

**SELECTIONS FROM BYRON,  
CHILDE HAROLD, CANTO IV,  
THE PRISONER OF CHILLON,  
MAZEPPA, AND OTHER POEMS**

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Selections from Byron, Childe Harold, Canto IV, The Prisoner of Chillon, Mazeppa, and Other Poems by Samuel Marion Tucker

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**GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON**

*After the portrait by Kramer*

SELECTIONS FROM  
**BYRON,** *George Gordon Byron*

CHILDE HAROLD, CANTO IV  
THE PRISONER OF CHILLON  
MAZEPPA, AND OTHER POEMS

EDITED

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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TO  
WILLIAM PETERFIELD TRENT  
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE  
IN COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS INSCRIBED  
IN GRATITUDE AND ESTEEM



## P R E F A C E

The primary purpose of this book is to give the young reader some insight into Byron's genius by presenting for study and for reading those of his poems which should make the most immediate appeal. For such a purpose much of Byron's poetry is admirably fitted, since, as a whole, it is not abstruse in its subject-matter, is lucid in its expression, and, above all, is spirited and energetic.

To teach the essential spirit of literature, not grammar, philology, or rhetoric, surely should be our aim when we present poetry to our classes. Even history, biography, mythology, or anything else, except as these are absolutely essential to a proper appreciation of the poem, are not really within our province. Teachers of literature have something to do that cannot be done by teachers of other subjects; and we have no business to poach upon the preserves of our colleagues. A great poem, rightly presented, is sure not only to give æsthetic pleasure, but to train the mind and the heart as well. In this connection it may not be amiss for one of his old students to acknowledge the help he has received from three essays by Professor W. P. Trent,—“Teaching the Spirit of Literature,” in *The Authority of Criticism*, and “The Aims and Methods of Literary Study” and “Teaching Literature,” in *Greatness in Literature*.

The length of the Introduction to this book, especially of the biographical part, can perhaps be justified by Byron's importance as a historic figure and by the intimate relations

subsisting between his life and his works. The criticism claims to be neither technical nor subtle, but attempts to deal rather in broad generalizations which may appeal to the young reader and yet not mislead him. In the Introduction, the notes, and the critical comments I have tried to be accurate in matters of fact, and still to present both facts and opinions in a style that might awaken *interest* — without which all literary study is of course soulless and ineffective.

In the choice of selections for this volume, *The Prisoner of Chillon*, *Mazeppa*, and *Childe Harold*, Canto IV, since they are among the college-entrance requirements, were naturally the first consideration. Other poems, in whole or in part, have been included, either for study or for reading, that the book may perhaps be found useful in college classes also. Lack of space, the purpose of the volume, and, in some cases, objectionable matter in the poems themselves have excluded from this collection the dramas, the longer narrative poems, and the satires; but the second and third cantos of *Childe Harold*, *Don Juan*, and *The Vision of Judgment* very well lend themselves to selection, and we find among Byron's poems many beautiful and appropriate lyrics.

It is hoped that the notes may be found sufficiently elaborate to pave the way to a full appreciation of the poems, without hampering the instructor or interfering with the student's self-activity. I was in such dread of overediting, having several terrible examples before my eyes, that my first intention was to include nothing in the notes that could be found by the student in any ordinary work of reference. So rigorous a policy, however, seemed to be mistaken in view of the fact that in some cases such works of reference may not be readily accessible; hence the historical, geographical, and other annotations. Some of Byron's allusions are of doubtful significance, and in such instances I have expressed merely an opinion.

Acknowledgments are due to Mr. John Murray, of London, for his courteous permission to use his definitive text of Byron's poems as edited by Mr. Coleridge and published in the twelve-volume edition of the prose and poetical works of Lord Byron and in the one-volume edition of the poems, both of which editions are imported into this country by Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons. The spelling of this text has, without exception, been preserved, even in its obvious inconsistencies. Certain changes in Byron's erratic punctuation, however, seemed absolutely necessary in the interests of clearness. It may be that the punctuation still remains somewhat inconsistent both with itself and with modern usage, but it is hoped that the poet's meaning will always be readily apparent.

S. M. T.