

(Lord Byron's Family)

JANUARY 22, 1968CHARLES D. ARING

'Tis pity learned virgins ever wed  
 With persons of no sort of education,  
 Or gentlemen, who, though well born  
 and bred,  
 Grow tired of scientific conversation:  
 I don't choose to say much upon  
 this head,  
 I'm a plain man, and in a single  
 station,  
 But - Oh! ye lords of ladies  
 intellectual,  
 Inform us truly, have they not  
 hen-pecked you all?

Don Juan I, XXII

The Bryon story is endlessly fascinating, but no one should become drawn into it without his wits about him. It is a maelstrom, and the material is so vast as to engulf even the diligent. But the quantity of material is nothing compared to those disruptive emotions that enveloped the Byrons. Indeed they were turbulent before the advent of the sixth Lord, whose unhappy mother never allowed her young boy to forget his descent from belligerent Gordons and the royal Stuarts, to say nothing of the befuddled Byrons. In and around the great poet and his ladies, emotions developed into a mighty wave that swamped not only their contemporaries but also their descendents and later generations of interested persons.

The chief actors had some consideration for posterity. Lady Byron appeared overweening in her concern about making a case, and we know how laboriously Byron wrote out his Memoirs. These he offered to his wife for her editing of the story as she saw it. She refused, thereby nurturing the mystery. Byron presented the Memoirs in two sections to his friend the Irish poet, Thomas Moore, as a legacy of sorts. On May 17, 1824, less than a month after Byron's death, the manuscript was consigned to the flames by friends and relatives not as magnanimous as the great poet. They were in an awful hurry, considering that news travelled slowly in

those days. Then each of the five persons involved in turn disclaimed personal responsibility for what had been done. As had happened so frequently during his lifetime, Byron's friends indulged their own limitations at his expense.

The loss of the Memoirs stands at the heart of the problem. I trust that a copy might yet be uncovered, since a number of Byron's acquaintances\* had had access to them during the several years before immolation. There remains mystery that Byron valiantly tried to dispel. Byron always invited the fullest investigation of the facts and was never given satisfaction by his accusers. We have the word of Thomas Moore that the Memoirs offered no resolution. Since he was among those acquiescing to their destruction, his word in this matter must be at discount. Byron was not one to engage in tedium of this sort, if it were to cast no light.

Byron repeatedly protested that he did not know the cause of the tragic separation from his wife. During the last year of his life, he told Dr. James Kennedy, a Scots Methodist minister, physician, at Cephalonia, that he would ever remain ready for reconciliation, whenever circumstances opened and pointed the way to it. It is uncanny to find tracts for or against Lady Byron and her Lord, written as late as the twentieth century when all passion would have seemed to have been spent. Generally those direct descendents who have had at it favored the maternal side in their polemics. The divisive emotions of these fine people have been so potent that they continue to enlist those interested after a century and a half. I assert this from my own relatively meagre experience.

\*Among others who saw them were Lord John Russell, later a Victorian Prime Minister. Lord Russell was a Whig as was Byron. Though he favored publication, he said some parts were too gross for publication, just another of many indications that Byron was ahead of his time. The first Lord Russell was the grandfather of Bertrand Russell who, it seems certain, would have wanted the Memoirs published unexpurgated. Grandfather to grandson is a measure of how far we have come in these matters.

For those who have not known the great poet (1788-1824) and his Lady (1792-1860) - and who can know them now? - I will attempt brief character sketches. I go some of the way with Byron's thoughtful biographer, G. Wilson Knight, that we must hold in reserve all normal moral judgments, since Byron is a phenomenon larger than our reach. It was Byron's friend Thomas Moore who observed, "the utter unreasonableness of trying such a character by ordinary standards". We cannot hope to understand Byron unless we think poetically and comprehensively. But how many can?

This greatest historical poet and richest poet of the sea in Western literature who in many ways resembled Shakespeare struck extraordinary fear into his contemporaries, as may be assessed by considering some of the revulsion stirred by his mature work. Even his brief youthful political career in the House of Lords as a Whig in a Tory era, derived for him the enmity born of fear. His liberal political machinations in Italy brought church and state down on his friends, for the authorities were afraid to deal but indirectly with the great British nobleman.

There was absolutely no concealment in Byron; he told everything he thought or did without reserve. His was a passion for facts accompanied by a singularly cool judgment. short year before his death, he said to Lady Blessington, "There are but two sentiments to which I am constant - a strong love of liberty and a detestation of cant, and neither is calculated to get me friends". His love of truth and all the qualities flowing from it is almost beyond comprehension even today, when we have moved in the directions of his thinking about liberty and straightforwardness.

Byron had an enormously developed sense of humor and a life-long fondness for playing tricks, from which he did not exclude his animals. While at Trinity College he kept a Newfoundland dog (Boatswian) that he would take boating with him, and on occasion feign falling out into the water. The dog never failed to plunge in after him and drag him out. It may be recalled that Byron was an expert swimmer.

Byron was instinctively led to assist the lowly and attack the great. This he learned at his

mother's knee, her views were amazingly liberal for the age. He preferred poetic action to poetry. After the failure of one of the revolutions in Italy where he was heavily committed, he wrote to Moore from Ravenna: "And now let us be literary . . . If Othello's occupation be gone". The literary always offered him consolation. He said of poetry: "If we cannot contribute to make mankind more free and wise, we may amuse ourselves and those who like it". He loathed radicals and demagogues as much as he loathed the ruling powers, whom he considered little - if at all - concerned with the welfare of the people. He was for reform but not for the reformers. In him, aristocracy entailed responsibility. Byron was at heart an educator, always anxious to assist, educate and raise those below him in the social scale. A lovely characterization of him by his last love, Countess Teresa Guiccoli was that his innate generosity was "too instinctive to be called a virtue, and yet was too admirable to be considered an instinct".

It is difficult to think of Lord Byron as a fervent puritan, yet in a sense he was. His was an age of gross immorality trending into the Victorian. His behavior can be understood as bridging the two. Born in Scottish Calvinism, his end was implicit in his beginning and his death at Missolonghi was clearly a martyrdom. He had dreamt more than once and had other presentiments that he would die in Greece.

Byron was ghost-ridden and fey; his concern with presages very nearly defies belief. How could a man of his intelligence and originality fear beginning a trip on Friday, and subscribe to all the other omens and portends that inexorably drove him, perhaps even to his death? Obviously he knew himself as different born and bred, even of the quality of a new Messiah. Knight says that he was of that genius who have been compelled to replace the worship of Christ by, however, fragmentarily, the imitation of Christ. Shakespeare, Milton, Swift and Nietzsche were of this stripe.

Byron forgave, returned good for evil, embodied the very heroism of Christian charity. Pardon was a habit with him. No single word could characterize him, but magnanimity comes closest. He would mask his stature by a studied selfmockery and self-denigration, in part a technique for disarming malice. All the evidence goes

to show that his disposition was cheerful, even gay and that in the important issues he was neither touchy nor vain.

The only constructive way to look upon his sexual passion is as a refuge and safeguard. Were sexual impulse always governed by sexual motives, human relationships would present a somewhat easier study. The thoughtful have not regarded incontinence as among the great sins. Byron's capacity for love in a germane sense was of high order, and sexuality as communion and release is to be evaluated carefully in persons such as he, for in his comprehensive personality, nothing was omitted. Byron was always spontaneous in word and in deed. There is no need to become disconcerted, if we can strive even with a modicum of good will to think poetically and comprehensively about him. That he was on occasion completely "released" is suggested by the evidence of his friends; Trelawny and the kindly Dr. Francisco Bruno who accompanied him to Greece described behavior late in his life entirely consistent with that rather complete state of release, the epileptic seizure. The perceptive Lady Blessington said during his last years, though before the final Greek venture, "Lord Byron's heart is running to waste for want of being allowed to expend itself on fellow-creatures". He said as much and more in his last poem, written a few months before his death at Missolonghi and entitled, "On this Day I complete my Thirty-sixth Year" beginning:

'Tis time this heart should  
be unmoved,  
Since others it hath ceased  
to move;  
Yet, though I cannot be beloved,  
Still let me love!

Anne Isabella, Lady Byron, or Annabella as she was called, was a highly intelligent lady. As the daughter of Sir Ralph Millbanke and niece of Elizabeth, Viscountess Melbourne, she was of the quality. One wonders if she and Byron could not have made a better adjustment had they not had to cope with family and friends. The friends of genius are likely to prove their greatest hindrance.

Lady Bryon had a certain proficiency in mathematic

and one of Byron's early references to her in a letter to her Aunt, Lady Melbourne\* was as the "Princess of Parallelograms". In his letters to the Countess Teresa Guiccioli, Lady Byron became the blessed Mathematician or the Lady Mathematician. Her scientific bent was obvious. She read widely in several languages. One of her authorities was Erasmus Darwin, the physician, naturalist and poet and grandfather of the more famous Charles. His treatise on diseased volition, in which he declared that a sufferer can be relieved by talking freely of his trouble, while anticipating Freud, served Lady Byron adversely in her skirmishes with her husband. Lady Byron, the student of science listening to her husband's tirades - to him no more than poetic license - must have contemplated him with amazed anxiety.

