included Parisina,The Prisoner of Chillon,Mazeppa,and The Island. The last three are not Oriental tales. The others mentioned give reason for the title.

2. See page 7.

In Byron's Oriental poetry,as we have before remarked,it is the portrayal of emotional character that attracts. This trait is more predominating in his Tales than in Don Juan.[1] The former were written in the first,feverish flush of success;the latter was composed with the more deliberate decision of poetical perfection. The Tales show the warmth of the ardent disciple;Don Juan exhibits the sportive tenderness of the complacent master. In the earlier pictures we see Byron crude,yet intensely alive;in the later sketches we see Byron polished,satiated,gayly and cynically retrospective. In Don Juan character and action is in a way subservient to description and interpretation;in The Corsair,The Giaour,Lara,The Bride,description and interpretation is made essential to character and action. In each of the poems we are impressed with the air of vivid reality.

Contemporary comment at the time of the publication of the Tales is interesting. "In Lord Byron's poetry,every image is distinct and glowing,as if it were illuminated by its native sunshine;and in the figures which people the landscape we behold not only the general form and costume,but the countenance,and the attitude,and the play of feature and of gesture accompanying,and indicating,the sudden impulses of momentary feelings. The magic of colouring by which this is effected is,perhaps,the most striking evidence of poetic talent." [2]

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1. Of course reference is to those cantos of Don Juan dealing with the East.

2. Geo. Ellis in Quarterly Review July,1814.

Another reviewer says, "Lord Byron has the clear title to applause, in the spirit and beauty of his diction and versification,and the splendor of his many descriptions. But it is to his picture of the stronger passions,that he is indebted for the fulness of his fame. He has delineated with unequalled force and fidelity,the workings of deep and powerful emotions,which enchant and agonize the minds that are exposed to their inroads."[1] Jeffrey draws the following striking contrast between the poetry of Moore,who also invaded the Oriental field,and that of Byron; "The poetry of Moore is essentially that of Fancy;the poetry of Byron that of Passion. If there is passion in the effusions of the one,the fancy by which it is expressed predominates over it:if the fancy is called to the aid of the other,it is still subservient to the passion."[2] And this in the main is the distinguishing mark of Byron's contribution to Oriental literature. He succeeded in making the luxury,magic,and mystery of the Arabian Nights and the gorgeous coloring of Vathek into a natural and realistic setting for stirring action.

The Giaour:a Fragment of a Turkish Tale appeared in May,1813.[3] It is an excellent example of Byron's indebtedness to Oriental liter-

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1. Edinburgh Review. April 1814.
2. Edinburgh Review. February 1808.
3. The first copy contained only 400 lines. With successive editions, seven in all,it finally reached 1400 lines. Its fragmentary nature easily admitted of these additions.

ature as well as to his personal knowledge of the East. In plan it is but a series of fragments,a set of "Orient pearls at random strung."[1] "It is obvious that in this,the first of his romantic narratives, Byron reflects the admiration he always felt for Coleridge's Christabel." The fragmentary style of composition was suggested by the then new and popular Columbus of Rogers[2] to whom the poem is dedicated.

Unusual interest was aroused by The Giaour because of a current report that it was based upon an incident in the life of the poet. Byron at the time of its publication denied this report.[3] Many years later Medwin quotes Byron as follows; "One of the principal incidents in The Giaour is derived from a real occurrence,and one too in which I myself was nearly and deeply interested;but an unwillingness to have it considered a traveller's tale made me suppress the fact of its genuineness." According to Medwin,Byron then told him the whole story.[4] Whatever its origin the tale is, title and all,distinctly Oriental.

The tale resembles the common model of the Oriental fable,but is distinguished by one striking peculiarity. "In eastern love stories the heroine is usually preserved to her lover by means of some mirac-

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1. Moore's Life vol. I. p. 390. In regard to Christabel see page 31, note 2 of this discussion.

2. This is a quotation from the editor's introduction to The Giaour. See letter to John Murray,June 13,1813. Let. and Jour. II. p. 218.

3. Byron's advertisement to The Giaour is, "The tale which these disjointed fragments present is founded upon circumstances now less common in the East than formerly;either because the ladies are more circumspect than in the 'olden time' or because the Christians have better fortune,or less enterprise. The story when entire,contained the adventures of a female slave,who was thrown,in the Mussulman manner,into the sea for infidelity,and avenged by a young Venetian,her lover." Cambridge Edition p. 310.

4. Medwin's Conversations pp. 97-100.

5. "Giaour" is the Moslem name for Christian or infidel.

ulous and preternatural agency,or consigned,with very little ceremony to death and oblivion.*** But in the present instance,the seducer of the lovely Leila is a Christian; * * a giaour,an unbeliever,who has the audacity to form and execute the desperate project of revenging the death of his murdered mistress,by the sacrifice of her executioner."[1] Otherwise the tale is distinctly Eastern. Byron could never have found inspiration for such lines as these in England:

> Her eyes' dark charm 'twere vain to tell,
> But gaze on that of the gazelle,
> It will assist thy fancy well:
> As large,as languishingly dark,
> But soul beamed forth in every spark
> That darted from beneath the lid,
> Bright as the jewel of Giamschid. [2]

nor

> The browsing camels' bells are tinkling,
> His mother looked from her lattice high,
> She saw the dews of eve besprinkling,
> The pasture green beneath her eye. [3]

nor this,

> The cold in clime are cold in blood,
> Their love can scarce deserve the name:
> But mine was like the lava flood
> That boils in Aetna's breast of flame. [4]

Much interest attaches to the "Jewel of Giamschid" in the first quotation because it sheds light on Byron's and Moore's mutual inter-

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1. Quarterly Review. January 1814.

2. Description of Leila in The Giaour. Lines 473-479.

3. Hassan's mother,who does not know he has been killed by the giaour is awaiting her son's arrival. The beauty of the scene is terribly contrasted with the succeeding situation in which Hassan's death is made known.It is interesting to note the resemblance between this passage and a similar description in the Old Testament,Judges,Chap. V,verse 28:"The mother of Sisera looked out at a window,and cried through the lattice,Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariot?"

4. The giaour's justification for wronging Leila. Lines 1099-1102.

est in the Orient. In the original copy Byron had it,"bright as the gem of Giamschid." He probably changed to "ruby" on the authority of Vathek,(p. 58 ed. 1856),where Beckford writes,"Then all the riches this place contains,as well as the carbuncle of Giamschid shall be hers."[1] At Moore's suggestion Byron changed again to "Jewel of Giamschid." In the course of their correspondence both refer to Richardson's Dictionary [2] and Byron hints at an Oriental poem,probably Lalla Rookh,which Moore has in the making.[3] In view of their relations Byron's advice to Moore is of interest;"Stick to the East;-the oracle, Stael,[4] told me it was the only poetical policy. The North,South,and West have all been exhausted;but from the East we have nothing but Southey's unsaleables,[5]-and these he has contrived to spoil by adopting only their most outrageous fictions. His personages don't interest us and yours will. You will have no competitor;and if you had you ought to be glad of it. The little I have done in that way is merely a'voice in the wilderness' for you;and if it has any success, that also will prove that the public are orientalising,and pave the path for you." [6]

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1. Letters and Journals. vol. II. p. 254 note 1.
2. John Richardson's Dictionary of Persian,Arabic,and English was published in 1777.
3. Letter to Moore. Letters and Journals vol. II. p. 253.
4. Anne Louise Germaine Necker (1767-1817). Byron speaks of her as follows;"Certainly the cleverest,not the most agreeable woman I have ever known. She declaimed to you instead of conversing with you,never pausing except to take breath." Lady Blessington's Conversations p. 26.
5. Southey (1774-1843) had written Thalaba the Destroyer in 1800. He says of it in his preface, "From this (Arabian) end the present romance has grown. * * * It is the arabesque ornament of an Arabian Tale." The Curse of Kehama was based upon Hindoo mythology.
6. Same letter indicated in note 3.

In The Giaour we can detect much of the influence of Vathek. In both Beckford and Byron there is the same oriental magnificence, the same contemptuous, reckless indulgence, the same injection of personality. The following lines refer unquestionably to the ~~description of the~~ description of the doomed ones in the "Hall of Eblis."[1]

To wander round lost Eblis throne,
And, fire unquenched, unquenchable,
Around, within thy heart shall dwell. (lines 750-752).

Byron acknowledges that these lines were drawn from Vathek and then goes on to say; "(Vathek is) a work to which I have before referred; and never recur to or read without a renewal of gratification."[2] His note at the conclusion of The Giaour is more suggestive; "The story in the text is one told of a young Venetian many years ago, and now nearly forgotten. I heard it by accident related by one of the coffee house stroy tellers who abound in the Levant, and sing or recite their narratives. The additions and interpolations by the translator will be easily distinguished from the rest by the want of Eastern imagery; and I regret that my memory has retained so few fragments of the original. For the contents of some of the notes I am indebted partly to D'Herbelot,[3] and partly to that most Eastern, and, as Mr. Weber justly entitles it, 'sublime tale' the 'Caliph Vathek.' I do not know from what source the author of that singular volume may have drawn his materials; some of the incidents are to be found in the Bibliotheque Orientale." Then follows the quotation given in Chapter I., page eight.

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1. See note 3, page 8.

2. Works of Lord Byron by Thos. Moore 1832. vol. IX p. 178 and X. p. 131.

3. D'Herbelot (1625-1695) was a French Orientalist, born in Paris. His Bibliotheque Orientale, or Universal) Dictionary containing generally all that regards the knowledge of the Eastern nations, was published in 1697, two years after his death.

As it is more to our purpose to trace the Oriental influence chiefly in Byron's career as a man,it is possible we have lingered too long over The Giaour. We cannot leave it,however,without giving a paragraph from a contemporary review: "The Oriental custom is preserved,as might be expected,with admirable fidelity through the whole of the poem;and the Turkish original of the tale is attested, to all but the bolder skeptics of literature,by the great variety of untranslated words which perplex the unlearned reader in the course of these fragments. Kiosks,Caiques,Muezzins,indeed,are articles with which all readers of modern travels are forced to be pretty familiar; But Chians,Palampore,and Ataghan,are rather more puzzling. * * * * * We hope,however,that he will go on,and give us more fragments from his Oriental collections;and,powerful as he is in the expression of the darker passions and more powerful emotions, * * * we own we should like now and then to meet in his pages with something more cheerful,more amiable,and more tender." [1]

The Bride of Abydos:a Turkish Tale was Byron's next contribution, December 1813. In a way it met the demands of the reviewer quoted above. Selim and Zuleika are characters as "tender and amiable" as any reviewer could wish,and yet the presence of Giaffir affords ample

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1. Edinburgh Review . April 1814.

opportunity for display of "the darker passions and more gloomy emotions." Moreover, The Bride was more than an Oriental fragment; it was Byron's first complete Oriental tale. In Byron's Diary, Dec. 5, 1813, we find his own estimate: "The 'Bride' such as it is, is my first entire composition of any length (except the Satire and be d--d to it), for the 'Giaour' is but a string of passages, and 'Childe Harold' is, and I rather think always will be, unconcluded. * * * Whether it succeeds or not is no fault of the public, against whom I can have no complaint. But I am much more indebted to the tale than I ever can be to the most important reader; as it wrung my thoughts from reality to imagination; from selfish regrets to vivid recollections; and recalled me to a country replete with the brightest and darkest, but always most lively colors of my memory."

The opening lines of the poem at once recall a song of Goethe's beginning, "Kennst du das Land wo die Citronen blühn?" but as Byron could not read German it is unlikely that he borrowed the idea.[1] The opening passage simply breathes the spirit of the East:

> Where the virgins are soft as the roses they twine,
> And all, save the spirit of man, is divine?
> 'Tis the clime of the East; 'tis the land of the Sun--[2]
> Can he smile on such deeds as his children have done?
> Oh! wild as the accents of lovers farewell
> Are the hearts which they bear, and the tales which they tell."

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1. The opening line of The Bride is "Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle," For discussion as to whether or not Byron owes the idea to Goethe see Letters and Journals vol. II. p. 304, note 3; Lady Blessington's Conversations pp. 326, 327; Galt's Life of Byron pp. 180-182.

2. Byron in a note on this line refers to the following from Young's Revenge:

> Souls made of fire, and children of the Sun,
> With whom revenge is virtue.

The Bride is more strictly Oriental than The Giaour because it is all Eastern. Add the magic wand and a happy ending and you will have a poetical version of a tale from the Arabian Nights. We already have in Giaffir,the Eastern despot:in Selim and Zuleika,the faithful lovers;we have the murdered father,Abdallah,and the faithful,cunning slave,Haroun;we have the "silken Ottoman,""a Koran of illumined dyes," "a lamp of fretted gold,""fragrant beads of amber," and "Sheeraz' tribute of perfume." Needless to say there is abundant use of Turkish words and expressions.[1] Byron evidently consulted Turkish histories and travels,and various forms of Oriental literature,at least to refresh his own "vivid recollections" of the East.[2] His reading was so

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1. Carasman Oglou in Canto I,stanza 7,chibouque and Maugrabee in stanza 8,Ollahs in 9,atar-gul in 10,tchocadar in 14,comboloio in the 5th stanza of the second canto,Rayahs in the 20th,Wul-wulleh in the 27th,are fair examples.

2. In his explanatory notes,prefixed to the first edition,he makes use of the Turkish dictionary. Referring to the line,"Within the caves of Istakar."in stanza 12,canto I,he cites D'Herbelot, article Istakar. See page 21,note 3.(Coleridge 1905 ed. p. 285.)
   Again in the 13th,14th,and 15th stanzas of canto II,he shows familiarity with Turkish history as he indicates in his notes: "Giaffir,Pacha of Argyro Castro,or Scutari,I am not sure which, was actually taken off by the Albanian Ali,in the manner described in the text." In a note on stanza 20 he says, "The wandering life of the Arabs,Tartars,and Turkomans,will be found well detailed in any book of Eastern travels."
   In regard to the last line in stanza 27,"'Where is my child?'--an Echo answers--'Where?'" Byron makes the following interesting acknowledgement:"I came to the place of my birth and cried,'The friends of my Youth,where are they?' and an echo answered,'Where are they?' From an Arabic MS. The above quotation(from which the idea in the text is taken)must be already familiar to every reader:it is given in the second annotation,page 67,of The Pleasures of Memory (Note to part I,line 103);a poem so well known as to render a reference almost superfluous:but to whose pages all will be delighted to recur(Poems by Samuel Rogers,1852,i.48.)"See Coleridge's 1905 Edition of Poetical Works of Lord Byron p. 294, note 1.

extensive,however,that,except in cases where he has indicated his sources,it is difficult to say whence he draws his information. Thus in the closing stanzas of The Bride,in which we escape much of the tragic and odious end of the tale,we are uncertain whether Byron drew upon an Eastern legend or his own imagination to give us a glimpse

> Within the place of thousand tombs
> That shine beneath,while dark above
> The sad but living cypress glooms
> And withers not,though branch and leaf
> Are stamped with an eternal grief,
> Like early unrequited love,
> One spot exists which ever blooms. [1]

In February,1814,Byron published The Corsair and in August of the same year Lara.[2] It is obvious that the latter is the sequel to the former. Fourteen thousand copies of The Corsair were sold the first day.As usual there was the current report that Byron was the hero of the tale.[3] The poem is dedicated to Thomas Moore. In this dedicatory letter Byron urges the Irish poet to complete his Eastern poem:"Your imagination will create a warmer sun and less clouded sky;but wildness,tenderness,and originality,are part of your national claim of Oriental descent."[4] In The Corsair,perhaps more than in any of his

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1. Lines 1146-52 of The Bride. E.H.Coleridge's 1905 ed. pp. 294-5.

2. Lara was published anonymously with the Jaqueline of Mr. Rogers.

3. Letters and Journals. vol. II. p. 399, Byron says, "(Hobhouse) told me an odd report,-that I am the actual Conrad,the veritable Corsair,and that part of my travels are supposed to have been passed in piracy. He don't know what I was about the year after I left the Levant;nor does anyone." cf. page 12,note *.

4. Letter of dedication prefixed to The Corsair.(Coleridge's 1905 ed. pp. 295-6.) It is interesting to compare the quotation given from this letter with Byron's later attitude toward Moore's Oriental poetry. In Medwin's Conversations p. 296 we find Byron expressing wonder that anyone should attempt to describe a country he had not seen. Moore's Lalla Rookh was not published until 1817.

other tales,Byron showed the results of personal contact with the East. In The Corsair and in Lara Byron was less indebted to Oriental literature;both poems bespeak first-hand knowledge.[1] Moreover,the rapidity[2] of the composition of The Corsair and the circumstances[3] of the composition of Lara precluded all but mere accidental reference to literature of any kind. One must see to write:

> High in the hall reclines the turbaned Seyd:
> Around--the bearded chiefs he came to lead.
> Removed the banquet,and the last pilaff--
> Forbiddon draughts,'tis said,he dared to quaff,
> Though to the rest the sober berry's juice
> The slaves bear round for rigid Moslems' use;
> The long chibouque's dissolving cloud supply,
> While dance the Almas to wild minstrelsy.
> (The Corsair ,Lines 635-40,Canto II,stanza 9.)

or

> Slow sinks,more lovely ere his race be run,
> Along Morea's hills the setting Sun.
> (The Corsair ,Lines 1169-70,Canto III,stanza 1.)[4]

or

> Flashed the dipt oars,and sparkling with the stroke,
> Around the waves' phosphoric brightness broke;
> They gain the vessel--on deck he stands,--
> Shrieks the shrill whistle--ply the busy hands.
> (The Corsair, Lines 571-74,Canto I,stanza 17.)[5]

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1. cf. note 3,page 25,and note 4,page 28.

2. The Corsair was begun on the 18th and finished on the 31st of December,1813.

3. In a letter to Thos. Moore,June 8,1822,Byron says,"(Lara) which you know,was written amidst balls and fooleries,and after coming home from routs and masquerades,in the summer of the sovereigns." Letters and Journals vol. VI, p. 81.

4. Of the passage of which these are the opening lines,Byron says in a footnote(Coleridge's 1905 ed. p. 312.),"They were written on the spot in the Spring of 1811." The quotation from Geo. Ellis, p. 16,in some measure describes the vividness of Byron's painting.

5. This is a description of the departure of Conrad's boat. Byron adds this footnote,(Coleridge's 1905 ed. p. 304); "By night,particularly in a warm latitude,every stroke of the oar,every motion of the boat or ship,is followed by a slight flash like sheet lightning from the water."

Galt's comment is peculiarly applicable at this point: "To the safe and shop-resorting inhabitants of Christendom, The Corsair seems to present many improbabilities; nevertheless it is true to nature, and in every part of the Levant the traveller meets with individuals whose air and physiognomy remind him of Conrad. The incidents of the story, also, so wild and extravagant to the snug and legal notions of England, are not more in keeping with the character, than they are in accordance with fact and reality. * * It is a work which could only have been written by one who had himself seen or heard on the spot of transactions similar to those he has described." [1]

Byron had indeed drawn his Eastern characters with remarkable fidelity. Jeffrey remarked, "Lord Byron has made fine use of the gentleness and submission of the females of these regions, as contrasted with the lordly pride and martial ferocity of the men: there is something so true to female nature in general, in his representations of this sort, and so much of the oriental softness and acquiescence in his particular delineations, that it is scarcely possible to refuse the picture the praise of being characteristic and harmonius, as well as eminently sweet and beautiful in itself. * * * There is something grand and imposing in the unbroken stateliness, courage and heroic bigotry of a Turk of the higher order." [2]

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1. Galt's Life of Byron 1830 edition, p. 200.

2. Edinburgh Review vol. 23, p. 205, 1814. Jeffrey's reputation as a critic needs no comment. Of course he is making reference to The Corsair and his remarks are applicable to Lara as well.

In Medora and Gulnare[1] we are given some idea of the fidelity and fierceness of Eastern love and passion. Medora dies because she thinks Conrad dead; to save him, Gulnare murders her lord, Seyd. We may not altogether approve of Gulnare, the murderess in The Corsair; we feel the deepest sympathy with Gulnare as Kaled the page, in Lara. Lord Byron is intensely human in dealing with these characters. Nor does he lose any of his vivid fidelity in dealing with Seyd. Listen to the malicious ingenuity of the Turk boasting to Gulnare of his intended revenge:

> And thirsting for revenge, I ponder still
> On pangs that longest rack, and latest kill. [3]

Lara, "the man of mystery," is Conrad unexpectedly returned from his travels, and in the two characters, or rather in two sides of the same character, there is some analogy to Lord Byron abroad and returned. [4] The name Lara is Spanish and Byron ascribes the poem to no particular person or age. The Oriental effect is maintained in the characterization of Lara and Kaled. By constant little touches Byron draws in Kaled a picture of Eastern devotion that reaches its height in the death of Lara. [5]

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1. Gulnare, a female slave, means literally the flower of the pomegranate. The name smacks of the East.

2. Speaking of Conrad and Medora, Jeffrey says, "We do not know of anything in poetry more beautiful or touching than this picture of their parting." Corsair canto II, stanza 15. Ed. Rev. 1814.

3. See the last ten lines of stanza 5, Canto III, of The Corsair.

4. Byron's contemporaries persisted--and with some justice--in reading much of Byron's life into these two poems. cf. page 25, note 3.

5. Lara Canto III, stanzas 19, 20, 21.

We have noticed in The Giaour and The Bride of Abydos Byron's indebtedness both to Oriental literature and to his own knowledge of the East. In The Corsair and in Lara the predominating impression is that of the author's first-hand knowledge. The Siege of Corinth, on the contrary, is founded upon an historical occurrence,[1] and throughout the poem we are constantly finding evidence of studious composition. Byron took more time than usual to write it (July, 1815 to Jan., 1816.) and naturally had more time for reading than in the case of The Corsair and Lara.[2] We shall forbear commenting upon the usual Orientalism of the poem and shall notice only some examples of Byron's indebtedness to literature.

Aside from the general historical setting of the story, of particular interest to us is Byron's recurrence to Vathek. Of the following

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1. The Siege of Corinth was dedicated to Hobhouse. It was prefaced by the following advertisement (Cambridge edition p.384): "'The grand army of the Turks (in 1715) under the Prime Vizier, to open to themselves a way into the heart of the Morea, and to form the siege of Napoli di Romania, the most considerable place in all that country, thought it best in the first place to attack Corinth, upon which they made several storms. The garrison being weakened, and the governor seeing it was impossible to hold out such a place against so mighty a force, thought it fit to beat a parley: but while they were treating about the articles, one of the magazines in the Turkish camp, wherein they had six hundred barrels of powder, blew up by accident, whereby six or seven hundred men were killed; which so enraged the infidels, that they would not grant any capitulation, but stormed the place with so much fury, that they took it, and put most of the garrison, with Signior Minotti, the governor, to the sword. The rest, with Signior or Antonio Bembo, Proveditor Extraordinary, were made prisoners of war.' A Compleat History of the Turks (London 1719) iii. 151."

