

I set out yesterday morning with the intention of paying my respects, and availing myself of your permission to walk over the premises.¹ On arriving at Padua, I found that the march of the Austrian troops had engrossed so many horses, that those I could procure were hardly able to crawl; and their weakness, together with the prospect of finding none at all at the post-house of Monselice, and consequently either not arriving that day at Este, or so late as to be unable to return home here the same evening, induced me to turn aside in a second visit to Arqua, instead of proceeding onwards; and even thus I hardly got back in time.

Next week I shall be obliged to be in Venice to meet Lord Kinnaird and his brother, who are expected in a few days. And this interruption, together with that occasioned by the continued march of the Austrians for the next few days, will not allow me to fix any precise period for availing myself of your kindness, though I should wish to take the earliest opportunity. Perhaps, if absent, you will have the goodness to permit one of your servants to show me the grounds and house, or as much of either as may be convenient; at any rate, I shall take the first occasion possible to go over, and regret very much that I was yesterday prevented.

I have the honour to be your obliged, &c.

[TO JOHN MURRAY]

Sept 15th. 1817

Dear Sir—I enclose a sheet for correction if ever you get to another edition—you will observe that the blunder in printing makes it appear as if the Chateau was *over* St. Gingo—instead of being on the opposite shore of the lake over Clarens—so—separate the paragraphs otherwise my *topography* will seem as inaccurate as your *typography* on this occasion.¹—The other day I wrote to convey my proposition with regard to the 4th & concluding Canto—I have gone over—& extended it to one hundred and fifty stanzas which is almost as long as the two first were originally—& longer by itself—than any of the

¹ R. B. Hoppner, British Consul in Venice, had occupied a country house or “villegiatura” called “I Cappucini” in the Euganean Hills near Este. Byron later sublet it from Hoppner, but never lived there. He loaned it to Shelley in the summer of 1818, and sent Allegra there to be with her mother, Claire Clairmont, for a few weeks. For an account of Hoppner and Byron’s relations with him, see Appendix IV.

¹ Byron here refers to the third canto of *Childe Harold*.

smaller poems except the “Corsair”—Mr. Hobhouse has made some very valuable & accurate notes of considerable length—& you may be sure I will do for the text all that I can to finish with decency.—I look upon C[hild]e Harold as my best—and as I begun—I think of concluding with it—but I make no resolutions on that head—as I broke my former intention with regard to “the Corsair”—however—I fear that I shall never do better—& yet—not being thirty years of age for some moons to come—one ought to be progressive as far as Intellect goes for many a good year—but I have had a devilish deal of wear & tear of mind and body—in my time—besides having published too often & much already. God grant me some judgement to do what may be most fitting in that & every thing else—for I doubt my own exceedingly.—I have read “Lallah Rookh”—but not with sufficient attention yet—for I ride about—& lounge—& ponder &—two or three other things—so that my reading is very desultory & not so attentive as it used to be.—I am very glad to hear of its popularity—for Moore is a very noble fellow in all respects—& will enjoy it without any of the bad feelings which Success—good or evil—sometimes engenders in the men of rhyme.—Of the poem itself I will tell you my opinion when I have mastered it—I say of the *poem*—for I don’t like the *prose* at all—at all—and in the mean time the “Fire-worshippers” is the best and the “Veiled Prophet” the worst, of the volume.—With regard to poetry in general² I am convinced the more I think of it—that he and *all* of us—Scott—Southey—Wordsworth—Moore—Campbell—I—are all in the wrong—one as much as another—that we are upon a wrong revolutionary poetical system—or systems—not worth a damn in itself—& from which none but Rogers and Crabbe are free—and that the present & next generations will finally be of this opinion.—I am the more confirmed in this—by having lately gone over some of our Classics—particularly *Pope*—whom I tried in this way—I took Moore’s poems & my own & some others—& went over them side by side with *Pope*’s—and I was really astonished (I ought not to have been so) and mortified—at the ineffable distance in point of sense—harmony—effect—and even *Imagination* *Passion*—& *Invention*—between the little Queen Anne’s Man—& us of the lower Empire—depend upon it [it] is all Horace then, and Claudian now among us—and if I had to begin again—I would model myself accordingly—

² Murray showed this letter to Gifford who wrote the following note with respect to Byron’s critique of modern poets and his judgment of *Pope*: “There is more good sense, and feeling and judgment in this passage, than in any other I ever read, or Lord Byron wrote.” (*LJ*, IV, 169n.)

Crabbe's the man—but he has got a coarse and impracticable subject—
& Rogers the Grandfather of living Poetry—is retired upon half-pay,
(I don't mean as a Banker)—

Since pretty Miss Jaqueline
With her nose aquiline

and has done enough—unless he were to do as he did formerly.—

[TO JOHN MURRAY]

Venice. Sept. 17th. 1817

Dear Sir—I shall send the assignment by Mr. Kinnaird—who is not yet arrived here—but your rectification of guineas does not bring you quite right yet—you said a thousand pounds—it is however—twelve hundred & thirty pounds—*viz*—a balance of £ six hundred—on the 3d C[ant]o & three hundred g[uinea]s Manfred—& three hundred Tasso—making six hundred & thirty pounds on the latter—according to my Cocker.—As to the time of payment—I repeat that I don't wish to press you—but that when it suits your convenience—it will not be incompatible with mine;—By Messrs. Morland's last account I perceive that a sum which I imagined to have been from your quarter came instead from Mr. Hanson—so that it should seem you are more in my books than I thought—for which reason I am thus precise as to items.—Mr. Hobhouse purposes being in England in November—he will bring the 4th Canto with him notes and all—the text contains one hundred and fifty stanzas—which is long for that measure.—With regard to the “Ariosto of the North” surely their themes Chivalry—war—& love were as like as can be—and as to the compliment—if you knew what the Italians think of Ariosto—you would not hesitate about that.—But as to their “measures,” you forget that Ariosto's is an octave stanza—and Scott's anything but a Stanza.—If you think Scot[t] will dislike it—say so—& I expunge.—I do not call him the “*Scotch Ariosto*” which would be sad *provincial* eulogy—but the “Ariosto of the North”—meaning of *all countries* that are *not* the *South*.—I have received your enclosed letter from Lady Caroline Lamb—& am truly sorry (as she will one day be) that she is capable of writing such a letter—poor thing—it is a great pity.—As I have recently troubled you rather frequently—I will conclude repeating that I am

yrs ever very truly,

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[TO JOHN MURRAY]

Oct. 12th. 1817

Dear Sir—Mr. Kinnaird & his brother Lord K. have been here—and are now gone again; all your missives came except the tooth-powder—of which I request further supplies at all convenient opportunities—as also of Magnesia & Soda-powders—both great luxuries here—& neither to be had good—or indeed hardly at all of the natives.—In Coleridge's life¹ I perceive an attack upon the then Committee of D[rury] L[ane] Theatre—for acting Bertram—and an attack upon Mathurin's Bertram for being *acted*—considering all things—this is not very grateful nor graceful on the part of the worthy auto-biographer—and I would answer—if I had *not* obligated him.—Putting my own pains to forward the views of Coleridge out of the question—I know that there was every disposition on the part of the S[ub] C[ommittee] to bring forward any production of his were it feasible—the play he offered—though poetical—did not appear at all practicable—and Bertram did—and hence this long tirade—which is the last Chapter of his vagabond life.—As for Bertram, Mathurin may defend his own begotten—if he likes it well enough—I leave the Irish Clergyman and the new Orator Henley² to battle it out between them—satisfied to have done the best I could for *both*—I may say this to *you*—who know it.—Mr. Coleridge may console himself with the “fervour—the almost religious fervour” of his and Wordsworth's disciples as he calls it—if he means that as any proof of their merits—I will find him as much “fervour” in behalf of Richard Brothers³ and Joanna Southcote⁴—as ever gathered over his pages—or round his fireside. He is a shabby fellow—and I wash my hands of, and after him.—My answer to your proposition—about the 4th Canto you will have received—and I await yours—perhaps we may not agree. I have since written a poem (of 84 octave Stanzas) humourous, in or after the excellent manner of Mr. Whistlecraft (whom I take to be Frere), on a Venetian anecdote—which amused me⁵—but till I have your answer—I can say nothing

¹ Coleridge reviewed Maturin's *Bertram* in Chapter 23 of his *Biographia Literaria* published in 1817.

² Byron compared Coleridge to John Henley whom Pope had ridiculed as “Zany of thy age”. (*Dunciad*, Book III, line 206.)

³ Richard Brothers (1757–1824) believed that, in 1795, he was to be revealed to be Prince of the Hebrews and ruler of the world. He was arrested and confined as a lunatic.

⁴ See Sept. 2, 1814, to Murray, note 6. (vol. 4, p. 164).

⁵ For the anecdote which was the foundation of the story of *Beppo*, see Marchand, *Byron: A Biography*, II, 708. The verse form, the ottava rima as used by John Hookham Frere in his mock heroic poem, supposedly by William and Robert Whistlecraft, had recently come to Byron's attention.