There runs through her tragic life some problem about an uneasy relationship with key men, as evidenced with her husband, her son-in-law and finally her grandsons. She was somehow dragooned into the continuing Byron contest, as futile as it was destructive to her and to hers. Her life was "spring and winter".

While I cannot hope to document her essential tragedy, perhaps an incident taken from Hobhouse's diary will be illustrative. Hobhouse, later Lord Broughton, was Byron's classmate at Cambridge, best man at his wedding, and his lifelong friend. He was among those faithless five who acquiesced in the burning of Byron's Memoirs, reflecting what has already been said about the friends of genius. In the Hobhouse diary for the same day, there is this entry:

"I should mention that this day I received a curious message from Lady Byron through Captain George (the seventh Lord) Byron. It was that she wished me to give out that I would write Lord Byron's Memoirs in conjunction with the assistance of the family, including Lady Byron, and that would stop all spurious efforts and would be particularly agreeable to her. I returned for answer that I had no spirits now nor inclination for undertaking or thinking of any such task".

It would be unseemly for me to choose among

\*Mother of Queen Victoria's first Prime Minister

Byron's loves - for a number of reasons I would have had him return to England to face the music late in 1819 when he was poised to leave Venice - it is worth remarking the contrast between Lady Byron and the Countess Teresa Guiccioli. The latter was of his nature, Lady Byron was not. Among her reasons for marrying seem to have been glamour, fame and social position. His reasons for marrying her may be sought in the fact that she stood out from the giddy, flirtatious crowd and did not pursue him, and that he regarded her aunt, Lady Melbourne, as a kind of substitute mother and hoped for the same in Annabella. She recognized Byron's great powers and found them dangerous. In marriage her tranquility proved to be more conventional and sanctimonious than consoling and affectionate. She was "mathematical" rather than passionate. Teresa was gay and kind - and she adored him - and she was young and passionate. She had no fear except of losing him and responded positively to his genius with the eyes of love; Lady Byron negatively with the eyes of studied criticism. Both responded to his genius.

In the description of Don Juan's mother in the First Canto, we are afforded Byron's estimate of Annabella.

His mother was a learned lady,  
 famed  
 For every branch of every science  
 known -  
 In every Christian language ever  
 named,

. . .

Her favourite science was the  
 mathematical,  
 Her noblest virtue was her  
 magnanimity;  
 Her wit (she sometimes tried at wit)  
 was Attic all,  
 Her serious sayings darken'd to  
 sublimity;  
 In short, in all things she was  
 fairly what I call  
 A prodigy;

. . .

Some women use their tongues -  
 she look'd a lecture,  
 Each eye a sermon, and her brow  
 a homily,

As may be expected from what has been already recounted of Lord Byron, he had no trouble discussing his previous loves with his final attachment, as Lady Blessington who met him little more than a year before his death, foresaw it to be. Countess Guiccioli's characterization of Lady Byron accords with the latter's intellectual attainments: "one of those minds that act as if life were a problem in jurisprudence or geometry; who argue, distinguish, and, by dint of syllogisms, deceive themselves learnedly".

These brief sketches of fascinating people are grossly inadequate to the task. I feel for both Lord and Lady Byron in their tragedy, which in some lights would be regarded today as largely neurotic. Both wrestled with ghosts out of their past, with unresolved problems derived from formative years. Some would believe that we are blessed by their travail, but that is another story. I prefer to think that Lord and Lady Byron accommodated to their problems deviously and at a price, a price terrible to them and theirs.

I was drawn to the Byron story by happening once again across those moving opening stanzas of Canto III of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, written in 1816 shortly after the breaking up of his family.

Is thy face like thy mother's  
 my fair child!  
 Ada! sole daughter of my house  
 and heart?  
 When last I saw thy young blue  
 eyes they smiled,  
 And then we parted . . .

Byron left England for Italy under a cloud of some sort for the second and last time on April 25, 1816, in his 29th year. It is difficult to extract facts from a fog of innuendo. He and his wife and infant daughter had parted amicably enough in London on January 15, 1816, after a year of marriage. Their finances were in something of a jumble, and there had been disagreements. Lady

Byron had taken Ada Augusta, born only a month before (December 10, 1815) to Kirkby Mallory, her parents' home, ostensibly for an interim visit. She had hoped Byron would visit there before he started for the continent, and he promised to do so. She was opposed to his trip abroad and had refused to join him. In the bosom of her family, something occurred, we know not what, to freeze Lady Byron in the posture of an offended woman. Despite Byron's overtures and hopes, his family was never reconstituted. He never again saw his wife or Ada.

