

**LIFE OF LORD BYRON,
WITH HIS LETTERS
AND JOURNALS. IN
SIX VOLUMES, VOL. II**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649634569

Life of Lord Byron, with His Letters and Journals. In Six Volumes, Vol. II by George Gordon Byron & Thomas Moore

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

GEORGE GORDON BYRON & THOMAS MOORE

**LIFE OF LORD BYRON,
WITH HIS LETTERS
AND JOURNALS. IN
SIX VOLUMES, VOL. II**

L I F E
OF
L O R D B Y R O N :

WITH HIS LETTERS AND JOURNALS.

BY THOMAS MOORE, ESQ.

IN SIX VOLUMES. — VOL. II.

NEW EDITION.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
1854.

PR
4381
A3M7
1854
v. 2

CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

LETTERS AND JOURNALS OF LORD BYRON, WITH NOTICES OF
HIS LIFE, from the Period of his Return from the Con-
tinent, July, 1811, to January, 1814.

1923897

NOTICES

OF THE

LIFE OF LORD BYRON.

HAVING landed the young pilgrim once more in England, it may be worth while, before we accompany him into the scenes that awaited him at home, to consider how far the general character of his mind and disposition may have been affected by the course of travel and adventure, in which he had been, for the last two years, engaged. A life less savouring of poetry and romance than that which he had pursued previously to his departure on his travels, it would be difficult to imagine. In his childhood, it is true, he had been a dweller and wanderer among scenes well calculated, according to the ordinary notion, to implant the first rudiments of poetic feeling. But, though the poet may afterwards feed on the recollection of such scenes, it is more than questionable, as has been already observed, whether he ever has been formed by them. If a childhood, indeed, passed among mountainous scenery were so favourable to the awakening of the imaginative power, both the Welsh, among ourselves,

and the Swiss, abroad, ought to rank much higher on the scale of poetic excellence than they do at present. But, even allowing the picturesqueness of his early haunts to have had some share in giving a direction to the fancy of Byron, the actual operation of this influence, whatever it may have been, ceased with his childhood; and the life which he led afterwards during his school-days at Harrow, was,—as naturally the life of so idle and daring a schoolboy must be,—the very reverse of poetical. For a soldier or an adventurer, the course of training through which he then passed would have been perfect;—his athletic sports, his battles, his love of dangerous enterprise, gave every promise of a spirit fit for the most stormy career. But to the meditative pursuits of poesy, these dispositions seemed, of all others, the least friendly; and, however they might promise to render him, at some future time, a subject for bards, gave, assuredly, but little hope of his shining first among bards himself.

The habits of his life at the university were even still less intellectual and literary. While a school-boy, he had read abundantly and eagerly, though desultorily; but even this discipline of his mind, irregular and undirected as it was, he had, in a great measure, given up, after leaving Harrow; and among the pursuits that occupied his academic hours, those of playing at hazard, sparring, and keeping a bear and bull-dogs, were, if not the most favourite, at least, perhaps, the most innocent. His time in London passed equally unmarked either by mental cultivation or refined amusement. Having

no resources in private society, from his total want of friends and connections, he was left to live loosely about town among the loungers in coffee-houses; and to those who remember what his two favourite haunts, Limmer's and Stevens's, were at that period, it is needless to say that, whatever else may have been the merits of these establishments, they were anything but fit schools for the formation of poetic character.

But however incompatible such a life must have been with those habits of contemplation, by which, and which only, the faculties he had already displayed could be ripened, or those that were still latent could be unfolded, yet, in another point of view, the time now apparently squandered by him, was, in after-days, turned most invaluable to account. By thus initiating him into a knowledge of the varieties of human character, — by giving him an insight into the details of society, in their least artificial form, — in short, by mixing him up, thus early, with the world, its business and its pleasures, his London life but contributed its share in forming that wonderful combination which his mind afterwards exhibited, of the imaginative and the practical — the heroic and the humorous — of the keenest and most dissecting views of real life, with the grandest and most spiritualised conceptions of ideal grandeur.

To the same period, perhaps, another predominant characteristic of his maturer mind and writings may be traced. In this anticipated experience of the world which his early mixture with its crowd gave him, it is but little probable that many of the more

favourable specimens of human kind should have fallen under his notice. On the contrary, it is but too likely that some of the lightest and least estimable of both sexes may have been among the models, on which, at an age when impressions sink deepest, his earliest judgments of human nature were formed. Hence, probably, those contemptuous and debasing views of humanity with which he was so often led to alloy his noblest tributes to the loveliness and majesty of general nature. Hence the contrast that appeared between the fruits of his imagination and of his experience,—between those dreams, full of beauty and kindliness, with which the one teemed at his bidding, and the dark, desolating bitterness that overflowed when he drew from the other.

Unpromising, however, as was his youth of the high destiny that awaited him, there was one un-failing characteristic of the imaginative order of minds — his love of solitude — which very early gave signs of those habits of self-study and introspection by which alone the “diamond quarries” of genius are worked and brought to light. When but a boy, at Harrow, he had shown this disposition strongly,—being often known, as I have already mentioned, to withdraw himself from his playmates, and sitting alone upon a tomb in the churchyard, give himself up, for hours, to thought. As his mind began to disclose its resources, this feeling grew upon him; and, had his foreign travel done no more than, by detaching him from the distractions of society, to enable him, solitarily and freely, to commune with his own spirit, it would have been

an all-important step gained towards the full expansion of his faculties. It was only then, indeed, that he began to feel himself capable of the abstraction which self-study requires, or to enjoy that freedom from the intrusion of others' thoughts, which alone leaves the contemplative mind master of its own. In the solitude of his nights at sea, in his lone wanderings through Greece, he had sufficient leisure and seclusion to look within himself, and there catch the first "glimpses of his glorious mind." One of his chief delights, as he mentioned in his "Memoranda," was, when bathing in some retired spot, to seat himself on a high rock above the sea, and there remain for hours, gazing upon the sky and the waters*, and lost in that sort of vague reverie, which, however formless and indistinct at the moment, settled afterwards on his pages, into

* To this he alludes in those beautiful stanzas,

"To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell," &c.

Alfieri, before his dramatic genius had yet unfolded itself, used to pass hours, as he tells us, in this sort of dreaming state, gazing upon the ocean: — "Après le spectacle un de mes amusemens, à Marseille, était de me baigner presque tous les soirs dans la mer. J'avais trouvé un petit endroit fort agréable, sur une langue de terre placée à droite hors du port, où, en m'asseyant sur le sable, le dos appuyé contre un petit rocher qui empêchait qu'on ne pût me voir du côté de la terre, je n'avais plus devant moi que le ciel et la mer. Entre ces deux immensités qu'embellissaient les rayons d'un soleil couchant, je passai en rêvant des heures délicieuses; et là, je serais devenu poëte, si j'avais su écrire dans une langue quelconque."