2. See page 26, note 3.

passage,Byron says, "I have been told that the idea expressed in this and the following lines has been admired by those whose admiration is valuable. I am glad of it:but it is not original--at least not mine; it may be found much better expressed in pages 182-3-4 of the English version of Vathek,a work to which I have before referred;and never recur to,or read,without a renewal of gratification."[1] The passage is,

> There is a light cloud by the moon--
> 'Tis passing,and will pass full soon--
> If,by the time its vapoury sail
> Hath ceased her shaded orb to veil,
> Thy hear within thee is not changed,
> Then God and man are both avenged;
> Dark will thy doom be,darker still
> Thine immortality of ill.
>
> Alp looked to heaven,and saw on high
> The sign she spake of in the sky;
> But his heart was swollen,and turned aside
> By deep interminable pride.
> * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *
> No--though that cloud were thunder's worst,
> And charged to crush him--let it burst.
> (Siege of Corinth lines 643-662.)

The idea is indeed drawn from Vathek [2] as those who are familiar with

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1. Byron's note on line 643. Cambridge edition p. 1025.

2. The passage Byron refers to begins on page 111 of the English version of Vathek published by W. Clowes and Sons,London:"'Deluded Prince! to whom Providence has confided the care of innumerable subjects,is it thus that thou fulfillest thy mission?Thy crimes are already completed;and art thou now hastening toward thy punishment?Thou knowest that,beyond these mountains,Eblis and his accursed dives hold their infernal empire;and,seduced by a malignant phantom,thou art proceeding to surrender thyself to them! This moment is the last of grace allowed thee: * * * * * * * * * Thou beholdest the clouds that obscure the sunset:at the instant he recovers his splendour,if thy heart be not changed,the time of mercy assigned thee will be past for ever.'
Vathek,depressed with fear,was on the point of prostrating himself at the feet of the shepherd,whom he perceived to be of nature superior to man;but his pride prevailing,he audaciously lifted his head,and,glancing at him one of his terrible looks,said,'Whoever thou art,withhold thy useless admonitions:thou wouldst either delude me,or art thyself deceived. * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * Let the sun appear! let him illume my career! it matters not where it may end.'"

the production of Beckford will note. The poem abounds with historical references which Byron explained in copious notes. The twelve lines beginning with Sent that soft and tender moan,[1] Byron acknowledges to be a close though unintentional imitation of certain lines in Coleridge's Christabel.[2] Byron always detested anything that savored of plagiarism. He once threw a whole poem in the fire because Medwin had suggested that two lines were taken outright from Southey.[3]

Parisina was the last publication of Byron (February 1816) before he left England. Like The Siege of Corinth it was founded upon historical circumstances.[4] In the original edition there was a translation by Byron of the passage from Frizzi's History of Ferrara from which the details of the story are taken. Parisina was the last of the Oriental tales and in the main attracts through the beauty of the poetry.[5]

1. Lines 522-534 of Siege of Corinth.

2. The following are the lines from Christabel:

> The night is chill, the forest bare,
> Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
> There is not wind enough in the air
> To move away the ringlet curl
> From the lovely lady's cheek--
> There is not wind enough to twirl
> The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
> That dances as often as dance it can,
> Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
> On the topmost twig that looks at the sky.

3. See Medwin's Conversations page 194.

4. "The following poem is founded upon circumstances mentioned in Gibbon's Antiquities of the House of Brunswick." Advertisement to Parisina, Cambridge ed. p.396. See Letters and Journals vol.III:261.

5. "In Parisina there is no tumult or stir. It is all sadness, and pity, and terror. There is too much of horror, perhaps, in the circumstances; but the writing is beautiful throughout, and the whole wrapped in a rich and redundant veil of poetry, where everything breathes the pure essence of genius and sensibility." Jeffrey in Edinburgh Review.

That Byron was greatly impressed by Eastern countries is evidenced between 1812 and 1816 by more than his Oriental poetry. As early as December,1811,we find him writing to Hodgson,"I have many plans;sometimes I think of the East again."[1] This intention to revisit the East he constantly reiterated in his letters. Writing again to Hodgson in February,1812,he says,"In the Spring of 1813 I shall leave England forever.Everything in my affairs tends to this,and my inclination and health do not discourage it. Neither my habits or my constitution are improved by your customs or your climate. I shall find employment in making myself a good Oriental scholar. I shall retain a mansion in one of the fairest islands,and retrace,at intervals,the most interesting portions of the East. In the meantime I am adjusting my concerns, which leave me with wealth sufficient even for home,but enough for a principality in Turkey."[2] In December of the same year he wrote Bankes that he intended going to Turkey in the spring,[3] and in the following February he stated his intentions more forcibly to Hanson.[4] During this same year (1813) we find numerous emphatic declarations of the same purpose.[5] In one of these letters(To Thos. Moore II:231) he

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1. Letters and Journals vol. II. p. 85.

2. Letters and Journals vol. II. p. 100.

3. Bankes was a close friend. Letters and Journals vol. II. p. 184.

4. Letters and Journals vol. II. p. 193. See page 9,note 3.

5. Byron also speaks of returning East in the following letters: Charles Hanson II:194;Augusta Leigh II:197;John Hanson,"I shall sail before the 20th of May," II:200;Thos. Moore II:229 and 231.

speaks jestingly about dying in Smyrna,Malta,or Palmero,"--one can die anywhere." [1]

Such statements as these mean more than a mere passing fancy for Eastern countries and for Eastern life. Certainly upon his return England had turned toward the young poet her most attractive side. He was successful in life,in politics,in society,and in the poetical world. His maiden effort in the House of Lords received most favorable comment.[2] Indeed the most severe criticism his speeches received was that they were too Asiatic.[3] No drawing room was complete without Byron or a copy of Byron's latest. His reviewers were now as enthusiastic in his praise as they had once been bitter in his censure.[4] Wordsworth [redacted] and Coleridge,deservedly or not,were forced into the background."Public enthusiasm for once enlightened,carried even stolid conservatism away from the cold,classical elegance of Rogers and Campbell to the fitful splendours of the young champion of a new romantic era."[4]

It might perhaps enliven our pages if we should follow Byron through those mad years of revelry and high life.It would be quite as interesting and quite as unprofitable to take issue on the "Beecher Stowe scandal." It is sufficient for our purpose to merely mention the fact

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1. These words now seem to us a rather significant omen.

2. See Elze's Life of Lord Byron pp. 122-123.

3. We find this comment in vol.III,p.73 , English Men of Letters, Byron,by John Nichol.

4. For this quotation and for contemporary critical estimate of Byron see Roden Noel's Life pp. 83-86. Murray says,(p. 86) "This morning I looked over my ledger,and I find that 75,000 pounds has passed over that counter from Lord Byron's pen alone." This indicates that the public at least were interested in Byron's Oriental poetry.

of his marriage.[1] That he was idolized,married,separated,exiled by public sentiment,in the brief space of four years is now a matter of history. We are concerned with his Oriental tendencies. In our first chapter we showed that circumstances and inclination rendered him highly susceptible to the Eastern charm. Thus far in our second chapter we have been principally concerned with discussion of his admiration for the "Clime of the East" as he expressed it in his Oriental Tales. As we have indicated,Byron expressed this admiration in other forms than poetry. He wanted to get back. The significant thing to us is that at the tide and at the ebb of his popularity Byron was anxious to return to "the land of the Sun." We risk tediousness in reiteration because it is remarkably significant that this man throughout his entire life continued in this admiration,formed in childhood and confirmed by actual experience.

In September,1813,Byron wrote Murray requesting a passage to the East.[2] Two months later we find him saying,"My hopes are limited to the arrangement of my affairs,and settling either in Italy or the East (Rather the East) and drinking deep of the language and literature of both." It is likely,however,that the success of his poems,particularly The Corsair,[3] and his own popularity,induced him to tarry in England as long as he did. The desire to travel continued to possess him. In September 1814,he declared to Thomas Moore that he would

1. Byron married Anna Isabella Milbanke Jan. 2,1815.The marriage was more the result of a conventional than an ardent courtship. For a time the couple were apparently happy. By the following year,however,shortly after the birth of their daughter,Augusta Ada,(Dec. 10,1815),Lady Byron left her husband.We shall refrain from taking sides as to her justice in so doing. The separation came as a great blow to Byron and no doubt hastened his departure from England.

2. Murray was his publisher. See Letters and Journals vol.II.p. 265.
3. For Byron's comment on the success of The Corsair see Letters and Journals vol. III.p.21. Also see page 25 of this discussion.

be out of England within the month."[1]

It is not surprising that he did not at once carry out these intentions;it is surprising that at this time he should be thinking at all of leaving England.He was busy writing poetry and receiving homage. During the Autumn of 1814 and the Spring of 1815 Byron wrote the Hebrew Melodies.[2] For the most part they are based on themes taken from the Old Testament. Needless to say they describe and reflect Eastern scenes and imagery almost as vividly and tenderly as the Bible itself. It is not possible at this time to consider these beautiful little songs in detail;we shall simply cite a stanza from one:--

> On Jordan's banks the Arab's camels stray,
> On Sion's hill the False One's votaries pray,
> The Baal-adorer bows on Sinai's steep--
> Yet there--even there--Oh God!thy thunders sleep.
> (First stanza of On Jordan's Banks.)

During this year,1815,he was married and wrote The Siege of Corinth and Parisina. It was possibly the happiest year of his life. It is sad to think how soon this brilliant bubble was to burst.

It is perhaps not amiss at this time to call attention briefly,but specifically,to some of the Oriental reading Byron had done during this period. As we might expect,he read eagerly everything he could

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1. Letters and Journals vol. III. p. 134.

2. In April 1815 the Hebrew Melodies were published "with appropriate symphonies and accompaniments by I. Braham and I. Nathan." The following are some of the titles: She walks in Beauty;The Harp the the Monarch Minstrel Swept;If That High World;On Jordan's Banks; Jeptha's Daughter;My Soul is Dark;Song of Saul before his Last Battle;Vision of Belshazzar;The Destruction of Sennacherib,etc.
   In stanza II of A Spirit Passed Before Me (Coleridge 1905 ed. p. 347) occurs the line,"Creatures of Clay--vain dwellers in the dust." It is not unlikely that Byron drew this from Vathek (English ed. 1815,p. 195)where Vathek and Nouronihar are thus addressed by Eblis, "Creatures of Clay,I receive you into my empire."

find relating to the East. In 1811 we find him reading Tasso's Gerusalemme Liberata.[1] Many years later in Don Juan (Canto I,Stanza 71) he refers to this work:

> But ne'er magicians wand
> Wrought change with all Armida's fairy art
> Like what this light touch left on Juan's heart. [2]

He also read Southey's Oriental poetry about this time and of course had something to say: "I should think X plus Y at least as amusing as The Curse of Kehama,and much more intelligible."[3] Galt's Voyages and Travels was published in 1812 and naturally came under his notice.[4] Prof. E.D. Clarke's Travels in Various Countries of Europe,Asia,and Africa,received high praise from Byron at this time.[5] In the same year he also read two works on Turkey;Castellan's Memoirs,Usages,and Customs of the Turks,[6] and Toderini's Della Litteratura Turchesca.[7] It is surprising how voraciously he seized upon everything pertaining to

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1. Letters and Journals vol. II. p. 49.

2. Armida is the sorceress in Gerusalemme Liberata.

3. Letter to William Harness Dec. 6,1811. Letters and Journals vol. II. p. 74. cf. page 31,note 3 of this discussion.

4. Byron says, "Truth to say the book is the book of a cock-brained man."Letter to F. Hodgson,Feb. 21,1812. L. and J. vol. II. p.101.

5. This work was completed between 1810 and 1823. Byron probably saw some of the earlier chapters. L. and J. vol. II. p. 129.

6. Published in Paris in 1812. Byron refers to the book in Letters and Journals vol. II. pp. 256-262.

7. G.B. Toderini (1728-1799) had published this work at Venice in 1787. Byron refers to it in his Letters and Journals vol. II. pp. 256-262.

the Orient. Even in England, Byron was less English than Oriental. It is difficult to imagine an Englishman saying, "Give me a sun, I care not how hot, and sherbet, I care not how cold, and my heaven is as easily made as your Persian's."[1] Late in 1813 he read Chardin's Voyage in Perse[2] and Sismondi's De la litterature du Midi.[3] J.H. Reynolds published Safie, an Eastern Tale in 1814 and presented Byron with a copy. Byron returned a grateful letter of acknowledgement.[4] In a letter of April 28, 1814, he speaks of reading the Dictionaire Historique et Critique.[5] In July of the same year he refers to Sir John Malcolm's History of Persia.[6]

Byron not only wrote Oriental poetry but he also in a way became the authority on Oriental literature. Reynold's had sought his approval of his Safie [4] in 1814; in 1815 Hogg dedicated his Pilgrims of the Sun to Byron.[7] In June, 1815, the Feast of the Poets was published. By-

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1. Letter to Thos. Moore, Aug. 22, 1813. L. and J. vol. II. p. 250.
   "A Persian's heaven is easily made--
   'Tis but black eyes and lemonade."
2. Letters and Journals vol. II. p. 403. Published in 1811.
3. Letters and Journals vol. II. p. 403. Published at Paris in 1813.
4. Letter dated Feb. 20, 1814. L. and J. vol. III. pp. 45, 52.
5. Letters and Journals vol. III. p. 73. This work was written by Pierre Bayle (1647-1706) and was published in 1697.
6. Letters and Journals vol. III. p. 113.
7. Letters and Journals vol. III. p. 270.

ron is thus admitted to the feast:

"And each of the lords had a wreath in his hair,
Lord Byron's with Turk's cap and cypress was mixed." [1]

If an anonymous bit of Oriental literature was published, its authorship was generally ascribed to Byron.[2] He succeeded in surrounding himself with a decided Oriental atmosphere, the glamour and romance of which was rudely dispelled in 1816.

On the 25th of April, 1816, Byron departed for Switzerland. His domestic troubles had turned the English public against him and hostile sentiment forced him into exile. Speaking of the reports circulated about him, Byron remarked in 1819, "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. I withdrew."[3] "The fashionable world was tired of its spoilt child, and he of it. Hunted out of the country, bankrupt in purse and heart, he left it, never to return; but he left it to find fresh inspiration by the 'rushing of the Arrowy Rhone,' and under Italian skies to write the works which have immortalized his name."[4]

The period 1816 to 1823 is extremely important in the life of Byron. During this time he produced the works that have placed him among the first of great English poets. We shall forbear attempting to enter

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1. Letters and Journals vol. III. p. 200, note.

2. Letters and Journals vol. II. p. 288. Byron was accused of being the author of Nourjahad. A Pilgrimage to the Holy Land was also attributed to Byron. Letters and Journals vol. IV. p. 90.

3. See letters for August, 1819.

4. John Nichol's Byron in English Men of Letters vol. III. p. 99.

too minutely into the details of those seven years. Most of this interval was spent in Italy, which like the East offered a warm and glowing contrast to cold and sullen England. It is not unlikely that Byron would have started for the East before he did (July 14, 1823) had it not been for his attachment for the Countess Guiccioli.[1] Whatever may have been the impropriety of their relations, Byron has never been accused of faithlessness toward her. We shall make a rapid sketch of the poet's life during this period and note some of the more apparent Orientalisms in the poetry he produced.

Byron spent the summer at Villa Diodati on the banks of Lake Geneva in company with the Shelleys and Miss Clairmont.[2] The Shelleys left for England in September, but the friendship formed continued over the remaining years of the two poets' lives. In October he set out with Hobhouse for Italy, and in November he was settled in Venice. Since his departure from England he had written The Prisoner of Chillon, The Dream, the first two acts of Manfred, the third canto of Childe Harold, and numerous minor poems.[3] At Venice he formed a number of questionable alliances. The first of his temporary idols was Mariana Segati, whom he

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1. The attachment of Byron and Theresa Guiccioli began in April, 1819, and continued until his death. So much has been written about their intimacy that it is unnecessary to more than mention it here.

