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**The works of ... Lord Byron**

Child Harold's pilgrimage [canto I & II] - The Giaour ; Bride of Abydos

**Byron, George Gordon**

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Memoirs of lord Byron.

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MEMOIRS OF LORD BYRON.

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THE Nobleman who at present bears the honours and the name of BYRON, requires not the equivocal aid of ancestry to distinguish him from the common tribe, either of patricians or of plebeians. Genius is a brilliant jewel even in a coronet; and though much depends upon the setting, it generally enables its possessor to soar —

Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,

Beneath the *good* how far — yet far above the *great!*

George Gordon Byron, Lord Byron, is the lineal descendant of a family which was of consequence even at the era of the Conquest, being recorded in Domesday Book as considerable landholders in Lancashire. The subsequent career of the Byrons, during the three or four succeeding centuries, was distinguished in almost the only

line of distinction which belonged to the baronial rank before the accession of the house of Tudor. Two of them fell at the battle of Cressy, one of them signalised himself in the field of Bosworth, in favour of Henry VII., and several shed their blood in the armies of Charles I., who called Sir John Byron to the peerage in the year 1643.

On the maternal side the ancestry of Lord Byron is equally illustrious: his mother, from whom he takes his second name of Gordon, having been the last of a branch of that family which descended from the Princess Jane Stuart, daughter of James II. of Scotland, who married an Earl of Huntley. A great variety of contingencies opened the way to Lord Byron's early accession to the title. William, the fourth Lord Byron, who died in 1738, left five sons, of whom the eldest, the late peer, William, the fifth Lord Byron, owing to an unfortunate event, withdrew from Court and Parliament, and lived in such strict retirement for many years before his death,

that the titles were scarcely ever heard of out of the family circle. This nobleman had an only son, William, who went into the army, and was killed in Corsica, long before the death of his father, by which means the present Lord, the infant grandson of the celebrated Admiral Byron, eldest brother to the existing peer, became presumptive heir to the title, to which he succeeded on the death of his great uncle, May 19, 1798. His Lordship's father was twice married, first to Baroness Conyers, the daughter of Lord Holderness, by whom he had a daughter; and secondly, to the lady already mentioned, Miss Gordon of Gight, who bore him the present Lord, born 22d January, 1788, so that his Lordship is at present only in his twenty-ninth year.

If the general voice of rumour may be depended upon, Lord Byron began very early to discover traits of a marked and original character. Some of his early years were spent in Scotland; but he received the chief part of his education

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at Harrow, from which distinguished school he removed to the University of Cambridge; and much is said at both places of his genius and eccentricity. He early began to court the deathless Muse; for it was soon after his quitting school, that he published his "Hours of Idleness," which being treated with a very disproportionate degree of severity by the critics of the Edinburgh Review, the youthful poet retorted in a Satire of great spirit and severity, called "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," which is believed to have had the extraordinary effect of increasing the mutual esteem of the belligerent parties: the Reviewers have certainly attended to the subsequent productions of his Lordship with great respect; and he, on his part, has done all in his power to recall his satires — preventing a fifth edition from being published, even after it was printed. His Lordship's succeeding intimacy with Mr. Moore, whom he had alluded to rather contemptuously in the mention of his affair with Mr. Jeffary, may

very honourably account for this solicitude in part; and the general accordance of his line of literary and political feeling with that of the celebrated Journal in question, will readily answer for the rest. In truth, in the end, his Lordship himself became a conspicuous member of the brilliant coterie at Holland House, which he had been provoked to deride.

On his coming of age in 1809, Lord Byron, after taking his seat in the House of Peers, went abroad, and spent some time in the South and East of Europe, particularly in Greece and its islands. In the year 1811, he returned to England, and in the Spring of 1812, published his celebrated «Childe Harold's Pilgrimage;» — a poem which at once established his fame as a poet, and ensured the greedy attention of the public to every subsequent production by the same hand. In the course of 1813, Lord Byron published three other poems: — «The Giaour,» «The Bride of Abydos,» and «The Corsair;»

and since that time, «Lara,» «The Siege of Corinth,» and, «Parisina.» Of the character of these celebrated poems, the Critical Review for February 1814, may be consulted with advantage: — it will apply more or less to them all.

In January, 1815, Lord Byron led to the altar the accomplished Miss Milbanke, only child of Sir Ralph Milbanke, (since Noel,) by whom he has one daughter. This union, so suitable in rank, fortune, and the superior mental endowments of the respective parties, has been unfortunately severed by the acknowledged indiscretion of his Lordship. Of the exact tenor of that indiscretion, very little is correctly known, more than what the beautiful «Fare thee well!!» insinuates, — though all manner of vague and extraordinary reports have been circulated. The manner in which that tender expostulation, and the severe «Sketch from Private Life,» have been received by certain Journalists, may reasonably excite surprise; as every thing has been

taken for granted against his Lordship in the strongest possible sense, and that in a tone approaching to malignity. To speak of the "Fare thee Well!" as an insult to Lady Byron, is singular enough, as it is a string of emphatic compliment from beginning to end, the simple fact of unforgiveness only being stated, without even being accompanied by the assertion of deserving it. It is the humble plea of acknowledged error which ventures to suggest the beauty of mercy. The "Sketch" is another affair, and so entirely depends upon the facts which gave rise to it, that it will be impossible to judge of any thing, except its talent, until they are made known. To suppose that Lord Byron did not imagine himself injured, would be to infer his insanity; and who, possessed of his powers of satire, under the impression of an insidious influence exerted against domestic peace, would not be tempted to exercise them as he has done? On the other hand, it is but justice to the in-

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dividual attacked to admit, that the agonised mind of a deeply wounded husband might not be sufficiently cool for nice discrimination; and that a strong satiric talent, exerted in a moment of real or imagined provocation, is always to be understood with some grains of allowance. That Lord Byron was originally to blame, the public knows, for he has admitted it; but that he has any way aggravated his primary fault, by *writing* his subsequent address to Lady Byron, may be reasonably denied. As to the satire, with a total absence of evidence, it is as difficult to determine upon its justice as easy to decide upon its ability. Thus much, however, is certain; a formal separation has taken place, and his Lordship has quitted England for the present; some of the Journalists say, *for ever*.

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