

NEW SHELLEY MANUSCRIPTS

BY WALTER EDWIN PECK

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THROUGH the very great kindness of W. T. Spencer, Esq., of 27, New Oxford Street, owner of the MSS., and that of Sir John Shelley-Rolls, holder of the copyright, I have lately been enabled to transcribe a considerable body of unpublished Shelley MSS., the first of which are presented to the public in the article following. The variant readings from the Bodleian MS. of Mary Shelley's drama of *Proserpine*, and some other passages from that MS., so far unpublished, are given by the kind consent of Bodley's Librarian.

I

Letter from Shelley to Hunt, November, 1819.

(First complete text, from the holograph original.)

On September 20th, 1819, Hunt wrote Shelley a letter which, with one other written on the 12th of the same month, was delayed in posting till October 20th. In this he informed Shelley that the box of various articles which Mary Shelley had requested Marianne (Mrs. Leigh) Hunt to send to Florence, Italy, had not yet gone forward, but would be sent soon. He also announced that he was 'refreshing' himself 'with translating that delightful compromise of art with nature, Tasso's "Aminta."' To this letter Shelley replied in a letter already published in part by Mr. Roger Ingpen, but which, in the complete form now

published, contains additional matter totalling more than 225 words (the new matter, for the reader's convenience, being bracketed):—

My Dear Friend,

Two letters, both bearing the date Oct. 20, arrive on the same day; one is always glad of twins.

We hear of a box arrived at Genoa with books and clothes; it must be yours. Meanwhile the babe is wrapped in flannel petticoats, and we get on with him as we can. He is small [but] healthy, and pretty. Mary is recovering rapidly. Marianne, I hope, is quite [recovered].

You do not tell me whether you have received my lines on the Manchester affair. They are of the exoteric species, and are meant not for the *Indicator*, but the *Examiner*. I would send for the former if you like some letters on such subjects of art as suggest themselves in Italy. Perhaps I will, at a venture, send you a specimen of what I mean next post. I enclose you in this a piece for the *Examiner*; or let it share the fate, whatever that fate may be, of the 'Masque of Anarchy.'

I am sorry to hear that you have employed yourself in translating the *Aminta*, though I doubt not it will be a just and beautiful translation. You ought to write *Amintas*. You ought to exercise your fancy in the perpetual creation of new forms of gentleness and beauty. [You are formed to be a living fountain & not a canal

however clear. When I read your nymphs, which is a poem original & intense, conceived with the clearest sense of ideal beauty & executed with the fullest and most flowing lyrical power, & yet defined with the most intelligible outline of thought and language, I envy Tasso his translator because it deprives us of a poet.—I speak rather of the nymphs than of the Story of Rimini; because the former is in my judgment more intensely and perfectly a poem, in the sense in which Tasso speaks of Poetry ‘Non c’e creatore fuorchè Iddio ed il Poeta’ the latter affects the passions & searches the understanding more completely, but the former appeals to the Imagination, who is the master of them both, their God, & their Spirit by which they live and are.—]

With respect to translation, even *I* will not be seduced by it; although the Greek plays, and some of the ideal dramas of Calderon (with which I have lately, and with inexpressible wonder and delight, become acquainted) are perpetually tempting me to throw over their perfect and glowing forms the grey veil of my own words. And you know me too well to suspect that I refrain from [the] belief that what I would substitute for them would deserve the regret which yours would [deserve] if suppressed. I have confidence in my moral sense alone; but that is a kind of originality. I have only translated the Cyclops of Euripides when I could absolutely do nothing else—and the Symposium of Plato, which is the delight and astonishment of all who read it; I mean the original, or so much of the original as is seen in my translation, not the translation itself.

[I do not wish it to be published that I am coming in the spring; for reasons which you can readily guess.]

I think I have an accession of strength since my residence in Italy, though the disease itself in the side, whatever it may be, is not subdued. Some day we shall all return from Italy. I fear that in England things will be carried violently by the rulers, and [that] they will not have learned to yield in time to the spirit of the age. The great thing to do is to hold the balance between popular impatience and tyrannical obstinacy; to inculcate with fervour both the right of resistance, and the duty of forbearance. You know my principles incite me to take all the good I can get in politics, for ever aspiring to something more. I am one of those whom nothing will fully satisfy, but who [am] ready to be partially satisfied [by] all that is practicable. We shall see.

