

THE LAST DAYS OF LORD BYRON

By Kenneth Macdonald, in T.P.'s Weekly.

Let us picture two vivacious passengers on board a British brig in the Mediterranean, laughing merrily at a skipper of exceptional bulk and girth, laughing in particular at the enormous scarlet waistcoat with which the skipper liked to adorn himself on ceremonial occasions. Let us picture them, further, getting possession of that waistcoat, putting it on so as to demonstrate that it was large enough to contain the two of them, and then leaping into the sea to prove that they could swim in it. It seems, at the first glance, a picture of two bank holiday young men out for a jaunt. It is, in fact, a picture of Byron and Trelawny, on their way to join the Greeks in their great revolt against the Turks. A curious prelude, no doubt, to an episode which has taken rank among the most romantic incidents of history; but the men who do serious things do not always choose to strike serious attitudes when setting out to do them. Byron, in particular, delighted to maintain the appearance of frivolity even when he cherished deep designs.

Byron and the Greeks.

The eyes of romantic Europe were upon him, and a great deal was expected from the magic of his presence and his name. He would at once, people thought, raise an army and march to Constantinople. Arriving before Constantinople, he would blow a trumpet, and the walls of the city would fall down flat. Instead of which, his critics complained, "he has settled down comfortably in a villa in the Ionian Islands, and is writing a fresh canto of 'Don Juan.'" But that was not true. Byron was, indeed, living in a villa—for even a romantic poet must live somewhere; but the only poetry which he wrote in his villa was a war-song. He was, in fact, transforming himself from poet to man of action; and he was doing so in the face of circumstances of considerable difficulty.

"I am not going to stir from here," he said, "until I see my way"; and to Tom Moore he wrote: "I have not been quiet in an Ionian Island, but much engaged in business as the Greek deputies (if arrived) can tell you."

For the situation, at the moment, was far from satisfactory. Success had turned the heads of the revolutionists, and their leaders were at loggerheads. Each of them was anxious to secure Byron's help, not for a nation, but for a faction, and to engage him, not in revolt against the common enemy, but in internecine strife. As Finlay puts it: "To nobody did the Greeks ever unmask their selfishness and self-interest so candidly." Kolokotronis invited him to a national assembly at Salamis. Mavrocordatos informed him that he would be of no use anywhere but at Hydra, for Mavrocordatos, then in that island, Constantine Mavrocordatos, who was governor of Missolonghi, wrote, saying that Greece would be ruined unless Lord Byron visited that fortress. Petros used plainer words. He informed Lord Byron that the true way to save Greece was to lend him, the bey, a thousand pounds.

The Sojourn in Cephalonia.

Trelawny, who was more keen about the fighting than about the cause, accused him of "dawdling" and "shilly-shallying," and went off, without him, to join the forces of one of the sectional chiefs. Byron, just because he took the revolution seriously at heart, his immediate purpose was to reconcile the rival factions, and raise money for the cause. He had the conclusion of a loan, he advanced them a good deal of his own money, and those who imagined that he was merely out to see sights and amuse himself, quickly discovered their mistake. His chance came when Mavrocordatos arrived to raise the siege of Missolonghi; after mopping up a Turkish treasure ship on the way, and invited Byron to join him, placing a

brig at his disposal for the voyage. "I beg not tell you," Mavrocordatos wrote, "to what a pitch your presence is desired by everybody, or what a prosperous direction it will give to all our affairs," and Stanhope, who was already with Mavrocordatos, wrote at the same time: "It is right and proper to tell you that a great deal is expected from you both in the way of counsel and money." With every respect to your coming here, all are ready to see you. I walked along the streets this evening, and the people asked me after Lord Byron."

And then, on the following day: "You are expected with feverish anxiety. Your further delay in coming will be attended with serious consequences."

Whereupon Byron wrote to the Honorable Douglas Kinnaird, his banker, who was managing his business affairs for him in London: "Get together all the means and credit of mine you can, to face the war establishment, for it is 'in for a penny, in for a pound,' and I must do all that I can for the ancients."

The Move to Missolonghi.

The Greek disorders were not, indeed, entirely healed, but they were in a fair way to be so, and it would have been unreasonable to hang back any longer. So Byron set out at last, accompanied by Count Gamba, the Guicciardi brother, and it is to Gamba that we owe our most graphic picture alike of the voyage and of the landing. The travellers joined in the choruses of the sailors' patriotic songs, and poets' artillery, firing of muskets, and wild music.

"Crowds of soldiery," Gamba continues, "and citizens of every rank, shore to testify their delight. Hope and content were pictured in every countenance. His lordship landed in a Speziot boat, dressed in a red uniform. He was in excellent health, and appeared moved by the scene."

That was on one of the first days of January, 1824. There was much to be done. The difficulties of doing it were done. Byron had only a very few weeks of active energy before him. Mavrocordatos gave him a commission as commander-in-chief—"archistrategos"—was his grandiloquent title. He prepared to lead them to the storming of Lepanto. He did something to mitigate the inhumanities of the war by insisting upon the release of some prisoners, whom his allies wanted to massacre, and by preventing a German officer from flogging a mutinous private.

The Last Poem.

He also wrote a final poem, containing these famous lines:

If thou regret'st thy youth, why live?
The land of honorable death
Is here: up to the field, and give
Away thy breath!

Seek out—less often sought than found—
A soldier's grave, for thee the best;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy rest.

He was indeed to take his rest, and to take it in the field of battle. It was his health—so falsely reported by Gamba to be "excellent"—that was to fail him. An imprudent plunge into the had upset him, though he had temporarily recovered. He was in a state to stand the pestilential Missolonghi climate. He knew it, and, at the very time when Stanhope was writing home to say that "Lord Byron burns with military ardor and chivalry," his own letters show that he was conscious of the danger attending his residence in the most malarious part of a malarious town.

"If we are not taken off by the sword," he wrote on Feb. 5, "we are like to march off with an ague in this mud-baked, and to conclude with a very bad pun, better martially, than very bad pun. The dykes of Holland when broken down are the deserts of Arabia in comparison with Missolonghi."

Quelling a Mutiny.

At the same time he began to have epileptic seizures, and, in a matter of one of them, he had trouble with his soldiers. There were only five hundred of them, as has been said, and one hundred and fifty of them should be promoted to be officers, and that the rest should be accorded a month's pay in advance. Colonel Stanhope tells us how he quelled the mutiny.

"Soon after his dreadful paroxysm when he was lying on his side, and with his whole nervous system completely shaken, the mutinous soldiers, broke into his apartment, brandishing their costly arms, and loudly demanding their rights. Lord Byron electrified by this unexpected act, seemed to recover from his sickness, and the more his soldiers demanded, the more his calm courage triumphed. The scene was truly sublime."

And Gamba's tribute is: "Upon trifling occasions he was certainly irritable; but in the aspect of danger, he was calm and collected, and restored him the free exercise of all the powers of his noble nature."

The doctors bled him, and he pulled through, whether in consequence of their treatment or in spite of it; but his regiment and his mode of life were not such as to restore him to vigor. His diet consisted of vegetables, purgative pills, and Epsom salts; and, at the same time, he partook very freely of a comforting punch concocted by Parry, the artificer, who had been brought out from England to organize the arsenal. Relapse succeeded relapse, and just at the hour at which fortune seemed beginning to smile upon the Greeks, his life could be seen to be ebbing away.

On April 9, while riding with Gamba, he was caught in a violent storm of rain. "I should make a fine soldier if I did not know how to stand such a trifle as this," he said to his companion; but two hours after his return he was shivering and complaining: "I am in great pain," he said to Gamba. "I should not care for dying, but I cannot bear these pains."

Serious Illness.

On April 11 he was well enough to ride again, but on the 12th, he was in bed with rheumatic fever, and the fever never again left him. The inevitable proposal to bleed him was repeated. At first he resisted, with the usual talk about the lancet being more deadly than the sword, but in the end he acquiesced. "There!" he said. "You

see, I see, a d—d set of butchers. Take away as much blood as you like, and have done with it."

They took twenty ounces, and also put blisters on his legs. It is useless to argue whether the treatment was wise, for he was apparently in a state in which no treatment, however wise, could have saved him. He had another rally, however, and Gamba, who was himself laid up with a sprained ankle, struggled in to see him. "I contrived," he writes, "to walk to his room. His look alarmed me much. He was too calm. He talked to me in the kindest way, but in a sepulchral tone. I could not bear it. A flood of tears burst from me, and I was obliged to retire."

Soon after that, delirium set in. It was proposed to fetch an English doctor from the Ionian Islands, but his ship could not be procured in time. Gamba, Parry and others stood by the bedside weeping. They could not, says Cordy Jeaffreson, "have wept more copiously had there been a prize of a thousand guineas for the one who wept most." Their tears showed him that they had lost hope, and then he said "Call Parry! I have something of importance to tell him."

Byron's Death.

Gamba sent Parry to him. "When he came," he says, "he could hardly recognize me. He wished to sleep. He continued to sleep for half an hour. About half-past five he awoke. . . . My lord knew him—he tried to express his wishes—he could not. About six o'clock he fell into a sleep. Alas! it was his last sleep. He breathed, however, until six in the evening of the next day, but without speaking a word or being sensible."

Concerning Greece, his last words were: "I have given her my time, my money, and my health—what could I do more? Now I give her my life," and then he spoke of home, and asked: "Who did I not go to England before I came here? I leave these that I love behind me—in other respects I am willing to die."

Another version of the story says that he died with a half-spoken message to Lady Byron on his lips. It is one of those matters about which it will never be possible to know the actual truth. For the rest we may take leave to quote the eloquent words of Professor Niehoff's monograph: "Never, perhaps, was there such a national lamentation. By order of Mavrocordatos, thirty-seven guns—one for each year of the poet's life—were fired from the battery, and answered by the Turf from Patras with an exultant volley. All offices, tribunals and shops were shut, and a general mourning for twenty-one days proclaimed. Stanhope wrote, on hearing the news, 'England has lost her brightest genius—Greece her noblest friend'; and Trelawny, on coming to Missolonghi, heard nothing in the streets, but 'Byron is dead!' like a bell ringing through the silence and the gloom. Intending contributors to the cause of Greece turned back when they heard the tidings, that seemed to them to mean that she was hopeless."

His relatives hoped that he might be buried in Westminster Abbey, but the Dean took the true deacon line in the matter, and would not have him there, any more than a later Dean would have George Moore there.

WM. J. BRYAN ON BROTHERHOOD

Love Is the Greatest Force in the World.

"It was in France," says W. Jennings Bryan, "that Charles Wagner wrote that little book, 'The Simple Life,' which has been translated into nearly every tongue, and what is it in that book that has touched the heart and found response? It is the eloquent protest that he presents against the materialism that has been making man the slave of his possessions. It is the earnest appeal for the assertion of a manhood and a womanhood that will raise the spiritual above the purely physical. I am sure I am not mistaken when I say that we are upon the eve of this era of brotherhood, and as the doctrine of brotherhood spreads, as we come to recognize the inalienable rights that bind every human being to each other human being, we shall be lifted to a higher plane. Instead of killing each other because we differ in opinion, we will find a rational way of settling every dispute that arises among us. Do not these conferences at the Hague mean something? Do not the peace congresses that are held from time to time in different places mean something? I had the privilege of attending one peace conference in London in 1906; there were assembled there representatives of 26 nations, and they unanimously endorsed a resolution, the substance of which was this: That before any declaration of war or commencement of hostilities every question that defies diplomatic settlement shall be submitted to an impartial international tribunal for investigation and report. That means that instead of flying at each other in anger, instead of fighting when the passions are excited, we shall pass for investigation and examination before we become any nation goes to war the reason must be known, and the sentiment of the world can be turned upon the question; and the enlightened public opinion of the people of the world will compel justice."

"Do you tell me that the building of battleships still goes on? Yes; they are still building battleships, and I am not expecting that they will stop at once, but I am expecting that every year a larger and larger number of the people of the world will endorse the doctrine set forth by Carlyle in the closing chapters of his 'French Revolution,' when he says that 'thought is stronger than artillery parks,' and at last mold the world like soft clay, and then Carlyle adds that at the back of thought is love. Love is the greatest force in the world. It is a larger intelligence, with a quickened conscience and with an increased application of ethics to public affairs, we will realize that the things that are unseen are eternal, and that the sentiment of justice, which no one can see with the eyes of the flesh is after all, the thing that is most real and the foundation upon which governments, societies and civilization rest."

A correspondent of the London Daily News writes from Milan, Italy: "I have recently had the advantage of meeting Mr. Hall Caine, whose opinion of the new British Parliament will be of interest to many."

I found Mr. Hall Caine in the lounge of a fashionable hotel at San Moritz. There was a cosmopolitan crowd of elaborately-dressed people, and a Viennese band playing waltzes. The novelist was dressed in the continental fashion, in a dinner jacket and white waistcoat, and Mrs. Hall Caine had a wonderful Japanese coat over a white satin gown. She wore a pale blue ribbon twisted in her dark hair.

"I am trying to do the hardest thing in the world," said Mr. Caine, "and that is not to write. Today I have really succeeded in not putting pen to paper, and I have skated for three hours in this glorious mountain air."

We soon found ourselves talking about the elections. "The Liberal success," he



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THE SECRET OF GENIUS

Scientist Dissects Lives and Family Histories of Great Men—Genius Purely an Accident.

How and why the world gets its geniuses is the subject of a treatise entitled "Great Men," which Professor Wilhelm Ostwald, winner of this year's Nobel prize for chemistry, has just published. It deals mainly with the underlying biological and psychological principles of research.

Dr. Ostwald dissects the lives and family histories of all the great men of science of modern times, and tries to lay down the general laws under which they attained greatness and by which they carried on their work. The first question he deals with is: What are the parents of great scientists and other influences under which great men of science are born?

While affirming emphatically that geniuses are born, Dr. Ostwald denies that geniuses or great talent is hereditary, and argues that neither the parents nor the brothers and sisters of a genius are great. The birth of a genius is an accident of nature.

Nearly all great men of science, says Professor Ostwald, spring from the middle classes, the three notable exceptions, Cavendish, Boyle and Lord Rayleigh, being Englishmen. They very rarely spring from the working classes, and from this Dr. Ostwald concludes that it is necessary for a great man of research to start from a certain cultured level; otherwise he would have to waste too much energy in the attainment of preliminary knowledge.

The parents of great scientists are, therefore, often men who, without being geniuses have taken an interest in science while not pursuing it as a career. As regards race, Dr. Ostwald holds that a scientific genius can arise only in a highly civilized race, but he does not think that the age of the civilization makes any difference, and points out that science has been lately showing more vigor in Scandinavia than in France and Italy, with their much older culture.

The argument that great men of research are born, not made, is supported by the fact that most great scientists showed their particular bent at an early age and that many made their most important discoveries while they were young. Newton, Linnaeus, Helmholtz are remarkable instances. Accompanying this phenomenon is often the premature decline of scientific genius, so that many men of research who made great discoveries before the age of 30 died little or nothing afterward.

Professor Ostwald divides all men of science into classicists and romanticists. The classicist works with the greatest pains at the completion of and proof of each discovery before making use of it, whereas the romanticist, impelled by too great a rush of ideas, is inclined to publish his ideas too soon. The best teachers of science are always belonged to the romantic school.

Dr. Ostwald concludes by considering the relation of women to science. His attitude is unfavorable. He holds that during the past twenty or thirty years enough women have studied science at universities and high schools to make it a fair test whether they are capable of first-class achievements in the domain of pure science, and he holds that the answer is negative.

ORIGIN OF A PHRASE.

What is the origin of the phrase, "getting into a scrape"? My attention has just been drawn to an explanation suggested by the late Robert Chambers, of journalistic fame. "There is a game called golf, almost peculiar to Scotland, though, also frequently played upon Blackheath, involving the use of a small, hard, elastic ball, which is driven from point to point with a variety of wooden and iron clubs. In the north it is played for the most part upon downs (or links) near the sea, where there is usually an abundance of rabbits. One of the troubles of the golf player is the little hole which the rabbit makes in the sward in its first efforts at a burrow; this is commonly called a rabbit's scrape, or simply a scrape. When the ball or simply a scrape. When the ball gets into a scrape it can scarcely be played. The rules of most golfing tournaments accordingly include one indicating what is allowable to the player when he gets into a scrape."—Glasgow News.

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