2. The half-sister of Shelley's wife. Allegra, daughter of Miss Clairmont and Lord Byron was born at Great Marlow in February, 1817, and died of fever April 22, 1822.

3. The Prisoner of Chillon was written at Ouchy, near Lusanne, at the end of June, and published with The Dream Dec. 5, 1816. Acts I. and II. of Manfred were written in Switzerland, Sept. 17-29, 1816. Act III. was written at Venice April, 1817. The poem complete was published in June, 1817. The third canto of Childe Harold was finished June 27, 1816 at Lusanne. Byron had also written Churchill's Grave, Sonnet to Lake Leman, Stanzas to Augusta, Monody on the Death of Sheridan, Epistle to Augusta, and numerous other shorter poems.

describes an an "antelope with Oriental eyes."[1] It is only fair to say that Byron dropped this class of acquaintances after meeting Madame Guiccioli in 1819.

Byron made his home at Venice until the beginning of 1821 when he moved to Ravenna. Needless to say the Countess Guiccioli also went to Ravenna. In the meantime he had written the fourth canto of Childe Harold, The Lament of Tasso, Beppo, Mazeppa, The Prophecy of Dante,[2] and the first four cantos of Don Juan. Byron stayed at Ravenna until November, 1821, when he moved to Pisa. His intimacy with Madame Guiccioli and her family, and his participation in Italian politics, kept him on the move, and in September, 1822, he went to Genoa, where he spent the remaining months of his Italian life.

The period from 1820 to 1823 is marked by his intense literary activity. His translation of the first canto of Pulci's Morgante Maggiore was finished at Ravenna in February, 1820. By Jan. 20, 1822, he had written Francesca of Rimini, Marino Faliero, The Vision of Judgment, The Blues, Sardanapalus,[3] The Two Foscari, Cain, Heaven and Earth, and Werner. Cantos VI-XI of Don Juan were written at Pisa in 1822 and cantos XII-XVI at Genoa in 1823. The Deformed Transformed was written at Pisa in the summer of 1822 and by February 20, 1823, Byron had also completed The Age of Bronze and The Island. It is unnecessary to mention numer-

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1. Letter to Thos. Moore, Nov. 17, 1816. L. and J. vol. IV. p. 8: "Mariana is in her appearance altogether like an antelope. She has the large, black, Oriental eyes, with that peculiar expression in them which is seen rarely among Europeans, and which many of the Turkish women give themselves by tinging the eyelid." Cf. lines descriptive of Leila, page 19.

2. The Prophecy of Dante was written during the month of June, 1819, "to gratify the Countess Guiccioli." Coleridge 1905 ed. p. 442, note 1.

3. In Sardanapalus Byron again reverts to the East.

ous minor poems he had produced during this time.

In this brief sketch of Byron between 1816 and 1823 we have noticed in particular his unusual literary activity. We have refrained from following his career as a revolutionist, philanthropist, as a man of many dissipations, as a friend and intimate of Shelley, and as the accepted lover of an Italian married lady. The story has often been told, as has the upshot of it all,--the upshot indeed of his whole life--his death in Greece. Before drawing the curtain over this last sad but glorious chapter of his life, however, we shall note a few instances in his later poetry of his continued admiration for the East and for Oriental literature.

Manfred was written amid the mountains of Switzerland, yet in Act II, scene 4, we have almost a transcription of a similar scene in Vathek.[1] The scene opens with a description of "The Hall of Arimanes---Arimanes on his Throne, a Globe of Fire, surrounded by the Spirits."[2] A contemporary review remarks thus upon this scene: "Now the whole of this idea is taken almost word for word from a very silly and disgusting tale, entitled Vathek, which for various reasons we have omitted to notice: and in the windows of more shops than one in Bond-street, our readers may see displayed a gorgeous engraving of this aforesaid monarch upon his throne, this globe of fire, and these attendant spirits; with which display we advise them to be contented; nor as they value their equanimity and good temper, to attempt the purchase,

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1. Vathek p. 194. London edition, 1815.

2. Arimanes, the spirit of evil, is the Aherman of Vathek.

3. British Critic, 1817, page 43.

much less the perusal of the tale."

Byron never ceased to be interested in books about the East. Aug. 31,1820,he speaks of reading a new Life of Mahomet;[1] "The true nature of imposture is fully displayed in this life of Mahomet." In his letters of 1821 he refers often to Mitford's History of Greece[2] which he consulted while writing Sardanapalus. Byron's notes on this drama indicate that he was in frequent consultation with various historical works during its composition.[3] In August,1821,he read A Narrative of a Ten Years' Residence in Tripoli,[4] and A Narrative of Egypt and Nubia.[5] He had previously read all of Henry Gally Knight's Eastern Tales,but found little to commend in them. Byron himself makes a sig-

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1. Life of Mahomet by Humphrey Prideau. L. and J. vol. V. p. 67.

2. Letters and Journals. vol. V. pp. 152,155,160.

3. In his preface to Sardanapalus Byron says,"For the historical setting of the following composition the reader is referred to the Notes."Coleridge's 1905 ed. p. 531. In a letter to Murray,July 9, 1821,Byron says,"I trust that Sardanapalus will not be mistaken for a political play,which was so far from my intentions,that I thought of nothing but Asiatic history." L. And J. vol.V.p. 323.

4. By Richard Tully,published in 1816. In a letter to Thos. Moore, August 23,1821,Byron says, "By the way,much of the description of the furniture,in canto 3rd (Of Don Juan) is taken from Tully's Tripoli." L. and J. vol. V.p. 346. See page 45.

5. By G.B. Belzoni,(1778-1823)published in 1820. L. and J. vol. V, p. 245.

6. For reference to H.G. Knight's Ilderim,a Syrian Tale see L. and J, II:299;Phrosyne,A Grecian Tale,and Alashtar,an Arabian Tale IV: 164.

nificant remark about his reading:"I have read his works (D'Israelli) oftener than perhaps those of any English author,except such as treat of Turkey."[1]

In The Deformed Transformed we find another example of Byron's indebtedness to Vathek. In the following passage,Byron is undoubtedly thinking of the wretches doomed by Eblis:[2]

> Fire'without which nought can live:
> Fire'but in which nought can live,
> Save the fabled salamander,
> Or immortal souls,which wander,
> Praying what doth not forgive,
> Howling for a drop of water,
> Burning in a quenchless lot etc.
> (Lines 459-465 Part. I. Deform. Transf.)

likewise in The Two Foscari:

> Now the rich man's hell-fire upon your tongue,
> Unquenched,unquenchable.
> (Act V,scene I,lines 156-7.)[3]

Again in Don Juan,Vathek makes its appearance:

> "I'm sure I see
> A phantom upon each of the four posts:
> And then I have the worst dreams that can be,
> Of Guebres,Giaours,and Ginns,and Gouls in hosts."[3]
> (Canto IV,stanza 48.)

Cain is based to a great extent upon the Biblical account.Naturally, as the Hebrew Melodies,it required an Eastern setting.

In cantos II,III,IV,and V,Byron again takes us Eastward.What the poet had read,seen,or heard,of the Orient he here reproduces in unequalled manner. In the first flush of poetical success and in the calm

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1. Letters and Journals vol. IV. p. 360.

2. See page 31 of this discussion and note.

3. Guebres,Giaours,Ginns,and Gouls,are common terms in Vathek. Goules is explained in note p. 304,Vathek:Afrits p. 90;Ginns p. 218. (London Edition,1815.)

complacency of acknowledged mastership,Byron found happy inspiration in the Orient. Don Juan is now so well known that reference to its Oriental characteristics is superfluous. It is undoubtedly the best specimen of Byron's poetic genius. In it he unites the glowing,gorgeous characteristics of his Oriental tales with the polished perfection of poetic skill. By the English public it was condemned for its immorality and read notwithstanding;people were shocked but equally interested. A stanza like the following compels admiration:

> Afric is all the Sun's,and as her earth
> Her human clay is kindled;full of power
> For good or evil,burning from its birth,
> The Moorish blood partakes the planet's hour,
> And like the soil beneath it will bring forth:
> Beauty and love were Haidee's mother's dower;
> But her large dark eye showed deep Passion's force,
> Though sleeping like a lion near a source.
> (Canto IV,stanza 56.)

or this.