Give Bessie a thousand thanks from me for writing out in that pretty neat hand your kind and powerful defence. Ask [her] what she would like best from Italian land. We mean to bring you all something; and Mary and I have been wondering what it shall be. Do you each of you choose.

[The ‘Julian & Maddalo’ I do not know how ought to be published. What do you think best to do with it? Do as you like. The Prometheus I wish to be printed and to come out immediately. I think you will be pleased over the spirit in which it is written.]

Adieu my dear friend.

Yours Affectionately ever,

P. B. S.

(Addressed outside:—) Leigh Hunt, Esqr., ‘Examiner’ Office; 19, Catharine St., Strand, London, Engleterre. (Postmarked:—) Firenze (and) F.P. O. DE.2 1819.

The reference, in paragraph four, to ‘your nymphs,’ was provoked by

Shelley's reading Hunt's poem by that title, which was the longest poem in *Foliage* (1818). Grounded in Greek mythology as this poem is, it may be profitably compared with the work of Keats and Shelley in this sort, about the same period. Shelley's enthusiasm for the poem was of long standing. On March 22nd, 1818, he had written Hunt: 'What a delightful poem "The Nymphs" is! especially the second part. It is truly *poetical*, in the intense and emphatic sense of the word.' As to Hunt's disposition of 'Julian and Maddalo,' which Shelley suggests in the letter, the poem did not, of course, appear until 1824 (*Posthumous Poems*).

II

Shelley's Correction in the Original Draft of Mary's Two-Act Drama of 'Proserpine' (1820).

Among the Spencer MSS. is one, a fragment of the original draft of Mary Shelley's two-act drama (unpublished; the final and complete draft, in Mary's autograph, is in the Shelley Collection in the Bodleian Library) on *Proserpine*. This drama, and another of the same length on *Midas*, were, says Medwin, in his *Revised Life of Shelley*, done by Mary in the winter of 1820-1821 at Pisa. The Spencer fragment, also in Mary's autograph, has been corrected throughout by Shelley, and is, therefore, important, as the so far neglected MS. of Edward Williams's play, *The Promise*, is important as indicating what wonders Shelley wrought even on the least promising material, lifting the commonplace to the realm of magic, and the dead word to a note of music.

In order that the speeches of Ino and Eunoe may be better understood, I mention the fact that in the Bodleian MS. of Act I. of Mrs. Shelley's drama, Ceres mother of Proserpine, being

obliged to visit the gods, leaves her daughter in the care of Ino and Eunoe, who are described in the *Dramatis Personae* at the beginning of the Bodleian MS. as 'Nymphs attending upon Proserpine.' The three become separated, however, as they roam about, picking flowers on the Plain of Enna in Sicily. The scene is described in the Bodleian MS. as 'a beautiful plain, shadowed on one side by an overhanging rock, on the other a chestnut wood. Aetna at a Distance.' When Ino and Eunoe meet again, after a little while, they miss Proserpine, and, suddenly fearful of her fate, they are in doubt whether to seek her or to fly from the righteous wrath of Ceres. In a few moments Ceres returns, and learning of her loss, upbraids the unfaithful nymphs and directs that an immediate search be instituted. This ends the first act.

The fragment of the original draft of the next act, now among the Spencer MSS., reads as follows, all words in Shelley's autograph being enclosed, for the reader's information, in brackets:—

ACT II.

Scene:

The Plain of Enna, as before.

[INO] HYMERA* & EUNOE.

EUNOE.

How weary am I!—and the hot sun
burns* [flushes]
My cheeks that else were white with
fear & grief
Ere* [E'er] since that fatal eve, dear
Hymera* [sister nymph],
On which we lost our lovely Proserpine,
I have but wept and watched the live-
long night,
And all the day have wandered thro'
the woods.

HYMERA* [INO.]

How all has changed since that unhappy eve!
 Ceres forever weeps seeking her child,
 And in her rage has struck the land
 with blight;
 Trinacria mourns with her—its fertile fields
 Are dry and barren—and my* [all]
 little streams
 Struggling, scarce creepst† within its*
 [their] altered banks,
 The flowers that, once were wont with
 bended heads
 To gaze within its clear and glassy
 wave,
 Have died, unwatered by its failing
 stream.
 And yet their hue but mocks the deeper
 grief
 Which is the fountain of these bitter-
 est* [bitter] tears.‡
 Methinks I read glad tidings in your
 looks,
 Your smiles are the swift messengers
 that bear

*Words starred thus have been cancelled by Shelley.

†s deleted by Shelley.

‡After line 17 of the Spencer MS., the Bodleian MS. reads:

EUN: 'This fairest Arethuse,
 A stranger naiad; yet you know her
 well.'

INO: My eyes were blind with tears—
Enter Arethusa,
dear Arethuse,

Methinks I read glad tidings in your
 eyes,
 Your smiles are the swift messengers
 that bear

A tale of coming joy, which we, alas!
 Can answer but with tears, unless
 you bring
 To our grief solace, Hope to our despair.

Have you found Proserpine? or know
 you where
 The loved nymph wanders, hidden from
 our search?

ARETH: Where is corn-crowned Ceres? I have
 hastened

To ease her anxious heart.

EUN: Oh! dearest Naiad,
 Herald of joy! Now will great Ceres
 bless

Thy welcome coming and more welcome tale.

INO: Since that unhappy day when Ceres
 lost

Her much-loved child, she wanders
 through the isle;
 Dark blight is showered from her
 looks of sorrow;—

The tale of coming joy which we, alas!
 Can answer but with tears unless you
 bring

Solace* To our grief [solace], hope to
 our despair.

And* [Dark blight is showered from
 her looks of sorrow]

The Bodleian MS. of this drama
 displays several passages of marked
 force and beauty. Thus, for example,
 Ino relates how Proserpine

—wandered in Elysian groves,

Through bowers forever green, and
 mossy walks,

Where flowers never die, nor wind
 disturbs

The sacred calm, whose silence
 soothes the dead,

Nor interposing clouds, with dun
 wings, dim

Its mild and silver light.

When one compares such passages,
 however, with the average level of the
 play one is inclined to believe that
 Shelley's hand must have been more
 than slightly exerted in touching up
 the earlier drafts of these passages,
 else they would scarcely have attained
 to this poetic level.

III

Letter from Shelley to Hunt, June 24,
 1822.

Shelley, on June 19th, 1822, advised
 Hunt that had he learned of his arrival
 at Genoa sooner (Hunt's letter,
 written on ship-board at Genoa on the
 15th, had gone to Pisa, and been forwarded
 to Shelley at Lerici) he might have
 ventured to meet him at Genoa;
 but that, as they might pass each other
 at sea should he attempt it, he would
 not go to Genoa. 'I shall therefore
 set off for Leghorn the moment that
 I hear you have sailed,' he promised
 his friend. But, as Thornton Hunt

informs us, 'the vessel was detained at Genoa to discharge part of its cargo, and it did not reach Leghorn until the beginning of July.' When he learned of the impending delay, Hunt must have written Shelley concerning it; and on receipt of this news Shelley wrote the following hitherto unpublished letter (probably on June 24th, which was a Monday):—

Lerico. Monday.

My dear friend,

I have received a bill for 37 pounds for you from your nephew, which I send by this post to Messrs. Guebhard & Co., Bankers, Leghorn, who will pay you the amount on your arrival there. The other 30 pounds you shall have when we meet: or within a few days afterwards, but I have been obliged to employ it in housekeeping. I can scarcely pardon myself for having alarmed you by my silence. But I relied on your being better off than fortune seems ever to permit a person of generous feelings to be—but we must try to cure fortune of this antipathy.

This morning, on the receipt of your letter, I was on the point of setting sail to Genoa, in the hope of arriving there before Tuesday evening. I prepared my boat, rigged up all the sails, laid in provisions, & Williams had already gone on board to weigh anchor, when poor Mary suffered a relapse, which though in the issue not serious was sufficient to warn me of the necessity of remaining with her for the present. She is now much better, although still confined to the sofa. However, she will be well enough by the time that we weigh anchor for Leghorn. Could you not arrange with the Captain to *approach* Lerici, & fire, or send up a rocket for a sig-

nal, & we would instantly come alongside.—Or must we wait until the promises of a merchantman conduct you to Leghorn?

Lord Byron, I hear, is in a state of supernatural fever about some lying memoirs published of him. You will see him before I shall, & as you have the faculty of eliciting from any given person the greatest possible quantity of good they are capable of yielding, all will go well. We shall soon meet. Adieu, my best friend. Kiss Marianne for me, & believe me

Ever yours,

S.

Mind you make no mistake about calling on Guebhard & Co. I send the bill to them to get negotiated ready for you, as there are seven days sight on it—

I send a *note to prevent any mistake*.

Should you be still detained at Genoa, I will meet you *there*.

Write by return of Post.

(Stamped:) Sarzana (and) Genoa. Giu. 26.

(Addressed:) Leigh Hunt, Esqr., Gentiluomo Inglese, Leghorn. (And further stamped:) Luigio.

(Endorsed in another hand:) Taken up & forwarded by Yr. Hbl. Servt. Ira S. Whitney. 28 June.

The letter, written within a fortnight of his untimely end, is alive with that large-hearted generosity and utter self-abandonment in friendship of which Shelley stands as an example, almost without peer among the English poets. At the very moment of his deep anxiety over Hunt's financial unsoundness; and unreliability in the execution of ordinary business transactions (cf. 'Mind you make no mistake about calling on Guebhard & Co.'), he yet declares himself so eager

to greet the new incumbrance that he must have some notice, by rocket or gun, of the precise moment of Hunt's passing Lerici. The 'lying memoirs' of Byron to which Shelley refers

were, Dr. Garnett informs us, the work of one John Watkins, and were published in 1822 under the title: 'Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Lord Byron, with Some of his Contemporaries.'

LIFE, LETTERS AND THE ARTS

OPERA IN EUROPE

IN spite of political and economic vicissitudes, the musical life of Vienna still goes on, though not quite at its old pace. The two operas, headed by Strauss and Weingartner respectively, are crowded at every performance and the concerts are equally popular, many of them being sold out far in advance.

The Staats-Oper, which is still under the control of the state, is directed by Strauss, although the cost of living compels him to supplement his earnings by visiting other countries professionally, as otherwise his government salary would be wholly inadequate. Other conductors take his place during his absences and the system of give-and-take does not seem to affect the artistic quality of the productions. In fact, there is more difficulty in securing singers than conductors, for the inroads of American operatic managers upon the ranks of foreign singers continue.

The repertory is not much affected. National lines are no more drawn than before the war and the impressarios venture upon very few novelties. The only new production at the Staats-Oper is a new work by Korngold, the child composer of the days before the war, who is now a mature musician of some twenty-three years. His latest work, *The Dead City* is based on Rodenbach's novel, *Le Mirage*. The opera exhibits Korngold's remarkable

command of tone in his treatment of the orchestra and has much music which is admirably singable, although the youthful composer at times shows varied influences—Puccini, Strauss, and Meyerbeer. The principal singers at the premiere were Oestwig, a Scandinavian tenor who is said to combine great vocal and dramatic ability with a fine stage presence, and Madame Jeritza, whom Vladimir Cernicoff declares to be possessed of 'one of the finest soprano voices I have heard for years.'

Within three weeks seventeen operas were performed, including works by Mozart, Wagner, Puccini, Massenet, Gounod, and Herr Strauss himself. Among the singers who are attracting attention are Bertha Kiurina, a beautiful singer of Mozart's music, Piccaver, an American tenor who specializes in Puccini, Richard Mayer, a genuine basso-profundo, and Gutheil Schoder, who has been singing *Carmen* and *Salome*.

La Scala at Milan is being practically rebuilt at a cost of 6,000,000 lire. The stage, roof, and artists' dressing rooms are to be wholly new, and large rooms for the chorus singers are to be added. Although 250 workmen have been employed since last August, the alterations are so extensive that no operas can be produced before next December, when the winter season will be given over principally to new operas.

In the meantime, the Paris Opera