

**PEACOCK'S MEMOIRS OF  
SHELLEY, WITH SHELLEY'S  
LETTERS TO PEACOCK**

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Peacock's memoirs of Shelley, with Shelley's letters to Peacock by H. F. B. Brett-Smith

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**H. F. B. BRETT-SMITH**

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THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

*From the portrait in the National Portrait Gallery  
by Henry Wallis*

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# PEACOCK'S MEMOIRS OF SHELLEY

WITH  
SHELLEY'S LETTERS TO PEACOCK

EDITED BY  
H. F. B. BRETT-SMITH

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## PREFACE

ALL Peacock's reminiscences of Shelley made their first appearance in the pages of *Fraser's Magazine*. Part I was the first article in the July number of 1858, and was printed as a review of the following volumes:—

*Shelley and his Writings.* By Charles S. Middleton.  
London: Newby, 1856. [An error, repeated  
in Cole's edition, for 1858.]

*Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron.*  
By E. J. Trevelyan. London: Moxon, 1858.

*The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* By Thomas  
Jefferson Hogg. In Four Volumes. Vols. I  
and II. London: Moxon, 1858.

It is to the titles of these works that Peacock refers on page 4. Part II of the *Memoirs* appeared in the January number of 1860, after the publication of the *Shelley Memorials*; the *Supplementary Notice* was added in the March number of 1862; and the seventeen letters, with the introductory note on pp. 93-4, formed the first article in the March number of 1860.



Of these, Shelley's letters have been included in various collections, but the *Memoirs* have been reprinted only once, in the three volume edition of Peacock's works edited in 1875 by Sir Henry Cole. From the sheets of this edition the present text has been prepared, but every word has been collated with the original articles in *Fraser*, and their earliest form has been strictly preserved. Cole's editing was far from satisfactory; he frequently omitted or inserted words, and made other alterations; these errors have been corrected, and Peacock's original punctuation retained except when it is untenable. Occasionally, however, it has been necessary to follow the later version when the earlier is manifestly wrong; Cole, for example, tacitly corrects a mistake in the age of Brown the novelist, which was originally printed as twenty-nine instead of thirty-nine.

The most difficult question has been that of quotations. Peacock very rarely gave a reference (not always correct), and invariably quoted with peculiar inaccuracy. In the present edition, every citation of more than half a dozen words from an English, Greek or Latin author, except in the case of legal documents, has been traced or verified, and the reference supplied. Where Peacock merely altered the punctuation, the reference has been considered

## PREFACE

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sufficient; where he altered the text, the correct version is supplied in a footnote. In the case of quotations in French, Italian, Portuguese and Welsh, I have been content to reproduce the exact words of the *Fraser* text. In justice to Peacock, it must be admitted that many of his sins in reforming his quotations are due to a reluctance to soil his pen with the abominable English of Medwin and Hogg. For the verification of two references which the Bodleian Library did not afford, and the generous sacrifice of time far more valuable than my own, I have to thank Mr. Percy Simpson.

In regard to the letters, my gratitude is due to Mr. H. Buxton Forman, who kindly permitted the text of his monumental edition of Shelley's Prose Works to be used for purposes of revision and amplification. From his high authority I have rarely departed, and never, except in a point of typography or the correction of an obvious misprint, without due acknowledgement. To his edition I am indebted also for a few identifications, and for one essential note, all of which are marked by the initials H. B. F. Notes added by Mary Shelley are subscribed M. S., and I have occasionally given *variae lectiones* from the text of her edition and those of Garnett and Rhys. It was found necessary to distinguish Peacock's

own notes throughout the volume by his initials; note 3 on page 133 has unluckily escaped this process. For all other unsigned notes and references the editor is alone responsible.

The text of the letters is now reproduced as fully as possible: Peacock, editing them in 1860, omitted besides the markedly anti-Christian passages all the more pointed references to Mr. Gisborne, and the names of some persons—Barry Cornwall, for example—who are ungently used. To preserve his *lacunae* would have been needless and annoying, but it is necessary to call attention to his original scrupulosity, and to the note on pp. 201-2.

Letters 1 and 3—those which Middleton pirated—are particularly imperfect. From the sale catalogue of Peacock's library, however, it is possible to supply one interesting passage selected from the third letter by an astute auctioneer:

Lord Byron is an exceedingly interesting person, and as such is it not to be regretted that he is a slave to the vilest and most vulgar prejudices, and as mad as the winds?

The same source yields an explanation of the opening of the twenty-seventh letter, which enclosed 'a letter from a creditor pressing for settlement or threatening outlawry', and an addition to the Gisborne passages of the twenty-eighth: