

A Comparison of the lyrical poems of Thomas Moore and Lord Byron.

The first thirty years of the nineteenth century are most remarkable in the history of the English Literature. The literary products of that time rose in their value and influence to a height not attained since the glorious days known under the name of Queen Elizabeth's Period. The French revolution had awakened the spirits from their cool and hypocritical self-satisfaction, and diffusing a great many sound and novel ideas over the whole of Europe, had rendered the old world more natural in feelings and thoughts. The so-called Laksists tried first to oppose the ideas of those high English circles which, greedy for most exquisite and refined enjoyments, had lost nearly all understanding of real life. Their opposition however was but fancied; although most richly describing the simple delights of rural life, they longed after that same comfortable indifference of which they seemed to be afraid. Other geniuses were wanted to overthrow that iron wall of pride and the strong bulwark of ill-veiled selfishness. They came: Walter Scott, Thomas Moore, Lord Byron, each in his own way, are the great movers of that intellectual revolution in England.

We do not follow here Scott's long and glorious reign over the English public; nor is it now our purpose to write an extensive essay on Moore's success in convincing England of her wrongs to Ireland, or on Byron's works thrilling the world with admiration for the energy and strength of his poetical character. It is our purpose to reflect on the lyrical poems of the two last remembered authors, and if we succeed in explaining their many relations to each other, the influence which they have had on their contemporaries, will strike upon our mind at once.

The poems of Thomas Moore which we consider, are his Odes and Epistles, the Irish Melodies, National Airs and Sacred Songs. Lord Byron's lyrical poems consist of the Hours of Idleness, his various songs, entitled sometimes Domestic pieces and Occasional pieces, the Hebrew Melodies and his two Odes.

Before we go on in examining the special character of the different kinds of lyrical poetry, with which the two celebrated poets have indulged us, we will trace the general character of their lyrical poetry.

Moore's poetry is „the radiance of morning poured out plentifully over earth and sky, and making all things laugh in light.“ We do not know how to express the fundamental tone of Moore's genius better than with these words of Craik (*Sketches of the history of literature and learning in England*. VI, p. 176). Moore considers all things on earth and in heaven in the brightest sun-light. Whenever he sings of love, it is smiling hope of the future which makes him happy, or gay remembrance of the past which he does not regret: his beloved appears surrounded with all the brilliant light which the most laughing similes of nature can bestow on her. Does he sing of friendship: he has the best-hearted friends whose memory makes present sufferings

tolerable, even happy, and to whom his witty gayety tries to recall himself in thoughtful epistles. When addressing himself to God: his ideas are those of a true christian mind, he knows but the mercy and love of the Lord to mankind, and his hope of a blissful other life embellishes human life which is so often darkened by trials and sins. Even his Irish patriotism, however warm, vigorous and manly his feeling may spring up in bitterness and sarcastic remarks against English tyranny, cannot destroy his good humour regarding the many excellent qualities of the English nation, and it was not to a low degree this impartiality of Moore which opened English eyes to view Irish misery in a new light.

Lord Byron's lyrical character is of quite a different cast of mind. Though we agree with our great Goethe who declares: *Er ist ein großes Talent, ein gebornes, und die eigentl. poetische Kraft ist mir bei Niemandem größer vorgekommen als bei ihm*: yet we cannot help deploring, that in far the greatest part of his lyrical poems this great genius displays the morbid and almost disgusting feelings of misanthropy and despair. „No art can sweeten, no draughts can exhaust his perennial waters of bitterness. From maniac laughter to piercing lamentation there is not a single note of human anguish of which he is not master.“ (Macaulay, Moore's life of Lord Byron.) His mastership alone in exhibiting his real or fancied misfortune can reconcile us with the bitter excitement often created in our minds by his poetry. Lord Byron's view of the world is in a deep contrast with that of Moore. Very rarely he sings the hope and happiness of love: those beautiful stanzas to the Po, addressed to Madame Guiccioli, are almost the only poem full of hopeful love. His other love songs or what may be called so, speak of the beloved as lost or dead; a whole series of songs belongs to his boyish love, that fair Mary, who had not answered his affection and was afterwards most unhappy in her married life: he will ever remember her, but hope has left him long ago; the dreariest, but most poetical monument he has established to her in the allegory, entitled „Dream“, in which he compares her life and his own one. His stanzas to Thyrza are equally mournful: Thyrza is dead, the pledge of their love is broken and his heart too like that cornelian heart. However his admiration of woman's virtue and tenderness is great, as it is proved by those two sonnets to Genevra and the stanzas written on several occasions to Florence.

He has a deep feeling of friendship. This is shown in his Childish recollections and the poems to Edward Long, to the Earl of Clare and to George Earl Delawarr. Yet his friendship is not always happy, he has lost some of his best youthful friends, which appears from that same poem to the Earl Delawarr and that to a youthful friend.

The deepest despair and misanthropy seizes us in his domestical pieces and the two large poems: *Darkness* and *Dream*. Betrayed in his first love, disappointed of a peaceful and happy family life, most cruelly injured by his own country, which had spoiled him before by her exaggerated admiration, he is indeed an unfortunate man: but abandoning himself to his natural sensibility and strong passions he renders himself more unhappy, if possible; not content with himself, he cannot bear the contempt of mankind, and though noble-hearted by nature, he cannot but express his sickness of life in the most bitter thoughts and in the sharpest scorn of his fellow-creatures and himself. While Moore is trying to conquer his disappointments in life by remembrance of the past and hope of the future, Lord Byron is all gloom, despair and death. Even the subjects of some of his poems most precious through their lyrical value and the sublime thoughts expressed in them, the odes on Venice and to Napoleon Buonaparte, are decay and death.

Thomas Moore and Lord Byron have exhibited their genius in the most expressive kinds of lyrical poetry, in songs, odes, elegies and epistles.

Songs.

If we call Song a poem which admitting of vocal delivery and generally accompanied by some instrument, expresses a single and fixed feeling in a plain, but most elaborate form: we cannot help confessing that far the greatest part of Thomas Moore's songs imply all the requisites alluded to in rather an uncommon degree. The Irish Melodies, the National Airs and Sacred Songs are composed after ancient and modern airs and have been published together with their airs. Even if we should never enjoy the opportunity of hearing any of those airs sung: we feel the sweetest music in reading those poems. Moore is eminently a musical genius. This we find in perusing all the Irish Melodies and National Airs and the greater part of his Sacred Songs. Could any thing be given more musical than the first of these Melodies:

Go where glory waits thee,
 But while fame elates thee,
 Oh! still remember me.
 When the praise thou meetest
 To thine ear is sweetest,
 Oh! then remember me.
 Other arms may press thee,
 Dearer friends caress thee,
 All the joys that bless thee,
 Sweeter far may be;
 But when friends are nearest,
 And when joys are dearest,
 Oh! then remember me.

Or the following:

As a beam o'er the face of the waters may glow,
 While the tide runs in darkness and coldness below,
 So the cheek may be ting'd with a warm sunny smile,
 Though the cold heart to ruin runs darkly the while.

Or the drinking-song:

Wreath the bowl
 With flowers of soul,
 The brightest wit can find us;
 We 'll take a flight
 Tow'rd's heaven to-night,
 And leave dull earth behind us!

Or the praising-song of Music herself:

Sing — sing — Music was given
 To brighten the day and kindle the loving;
 Souls here, like planets in Heaven,
 By harmony's laws alone are kept moving.

Or the National air:

Those evening bells! those evening bells!
How many a tale their music tells,
Of youth and home and that sweet time,
When last I heard their soothing chime.

Those joyous hours are past away,
And many a heart, that then was gay,
Within the tomb now darkly dwells,
And hears no more those evening bells.

And so 't will be when I am gone;
That tuneful peal will still ring on,
While other bards shall walk the dells,
And sing your praise, sweet evening bells!

We have chosen these few pieces, while we may be able to quote twenty times as many: so rich is Moore's Music in her variation. Even some songs of Moore's earlier period, though in other regards much inferior, already show this musical quality: so the song of the evil spirit of the woods, composed on his journey in the wilderness of North-America, and the Canadian boat-song, written on the river St-Lawrence.

The musical value of Byron's songs does in general not attain the musical vein of Thomas Moore. Byron's dark and dreary mind shines but rarely in gay sentiments; and to breathe dark rolling verses in a manner meant for being sung, is hard work, even to so lyrical a genius as Byron is. Yet in some songs of his and even in gloomy ones we may feel that gift of music in a very satisfying way, so in the drinking-song:

Fill the goblet again! for I never before
Felt the glow which now gladdens my heart to its core;
Let us drink! — who would not? — since through life's varied round
In the goblet alone the deception is found.

In the lines to Mr. Hodgson:

Huzza! Hodgson, we are going,
Our embargo 's off at last;
Favourable breezes blowing
Bend the canvass o'er the mast.
From aloft the signal 's streaming,
Hark! the farewell gun is fired;
Women screeching, tars blaspheming,
Tell us, that our time 's expired.
Here 's a rascal
Come to task all,
Prying from the custom-house;
Trunks unpacking,
Cases cracking,
Not a corner for a mouse
'Scapes unsearch'd amid the racket,
Ere we sail on board the Packet.

In that beautiful last „Good Night“ of Childe Harold, Canto II:

Adieu, adieu, my native shore
 Fades o'er the waters blue;
 The night-winds sigh, the breakers roar,
 And shrieks the wild sea-mew.
 Yon sun that sets upon the sea
 We follow in his flight;
 Farewell awhile to him and thee,
 My native Land — Good Night!

In the stanzas for music, written in May 1814:

I speak not, I trace not, I breathe not thy name,
 There is grief in the sound, there is guilt in the fame.

In the stanzas for music, written in March 1815, the best stanza:

Oh could I feel as I have felt, — or be what I have been,
 Or weep as I could once have wept, o'er many a vanish'd scene;
 As springs in deserts found seem sweet, all brackish though they be,
 So, midst the wither'd waste of life, those tears would flow to me.

In another poem, entitled stanzas for music:

Bright be the place of thy soul!
 No lovelier spirit than thine
 E'er burst from its mortal controul,
 In the orbs of the blessed to shine.

Regarding the exterior form, both Moore and Byron are Masters of it. They express their feelings in plain and clear constructions. Byron's sentences are sometimes a little complicated; nevertheless, the exterior composition answers the gloomy and more striking objects of his muse. The metres which our poets use, are corresponding with the objects of which they sing. But we generally made the observation, that, in his Irish Melodies, Moore prefers the gamboling anapaestic tetrameter, even in those poems which regret the lost freedom of Erin. In the Sacred Songs iambic trimeters and tetrameters are the measures regularly used, the same in the greatest part of the National Airs. The trochaic metre is but rarely employed, especially in some of the National Airs and Sacred Songs. Byron's measures are usually such as correspond best with gloomy and wounded feelings. In almost all his stanzas and songs the iambic tetrameter prevails, once or twice the iambic pentameter is used. The renowned „Fare thee well!“ to his wife and child is most aptly composed in the trochaic tetrameter. Jambic dimeters are also employed by Byron, but very seldom. He does not like the anapaests much, although some of his stanzas are written in this metre. The English language is rich of most beautifully sounding rhymes. Moore and Byron are in the highest degree masters in finding and applying them to their poetry. Notwithstanding that great mastership, however, there are some words rhyming merely to the eye, but not to the hearing as: stood — blood, rove — love, wove — love, improve — love, remove — above, bloom — come, mourneth — returneth, women — foemen. Still they are accepted as good rhymes by every body.

Concerning the nature of the feelings expressed in the songs of Moore and Byron, we may say, that all woes and pleasures of human life, all sweet and bitter feelings of mankind are found in their manifold expressions of happiness and misery.

We have no patriotic song of Lord Byron left; Thomas Moore has given us most beautiful ones. He sings Ireland's defeat and decay, her political misery in heart-piercing modes:

Erin! the tear and the smile in thine eyes,
Blend like the rainbow that hangs in thy skies!
Shining through sorrow's stream,
Saddening through pleasure's beam,
Thy suns, with doubtful gleam,
Weep, while they rise.

Never will Erin be free again:

'Tis gone, and for ever, the light we saw breaking,
Like Heaven's first dawn o'er the sleep of the dead —
When man, from the slumber of ages awaking,
Look'd upward and bless'd the pure ray, ere it fled!
'Tis gone — and the gleams it has left of its burning
But deepen the long night of bondage and mourning,
That dark o'er the kingdoms of earth is returning,
And, darkest of all, hapless Erin! o'er thee.

Discord has divided the sons of his nation:

As vanquish'd Erin wept beside
The Boyne's ill-fated river,
She saw where Discord, in the tide,
Had dropp'd his loaded quiver.
„Lie hid," she cried, „ye venom'd darts,
Where mortal eye may shun you;
Lie hid — for oh! the stain of hearts
That bled for me is on you.“
But vain her wish, her weeping vain —
As Time too well hath taught her:
Each year the fiend returns again,
And dives into that water:
And brings triumphant, from beneath,
His shafts of desolation,
And sends them, wing'd with worse than death,
Throughout her maddening nation.
Alas! for her who sits and mourns,
Even now beside that river —
Unwearied still the fiend returns,
And stored is still his quiver.

„When will this end? ye Powers of Good!“
 She weeping asks for ever;
 But only hears, from out that flood,
 The demon answer, „Never!“

To this day that demon of discord has not fled from Ireland. On the 12th of July the Orangemen still celebrate their victory got over the Jacobites in the bloody battle of the river Boyne in 1690, and so every year the soil of Erin is stained anew with the blood of her children.

Nevertheless Thomas Moore loves his country with his best love:

Wert thou all that I wish thee, great, glorious and free,
 First flower of the earth, and first gem of the sea,
 I might hail thee with prouder, with happier brow,
 But oh! could I love thee more deeply than now?

He tries to console his enslaved country with the memory of the past:

Let Erin remember the days of old,
 Ere her faithless sons betrayed her;
 When Malachi ¹⁾ wore the collar of gold,
 Which he won from her proud invader;
 When her kings, with standard of green unfurl'd,
 Led the Red-Branch Knights ²⁾ to danger; —
 Ere the emerald gem of the western world
 Was set in the crown of the stranger.

But however great the present misery may be, still fair green Ireland is worthy to be praised: the sensitive and true hearts of her daughters are far to be preferred to the prudery of English ladies and to the fickleness of French women. This opinion of his is beautifully expressed in Moore's admirable melody:

We may roam through this world like a child at a feast,
 Who but sips of a sweet and then flies to the rest;
 And when pleasure begins to grow dull in the east,
 We may order our wings and be off to the west:
 But if hearts that feel, and eyes that smile,
 Are the dearest gifts that Heaven supplies,
 We never need leave our own green isle,
 For sensitive hearts and for sun-bright eyes.

In England, the garden of beauty is kept
 By a dragon of prudery, placed within call;
 But so oft this unamiable dragon has slept,
 That the garden 's but carelessly watch'd after all.

¹⁾ A Monarch of Ireland in the tenth century who defeated the Danes.

²⁾ A military order of Irish knights, which has been established in Ulster long before the birth of Christ.

Oh! they want the wild sweet briery fence,
Which round the flowers of Erin dwells,
Which warms the touch, while winning the sense,
Nor charms us least when it most repels.

In France, when the heart of a woman sets sail,
On the ocean of wedlock its fortune to try,
Love seldom goes far in a vessel so frail,
But just pilots her off, and then bids her good bye!
While the daughters of Erin keep the boy,
Ever smiling beside his faithful oar,
Through billows of woe and beams of joy
The same as he look'd when he left the shore.

Valour, love and wit are the natural gifts of a true Irish heart; this appears best in the melodious song on the Irish Shamrock. Of the many heroes whom Erin has born, Wellington is one of the most blameless:

- - - - There is not
One dishonouring blot
On the wreath that encircles my Wellington's name!

The Island herself is rich in natural beauties and scenery; so he sings of her in the two melodies entitled: „The meeting of the waters,“ and „Fairest! put on awhile.“

We have already spoken of the chief ideas of Byron's love songs: they distinguish themselves by deep, yet for the most part dark and dreary feelings. Lord Byron knows the deepness and strength of human passions so well, that his pictures touch our heart to the core. Still he is great in describing tender and pure love. Thomas Moore sings of love's pleasures and woes in happier, yet not less true and deep tones. He praises the charming qualities of the fair sex in lighter and more cheerful similes than Lord Byron. Remembering tenderly the blissful and dear, but absent beloved, his eyes are not closed to beauties near him. But the love of youth is far the sweetest:

Oh! that hallow'd form is ne'er forgot
Which first love trac'd;
Still it lingering haunts the greenest spot
On memory's waste!

Still he needs woman's love in his old age; but then the dreams of folly are past, it is reason which rules over his happy feelings:

Oh! doubt me not — the season
Is o'er, when Folly made me rove,
And now the vestal, Reason,
Shall watch the fire awak'd by Love.

Both our poets are tender and true friends. We find this feeling expressed oftener in epistles than in songs. Byron's best song regarding friendship's happiness and consolation is most likely that entitled: *L'amitié est l'amour sans ailes*. It has been written in December 1806 and is to be found in the *Hours of Idleness*. We may quote the closing strophe:

Fictions and dreams inspire the bard
 Who rolls the epic song;
 Friendship and Truth be my reward —
 To me no bays belong;
 If laurell'd Fame but dwells with lies,
 Me the enchantress ever flies,
 Whose heart and not whose fancy sings;
 Simple and young, I dare not feign;
 Mine be the rude yet heartfelt strain,
 „Friendship is Love without his wings!“

Of Moore me may mention the melody beginning:

And doth not a meeting like this make amends
 For all the long years I 've been wand'ring away —
 To see thus around me my youth's early friends,
 As smiling and kind as in that happy day!

The vanity and delusions of human life are sung in most piercing tones by Byron. The many disappointments with which he has met, quiver in heart-appalling modes in almost all his songs. In this regard we may quote one and certainly the best of his earlier songs, that melancholic but somewhat consoling poem „The Tear“ composed in October 1806. Of his later period the song „I would I were a careless child“, the renowned „Fare thee well!“ to his wife and the „Lines“ inscribed „On this day I completed my thirty sixth year“ and written at Missolonghi, January 21st 1824, are most mournful and heart-seizing. Although happy circumstances and a mind moderate in his claims to human life, had sheltered Thomas Moore from the cruel trials of his friend Lord Byron, yet his sensible Irish heart is not untouched by the misery and the destroyed hopes of his fellow-creatures. This he proves in those beautiful songs „T is the last rose of summer“, „Has sorrow thy young days shaded“, „I saw from the beach, when the morning was shining.“

Every poet of sound and natural feeling raises his melodious and consoling voice to sing the eternal qualities of the Almighty and His works blissful to mankind. Thomas Moore and Lord Byron have left us proofs of their religious feelings in the „Sacred Songs“ and „Hebrew Melodies“. The Hebrew Melodies have been published with the music arranged by Mr. Braham and Mr. Nathan in January 1815, the Sacred Songs with their airs, composed by some of the most celebrated German, Italian and English composers of that time, in May 1816. The Hebrew Melodies, for the most part, exhibit objects taken from the Old Testament, two „Herod's lament for Mariamne“ and „On the day of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus“ from the New one. The „Song of Jephtha's daughter“, „Saul's song before his last battle“, „On the rivers of Babylon we sat down and wept“, „The destruction of Semnacherib“ are most wonderfully adapted to the corresponding situations. „The destruction of Semnacherib“ is, no doubt, the best of these poems: in poetical similes and strength of feeling and expressions it is most excellent. The greatness of the Lord is sung in the poem taken from Job „A spirit pass'd before me.“ In the songs „If that high world which lies beyond“, „All is vanity, saith the preacher“, „When coldness wraps this suffering clay“ the poet tries to console the distress of our life in showing and hoping the love of the Lord in the quietness of that world which lies beyond our own. As a religious song is also

to be mentioned the „Prayer of Nature,“ though it is written in 1806: in the despair of his soul the author addresses himself to the Father of Light, he is grateful for all His mercies past, and hopes that to Him again at last his erring life may fly.

Of Thomas Moore's Sacred Songs some are composed, like the greatest part of Lord Byron's Hebrew Melodies, on objects taken from the Old Testament. „Fallen is thy throne, o Israel!“ „Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea!“ „Weep, children of Israel, weep!“ „Go forth to the Mount — bring the olive-branch home!“ „War against Babylon! shout we around!“ all these Hebrew songs are distinguished by truth of sentiment and a harmonious form. Praise of God's love and mercy to man, trusting christian hope of a happy other life after the dark errors of this one are the sentiments poetically expressed in the rest of Moore's Sacred Songs. The night of heathendom and the bright sun of the Gospel are most beautifully sung in the poem:

Behold the sun, how bright
From yonder East he springs,
As if the soul of life and light
Were breathing from his wings.

The blessing of christian charity cannot be better described than in the „Angel of Charity.“ The sweet hope of meeting all our dear ones in the light of the eternal Home moves our hearts in the song:

Is it not sweet to think, hereafter,
When the Spirit leaves this sphere,
Love, with deathless wing, shall waft her
To those she long has mourn'd for here?
Hearts, from which 't was death to sever,
Eyes, this world can ne'er restore,
There, as warm, as bright as ever,
Shall meet us and be lost no more.

Odes.

The ancient Greeks understood by Ode any poem which could be sung or accompanied by music. Following this originary definition, Thomas Moore attributed the name of odes to a series of ten love-songs, addressed to Nea and written during his residence at Bermuda in 1803, and to six satirical and humouristic poems, written in 1826 and 1828, which are contained in the VIIIth and IXth volumes of the London edition. It may be said that some of these so-called Odes to Nea, namely those beginning „If I were yonder wave, my dear,“ and „Behold, my love, the curious gem“ are not without some poetical beauties; yet they cannot be reckoned among his good songs and if we call Odes those lyrical poems which express enthusiastically and in a most artificial form feelings produced by sublime objects which awaken a deep interest, Thomas Moore has written no ode, Lord Byron has left two: on Venice and to Napoleon Buonaparte.

Indeed the decay of Venice, the once mighty queen of the sea, and the fall of Napoleon, at the feet of whom the most powerful nations of Europe have writhed, are subjects full of high interest and awakening mournful feelings and sublime thoughts. We cannot but admire the manner in which Byron has fulfilled his poetical purposes in these two odes. His style is energetic without being bombastical; conciseness sometimes, most complicated but not unintelligible periods another time strike our eyes in reading those sonorous verses. The images which he has chosen, answer by their richness and significance the boldness of his fancy and the sublimity of his ideas.

„The everlasting to be which hath been“ is the principal idea of the ode on Venice.

With Venice

- - - - - Thirteen hundred years
Of wealth and glory turn'd to dust and tears;
And every monument the stranger meets,
Church, palace, pillar, as a mourner greets - - - -

So it is with all nations:

- - - - - Search the page
Of many thousand years — the daily scene,
The flow and ebb of each recurring age,
The everlasting to be which hath been,
Hath taught us nought or little.

— — — — —
Ye see and read,
Admire and sigh, and then succumb and bleed!

With Venice one of Freedom's pillars has fallen:

Glory and Empire! once upon these towers
With Freedom — godlike Triad! how ye sate!
The league of mightiest nations, in those hours
When Venice was an envy, might abate,
But did not quench, her spirit —

But now

The name of Commonwealth is past and gone
O'er the three fractions of the groaning globe;
Venice is crush'd, and Holland deigns to own
A sceptre, and endures the purple robe;
If the free Switzer yet betrides alone
His chainless mountains, 't is but for a time!
- - - - - One great clime,
Whose vigorous offspring by dividing ocean
Are kept apart and nursed in the devotion
Of Freedom which their fathers fought for - -

— — — — —
Still one great clime, in full and free defiance,
Yet rears her crest, unconquer'd and sublime,
Above the far Atlantic!

It is free America which in our poet's mind keeps Freedom fled from Europe. The founder of the Republic of the United States stands higher in Byron's esteem than the mightiest conquerors of the old world. This he shows in the Ode to Napoleon.

The expressive language of the first verses might be applied as well to the fall of the second emperor of France:

'T is done — but yesterday a King!
 And arm'd with Kings to strive —
 And now thou art a nameless thing:
 So abject — yet alive!
 Is this the man of thousand thrones,
 Who strew'd our earth with hostile bones,
 And can he thus survive?
 Since he, miscall'd the Morning Star,
 Nor man nor fiend hath fallen so far.

Buonaparte, the desolator and victor, has been overthrown, like Milon of old, in the sternness of his strength; yet he has found a darker fate than this athlete:

He fell, the forest prowler's prey;
 But thou must eat thy heart away!
 Thou Timour! in his captive's cage
 What thoughts will there be thine,
 While brooding in thy prison'd rage?
 But one — „The world was mine!“

Sylla and Charles V. have departed from their empires in full grandeur,

But thou — from thy reluctant hand
 The thunderbolt is wrung —
 Too late thou leav'st the high command
 To which thy weakness clung!

And yet

There was a day — there was an hour,
 While earth was Gaul's — Gaul thine —
 When that immeasurable power
 Unsated to resign
 Had been an act of purer fame
 Than gathers round Marengo's name.

But Napoleon did not resign, he was the „vain froward child of empire.“ And so are all the Great:

Where may the wearied eye repose
 When gazing on the Great;
 Where neither guilty glory glows,
 Nor despicable state?

Yes — one — the first — the last — the best —
 The Cincinnatus of the West,
 Whom envy dared not hate,
 Bequeath'd the name of Washington,
 To make man blush there was but one!

Elegies.

There are but a few poems of Thomas Moore and Lord Byron, which these poets themselves have named elegies or which can be named so.

Of Moore we may mention two juvenile poems, called by him elegiac stanzas, the Lines on the death of J. Atkinson, and one Irish melody lamenting the death of Gratian, a celebrated Irish orator and patriot, and thus commencing:

Shall the harp then be silent when he, who first gave
 To our country a name, is withdrawn from all eyes?
 Shall a minstrel of Erin stand mute by the grave,
 Where the first, where the last of her patriots lies?

The elegiac stanzas, supposed to have been written by Julia on the death of her brother, reproduce in simple, yet not untouching verses the mournful feelings of a young lady who lost her brother, a hopeful young man. The other poem, called likewise elegiac stanzas, sings of the soft quietness of grave. The lines on the death of J. Atkinson speak in deeply felt tones of the high qualities of the deceased friend. Stronger in expression and praising is that lamentation on the death of Gratian: an Irish patriot of the highest merits in defending his country, has died, and the poet consoles himself of that great loss by praising the moral and political virtues of the deceased.

We possess of Lord Byron the Elegy on Newstead Abbey, elegiac stanzas on the death of Sir Peter Parker, and the Monody on the death of Sheridan, spoken at Drury-Lane Theatre. The elegy on Newstead Abbey presents the description and history of this seat of Lord Byron's ancestors and deploras the decay of this old mansion; although this poem, written in 1806, is not of a high poetical value, still it may be called interesting as it already favours us with the poetical outlines of that most beautiful description of the same Norman Abbey, which Byron has left in the Stanzas 55 to 67 of the XIIIth canto of his Don Juan. In the elegiac stanzas on the death of Sir Peter Parker the poet envies the glorious death and life of this baronet in a manner excellent for deep sentiment and tender melancholy. The monody on the death of Sheridan is rather to be named an elegiac ode: so powerful are the expressions, so poetical the similes, so enthusiastical and sublime the ideas of which this lament is inspired. The poor, yet honourable life of Sheridan is shown in its principal lineaments; the loss of Sheridan is scarcely to be restored to the dramatic Muse:

Long shall we seek his likeness — long in vain,
 And turn to all of him which may remain,
 Sighing that Nature form'd but one such man,
 And broke the die — in moulding Sheridan!

Epistles.

Moore's poetical epistles are a fruit of his voyage to America and of but little value. They remind European friends of the happy hours which they have enjoyed together in years past, and sometimes compare the poet's journey and its impressions with similar situations of his friends. The two letters written from the City of Washington and that from Buffalo, upon Lake Erie, awake a greater interest by their descriptions of American life and manners. According to his own experience, Moore cannot agree with those enthusiastic friends of freedom, who are accustomed to look on America as the free and happy asylum of those who are turned out of Europe by religious and political tyranny.

Of Byron's few epistles we may give the name of poetical ones to that addressed to Edward Noel Long in 1806 or 1807, and to the Epistle to a friend in answer to some lines exhorting the author to be cheerful and to banish care, written in Newstead Abbey in 1811. The contents of these two letters are nearly the same: his mischief in love. But while in the former epistle the poet intends to banish his care in the midst of his youthful friends: he is going to throw himself into a busy political life in the second. Like almost all the other products of the same period, the poetical beauties of the first named epistle are but small; the second is to be called a good one, particularly on account of the lively description of the poet's meeting with the beloved lady of his boyhood and her child.

The epistle addressed to Edward Noel Long, written by Moore in the month of August 1806 or 1807, is a beautiful specimen of the poet's style. It is a letter of a few lines, but it is so full of life and interest, that it has become a classic. The poet describes his own situation in America, and compares it with the life of his friends in Europe. He speaks of the freedom of the American continent, and of the happiness of those who are turned out of Europe by religious and political tyranny. The epistle is a beautiful specimen of the poet's style, and it is so full of life and interest, that it has become a classic.

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