

**THE LAST DAYS OF PERCY  
BYSSHE SHELLEY.  
NEW DETAILS FROM  
UNPUBLISHED DOCUMENTS**

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The last days of Percy Bysshe Shelley. New Details from Unpublished Documents by Guido Biagi

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**GUIDO BIAGI**

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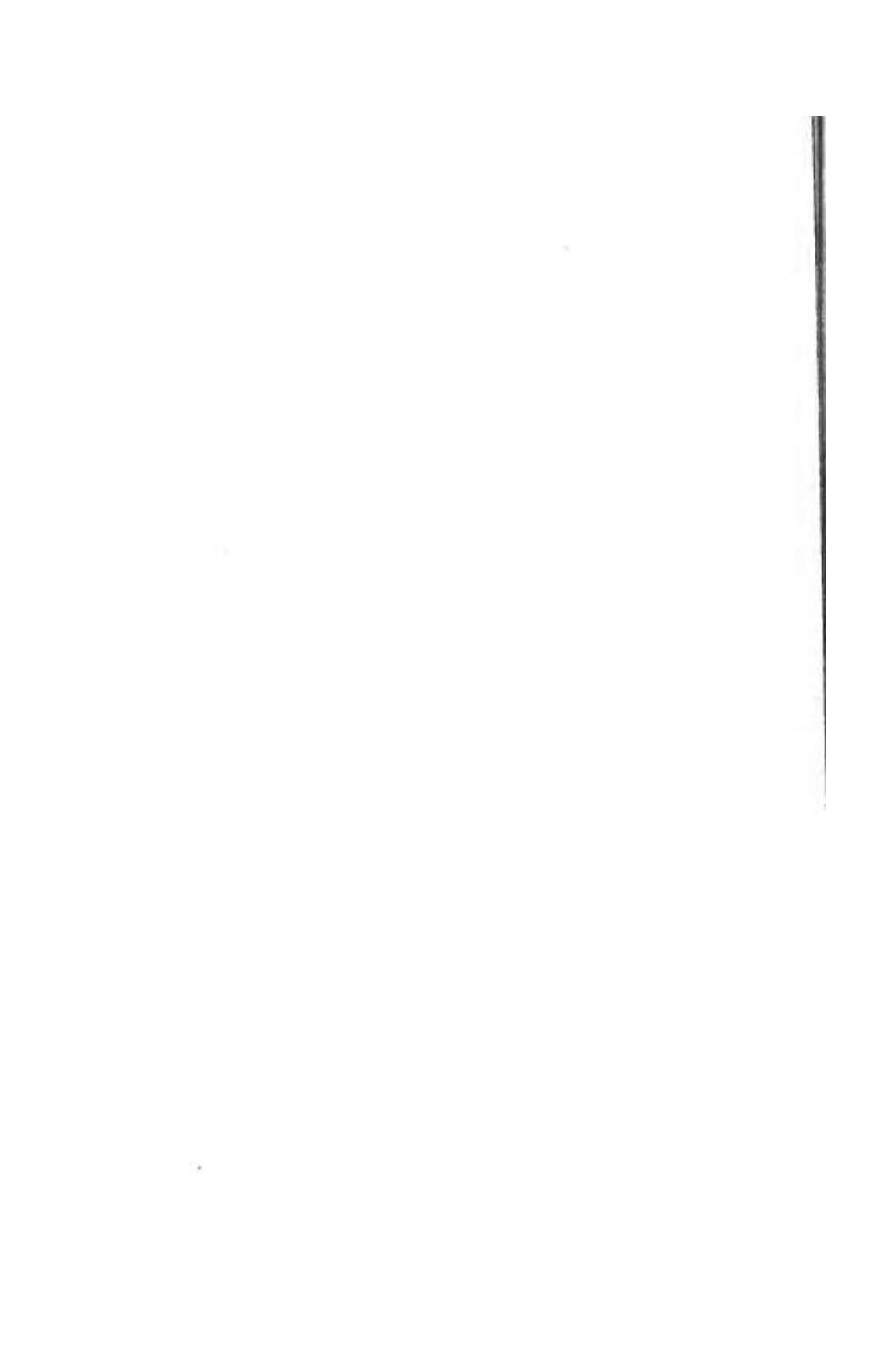
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BY D.<sup>o</sup> GUIDO BIAGI. ❁

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LONDON - T. FISHER UNWIN, MDCCCXCVIII.

TO  
LADY SHELLEY  
THE WORTHY GUARDIAN  
OF AN IMMORTAL TRUST



## THE LAST DAYS OF P. B. SHELLEY

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**T**o those whose hearts have thrilled over the pages of Trelawney and the narratives of other witnesses to these facts, as well as those of Professor Dowden's masterly biography of the poet, related, as it is with the true insight of love; it were idle once more to recount the bare details of that dark catastrophe which closed, tragically as an antique drama woven by inevitable Fate, the life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.



Who, in truth, can remember without profound sympathy, I had almost said, without tears, that sorrowful letter which Mary Shelley, the desolate widow, wrote on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August, 1822, to Mrs. Gisborne telling the story of those days of agony? The terrible drama of which those two women, Mrs. Shelley, and Mrs. Williams foresaw the end, is narrated with so true, so natural a *crescendo* of horror and of pathos as might move even the author of 'The Real Shelley', if certain critics condescended to possess hearts. If no more were known of Shelley's beloved companion, this letter would be enough to prove how worthy she was to be invoked as "Mine own heart's home",

as he calls her in the dedication of the 'Revolt of Islam', in which he says: "through thine eyes, even in thy soul I see, A Lamp of vestal fire, burning internally".

"The days pass", she writes after the terrible event, "pass one after another, and we still live. 'Adonais' is not Keats' elegy, but his very own". Who knows how often she read, and re-read it in those twentynine long years during which she outlived him, widowed vestal of her one and only love? The proof is found in a copy of the Pisan edition of this poem, that she possessed, where after her death a tiny silken sack was found among the pages, containing ashes, taken by her from his funeral urn.

So is it in all which concerns the poet of the "Liberated World", there breathes the true and simple grandeur of the *pathos* of the days of old.