> Soft hour'which wakes the wish and melts the heart
> Of those who sail the seas,on the first day
> When they from their sweet friends are torn apart;
> Or fills with love the pilgrim on his way
> As the far bell of vesper makes him start,
> Seeming to weep the dying day's decay;[1]
> Is this a fancy which our reason scorns?
> Ah' surely Nothing dies but Something mourns'
> (Canto IV,stanza 108.)

We shall suggest Byron's vividness in depicting Oriental scenes by two stanzas.In the first we feel that Byron has actually seen what he describes;in the second we realize his ability to make what he has [redacted] read about appear almost as vivid.

> A crowd of shivering slaves of every nation,
> And age,and sex,were in the market ranged;
> Each bevy with the merchant in his station:
> Poor creatures!their good looks were sadly changed.

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1. An unacknowledged line from Gray's Elegy.

All save the blacks seemed jaded with vexation,
From friends,and home,and freedom far estranged:
The negroes more philosophy displayed,--
Used to it,no doubt,as eels are to be flayed.
(Slave market at Constantinople. Canto V,stanza 7.)

and

Crystal and marble,plate and porcelain,
Had done their work of splendour;Indian mats
And Persian carpets,which the heart bled to stain,
Over the floors were spread;gazelles and cats,
And dwarfs and blacks,and such like things,that gain
Their bread as ministers and favourites (that's
To say,by degradation)mingled there
As plentiful as in a court,or fair.

There was no want of lofty mirrors,and
The tables most of ebony inlaid
With mother of pearl or ivory,stood at hand,
Or were of tortoise-shell or rare woods made,
Fretted with gold or silver:--by command
The greater part of these were ready spread
With viands and sherbets in ice--and wine--
Kept for all comers at all hours to dine. [1]
(Canto III,stanzas 58,59.)

To trace Byron's Orientalism to any greater extent in Don Juan is needless;the poem is sufficient evidence in itself.

In connection with this discussion we are naturally confronted with the query,Why did Byron not return to the East before 1823? Why,admiring the Orient as he did,did he spend almost the last six years of his life in Italy? The answer lies in his attachment for the Countess Guiccioli and his desire to aid the Italian revolutionists. This same sympathy for struggling liberty eventually did take him to his

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1. Passage based upon a similar description in Tully's Tripoli. See page 42,note 4.

death in Greece. In regard to going back to the East,Byron writes in 1823, "Nothing but the hopes I entertained of witnessing the liberation of Italy itself prevented me from long ago returning."[1] Two years before,in a letter to Samuel Rogers,he showed his attachment for Madame Guiccioli and in a pithy sentence,"Where they go I accompany them (The Guiccioli and relatives),"[2] we are told in a nutshell why he remained in Italy. Moreover,as we have indicated,he wrote a great deal of poetry during this time;undoubtedly the greater facility of Italy as compared with Turkey for the publication of his works made him hesitate to go farther from England. It is sufficient for us to note that he continued to express his admiration of Turkey and the Turks,even when he was in arms against them.

In a letter to Thos. Moore,April 11,1817,Byron says, "I shan't go to Naples. It is but the second-best seaview,and I have seen the first and third,viz. Constantinople and Lisbon."[3] In March,1818,he writes interestingly of a recent visit of Samuel Rogers with Beckford at Fonthill; "Your account of your visit to F(onthill) is very striking;could you beg of him for me a copy in MS. of the remaining Tales?"[4] His admiration for Turkey was equalled by his detestation of England; "Judge of my detestation of England and all that it inherits,when I

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1. Letter to Edward Blaquiere April,1823. Letters and Journals vol. VI. p. 185.

2. Written at Ravenna,Oct. 21,1821. Letters and Journals Vol. V. p. 345.

3. Letters and Journals vol. IV. p. 101.

4. Through Vathek Byron became an ardent admirer of Beckford. Letters and Journals vol. IV. p. 206.

avoid returning to your country at a time when not only my pecuniary interests,but,it may be,even my personal security,require it."[1] Again a little later: "The Noel affairs,I hope,will not take me to England. I have no desire to revisit that country."[2]

While at Ravenna,Byron made this significant remark in a letter to Moore: "We were divided in choice between Switzerland and Tuscany,and I gave my vote for Pisa,as nearer the Mediterranean,which I love for the sake of the shores which it washes,and for my young recollections of 1809."[3] We have previously made reference (p. 13) to the fidelity and vividness in 1821 of these "young recollections of 1809." This is in accordance with the sentiment he expressed to a close friend: "Switzerland is a country I have been satisfied with seeing once;Turkey I could live in forever."[4]

In 1821,also,we note Byron's first reference to the Greek revolution: "If the papers lie not,Demetrius Zograffo of Athens is at the head of the Athenian part of the present Greek insurrection. He was my servant in 1809,1810,1811,1812,at different intervals in those years."[5] Different motives have been assigned for his joining the Greek cause in 1823,but no one can question his unselfishness and self-sacrifice in the Greek service. In a more extended discussion

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1. Letter to Lady Byron,Ravenna,Mar. 1,1821. L. and J. vol.V.p. 383.
2. To John Murray,Mar. 15,1822. Letters and Journals vol. VI. p.41.
3. Letter to Thos. Moore. Letters and Journals vol. V. p. 364.
4. The friend was Medwin. See Conversations p. 285.
5. Detached Thoughts,1821. Letters and Journals vol. V. p. 424. Byron seems to have had a personal interest in the revolution.

it may be our privilege to devote a chapter to that last eventful year.For the present a few lines must suffice.

Although fighting against the Turks it is worth noting that Byron admired and respected them to the last more than he did his Greek compatriots. He distrusted the Greek character;"Of the Greeks,I can't say much good hitherto,and I do not like to speak ill of them,though they do of one another."[1] And indeed their dissensions,and selfishness toward him did little to alter this opinion. He aided them because he thought thir cause just. He continued to respect and admire the Turks. Through his efforts many Turkish prisoners were restored to their homes.[2] It was unusual for anything like that to happen in a war of that kind.In February,1823,he wrote a very appealing letter to his half-sister,Augusta Leigh,asking her to care for a little Turkish girl,who had been taken prisoner.[3]

Throughout this discussion we have repeatedly called attention to Byron's lifelong admiration of Vathek. He read it,absorbed it,and remodeled it into poetry. In 1823 he wrote a letter home from the East.The letter requests a favor from a friend. We leave it to the reader to grasp the suggestion in his words: "Also preserve me a copy of the Caliph Vathek,and Rome,Naples,and Florence in 1817, and

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1. Journal,Oct. 1823. Letters and Journals vol. VI. p. 276.
2. Letters and Journals vol. VI. pp. 312 and 325.
3. This letter was written February 23,1824. See Letters and Journals vol. VI. p. 330.

the two prints of my daughter Ada."[1]

Byron died at Missolonghi, Greece, on the 19th of April, 1824. The circumstances of his death have done much to remove some of the blame attached to his life. It was a rather happy fatality that he should die in that quarter of the earth he loved so well. It recalls to us his rather prophetic remark, "One can die anywhere."

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1. Letter to Chas. F. Barry, Nov. 11, 1822. L. and J. vol. VI, p. 284.

## Chapter Three.

## BYRON'S ORIENTAL ROMANTICISM.

In discussing Byron's Oriental romanticism there is a wide range of possibilities. It is possible to consider Byron, his Oriental characteristics, and his romanticism, from the point of view of the beginning of the nineteenth century: it is quite as possible and much more appropriate for us to estimate this man and these characteristics as they are significant to the average reader of Byron's poetry today. It is a fact too often overlooked that many of the so-called romantic tendencies of Byron, Wordsworth, Shelley, and others of the same school, have now become extreme conventionalities. To be romantic means to be unconventional: certainly it is not to be denied that conventional romanticism is an almost impossible paradox.

It has proved a difficult task for our most brilliant literary critics to give a satisfactory, comprehensive definition of romanticism. Perhaps Victor Hugo's "Liberalism in Literature" comes as near as any: as a definition, however, it is much more catchy and comprehensive than true and specific. It may be true that all romantic literature is liberal and tolerant; it by no means follows that all liberal and tolerant literature is romantic. Prof Beers's attempt, "Romanticism is a return to the spirit of the Middle Ages," is as much too narrow as Victor Hugo's is too broad. Romanticism can best be defined by stating that it escapes definition.

It is quite true that there are certain tendencies as a love of the

picturesque,a deeper feeling for nature,a spirit of revolution,an aspiring for better things,that in so far as they were opposed to the spirit of the Augustan age,were decidedly romantic in character. With different ages the same characteristics carry a changed significance. Today picturesqueness is so sought after that it has become extremely artificial and hence decidedly non-romantic. Revolt,either in life or literature,is a twentieth century conventionality. A vacation,a cheap excursion,and a "good old country dinner" are now synonomous with the "return to nature" of a hundred years ago. Romanticism,if it implies anything,implies being different:nowadays being different implies being right in style. Terms that were once romantic have now become extremely hackneyed;an "ivory brow" and "raven tresses" are found in all the "penny drealfuls" of the day.Moreover,science by realizing some of the wildest dreams of the romanticists has made these dreams quite commonplace. In recent years we have actually winged our way to the clouds.

Whether a bit of literature may be called romantic is also largely a matter of individual taste. Wordsworth's Peter Bell enabled its author to give full vent to his sympathetic emotion:it interested Byron only in so far as it was to him ridiculous. There are others who will not read it at all. To a philologist a dissertation on Terminations in T might suggest all sorts of romantic possibilities; to an ordinary man it might appear less attractive than a piece of

war-time hardtack. To a great many people Byron appears as the ideal type of romanticist;in Prof. Beers's History of Romanticism Byron is comparatively disregarded. Some students of literature might find great pleasure in labeling and classifying the romantic characteristics in Byron's Oriental tales;the average reader is content to feel more romantic and less scientific in enjoying these beautiful,fascinating romances.

For us,then,it is pardonable to adopt the point of view of the average modern reader in making a few comments on Byron's Oriental romanticism. Some would say it is proper because it is the point of view of the majority;it is particularly proper for us because it is the point of view of the class to which we belong.Poetry,or literature of any kind,can have no widespread influence when it appeals only to a select few. Mark Twain has done more to mold public thought--and to mold public thought must be the highest aim of literature--than many of our more scholarly writers. Mark Twain's works live and will continue to live because he strikes a responsive,sympathetic chord in a great class of readers;similarly Byron's Oriental tales are still read because they strike a responsive chord in a great class of readers.

A more scholarly criticism would have undoubtedly either here or previously devoted some pages and notes to the form of Byron's Oriental poetry. We must confess,however,that the charm of Byron's poetry has made us entirely forget mechanical details. It was only

upon another's suggestion that we discovered that in the Tales, Chiefly Oriental a form of the rhyming couplet is used, that in Sardanapalus and Cain blank verse is employed, and that in Don Juan Byron adopted the ottava rima of Tasso. These details may have had some significance in showing Byron's poetical development; if so they have undoubtedly received proper analysis. As we indicated in our introduction, we have permitted appreciation to overshadow analytical criticism.

It is safe for us to assume that there are two striking characteristics in Byron's Oriental poetry that now, as heretofore, have aroused within the reader that feeling of escape f[illegible]c that is well described as romantic. The first of these characteristics is simply Orientalism. The more we learn about the "mysterious East," the greater becomes the mystery. The Orient, particularly China and Japan, is unfolding to us day by day, year by year; with increased knowledge, however, we have only increased wonder. No writer has perhaps absorbed more of the Oriental spirit than Lord Byron; certainly few writers have rebreathed that spirit in more charming garb. In these days of automobiles and aeroplanes it is restful, it is delightful, it is romantic to wander with Byron in that

> "Fair clime' where every season smiles
> Benignant o'er those blessed isles."

We have learned, we know the East geographically; the Eastern spirit we

shall likely never understand. It is something irreconcilable to bustling America as it was quite foreign to the England of Byron's time. One hundred years ago Byron's Oriental tales possessed that tritely expressed quality of romanticism,"Strangeness added to beauty:" the progress of a century has only given increased glamour to this strangeness. This one trait of Byron's romanticism time has augumented and will augument;in the future,and even now,we can call these Oriental tales romantic,if for no other reason than that they recall or revive the spirit of a foreign past;a past whose mystery is deepened with greater knowledge. Just as romanticism may lose certain attributes in changing ages,so may it also gain certain romantic qualities through the march of centuries.

We have mentioned Byron's Orientalism as one prominent characteristic of his romanticism;the second no less prominent characteristic is his portrayal of emotional character. It is a characteristic that remains unaffected by the changing standards of countless ages.Since the Creation,the fundamental elements of human nature have remained the same. In the literatures of all ages,of all nations,man has been and is an all absorbing theme. As long as man is man Byron's Oriental tales will find interested readers. In these tales he emphasized the primary passions of men,love,hate,ambition,revenge;the passions that took root in the Garden of Eden and play the ultimate part

in the destinies of men today.

If there are any romantic elements in one's nature,they are called into play by a perusal of these tales. In The Giaour,in The Bride of Abydos,in The Corsair and in Don Juan,we are permitted,nay we are compelled to escape from the materialism of present day ideals. We love,we hate,we experience all the emotions that Byron has so vividly called into life. We forget that Gulnare,Conrad,and Juan,are creations of the poet's genius;or,if we do not forget it,we completely disbelieve it. Mere fancy could scarcely effect such vivid reality; we are convinced that Byron must have experienced or witnessed much of what he has described. Pope's Essay on Man is crisp and chill in its clean-cut philosophy:Byron's delineation of man is invigorating and inspiring in its intense life. Pope appeals to the intellect of man;Byron appeals to the passions.Pope's view of man is scrupulously microscopic;Byron's view of man is ardently comprehensive. We stoop with the Augustan;we soar with the romanticist. As we escape with Byron,we in turn become romanticists. It was in the Orient that the poet found wings for his flight. Because this is true,because Byron owes his awakening to the kindred spirit of the East,we are justified in calling his later poetry Orientally romantic.

It is a matter of conjecture what Byron would have accomplished had

he never visited the East;it is a matter of history that the influence of the East wrought a complete,if unconscious,change in his life and in his poetry. In his Hours of Idleness we find little indication of Childe Harold,The Corsair and Don Juan. Between 1809 and 1811 a new spirit took possession of the man;or more properly speaking the real Byronic spirit was awakened by his Oriental environment. Once awakened,as we have seen,this Oriental spirit never became dormant again. It is most strikingly evident in his Tales,Chiefly Oriental and in Don Juan,but it also permeates all his later poetry.And it is the poetry that he wrote after 1809 that has entitled him to be called a romantic poet. He was called a romanticist then because of many characteristics that have since lost the savor of novelty. He must be called a romantic poet today,as we have suggested,because of his Orientalism and because of his power in portraying emotional character. This power received stimulus and nourishment under an Eastern sky. Thus for much of his permanent romanticism Byron is deeply indebted to the Orient. In short he is an Oriental romanticist.

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* A more or less complete bibliography in card form has already been submitted.This is only intended to indicate some of the sources of this discussion.

II.

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(This magazine and periodical bibliography is far from being complete. Many of the above articles have been read in preparation for this discussion. A great many more have not as yet been investigated but are included as being likely to be of value in a more extended attempt. A more complete and more extended bibliography has been kept in card index.)