

**PERCY BYSSHE
SHELLEY: A
MONOGRAPH**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649669271

Percy Bysshe Shelley: A Monograph by H. S. Salt

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THIS sketch of the chief scenes of Shelley's life has been written with the desire of exhibiting his opinions and actions as they appear to a sympathetic, instead of a hostile or indifferent, observer. Shelley's writings are now held in great and growing esteem by a considerable number of earnest thinkers; yet it so happens that none of his biographers, with the possible exception of Leigh Hunt, have been heartily in accord with his social and moral doctrines, however sincerely they

have admired his character and poetical genius. The inevitable consequence has been that Shelley's story has seldom or never been told in such a manner as to do justice to the real significance of his ethical creed, and the principles by which his conduct was directed.

Assuming that most readers are acquainted with at least the main outline of Shelley's life, I have employed what has been styled the "scenical" method of narration, omitting, as far as possible, the dry details of dates and places, and avoiding the mass of controversial matter with which the whole subject is unfortunately overlaid. Nor have I scrupled, in dealing with the conflicting and never wholly reliable accounts left us by Hogg,

Peacock, Medwin, and Trelawny, to use my own judgment in accepting some statements and rejecting others. "The rule of criticism," says Shelley himself in one of his prose essays, "to be adopted in judging of the life, actions, and words of a man who has acted any conspicuous part in the revolutions of the world, ought not to be narrow. We ought to form a general image of his character and doctrines, and refer to this whole the distinct portions of action and speech by which they are diversified." I have tried to keep this principle in view in the following study of Shelley's life.

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