There can be no question that he felt the dissolution keenly. His letters, journals and poems are full of it. The final four stanzas of Canto III of *Childe Harold*, written in 1816, are a hauntingly beautiful statement of a father's feeling for his little daughter and the heaviness of his heart at not being allowed to know her. In 1824, his dying thoughts at Missolonghi were on Ada and Lady Byron.

I find it unwise to meditate too deeply upon Byron's feeling, one can become consumed in his fire, as Byron himself described:

. . . I have thought  
Too long and darkly, till my  
brain became,  
In its own eddy, boiling and  
o'erwrought,  
A whirling gulf of phantasy and  
flame:

To be sure his feelings for children were complex. It must be remembered he never had Ada's care and support, and that when in 1817 he was presented another lovely daughter, Allegra, by Claire Clermont, he failed as a father in the flesh. This too is another story, and sad to boot. My estimate is that he could intellectually "suffer the little children", but his statement to Lady Blessington that "in poets the imagination is warmer than the heart" seems to fit him exactly.

It occurred to me to wonder what had become of Ada (1815-1852), "The child of love - though born in bitterness". As might have been expected the offspring

of two such intelligences as Lord and Lady Byron was an interesting person in her own right. As a young girl, Ada was tall and robust and cheerful and of good temper. She was said to resemble her mother, as Byron had surmised in the opening line of Canto III (Childe Harold). Much as her mother - Byron's "Princess of Parallelograms" - Ada developed remarkable mechanical ingenuity, exhibited early in the construction of miniature ships and boats before her teens. Her love of the sea resembled her father's, a love that in Byron knew no bounds, surely an affair of great psychological significance. What surcease he derived from the sea may be gathered from lines toward the close of Childe Harold (CLXXXIV) written in 1818:

And I have loved thee, ocean!  
 and my joy  
 Of youthful sports was on thy  
 breast to be  
 Borne, like the bubbles, onward:  
 from a boy  
 I wantoned with thy breakers -  
 they to me  
 Were a delight; and if the  
 freshening sea  
 Made them a terror - 'twas a  
 pleasing fear,  
 For I was as it were a child  
 of thee,  
 And trusted to your billows far  
 and near,  
 And laid my hand upon thy mane -  
 as I do here.

Ada's forte was mathematics. She particularly liked geometry, much of which she learned on her own initiative. She preferred prose to poetry, as did her father, according to his own statement. When he heard of Ada's preferment, he said that poetry should only occupy the idle. She was introduced to his poetry at the age of 16, when her mother read to her the beautiful lines on Greece in "The Giaour", published in 1813, which open:

Fair clime! where every season  
 smiles  
 Benignant o'er those blessed isles,

Her mother reported Ada's great pleasure with this poem. Ada considered "A Satire" (English Bards and Scotch Reviewers first published in 1809) amusing. This witty excoriation directed at nearly all the eminent poets and critics then living appeared just after Byron's twenty-first birthday. It heralded the return of wit to poetry in the style of his beloved Alexander Pope. We should always be grateful to those who show that serious thought may use light tones. The famous "Fare Thee Well" Ada thought labored. She cannot be blamed for falling into the same error as many of her contemporaries to say nothing of succeeding generations. Even Thomas Moore, Irish poet and friend, felt similarly about "Fare Thee Well" (1816) until he was privileged to read the Memoirs now unfortunately lost to us. It was only then that he grasped the poignancy of those famous lines referring to the separation. Ada was not yet ready to sense the depth of her father's "heart running to waste". Ultimately she did feel with her father as events were to prove.

On April 18, 1833, in her eighteenth year, Ada was presented at Court. She was immersed in the study of Astronomy and greatly enjoyed machinery of all kinds. She drew well. Her interests led to an acquaintance with that fascinating genius, Charles Babbage, inventor of the "analytical engine", forerunner of the computer.

Though she was often absorbed by study, Ada was by no means a drudge. She was a beautiful and talented young woman who loved to dance. Like her father she possessed a ready wit. Unlike him she was at ease in repartee. She had been a fearless equestrienne since early youth. Her introduction to the races at Doncaster by her mother began an interest that was to play a vital role in her life. Byron's love of horses and his riding propensities are well known.

In July 1834 at the age of 19½, Ada married William the eighth Lord King who in 1838 was created the first Earl of Lovelace. Thenceforth she was known as Ada, Countess of Lovelace.

While Ada was touched by the genius of both parents, her personal fame rests on her remarkable treatise on the Babbage analytic engine. Her secure

friendships were with intellectuals, among them Charles Babbage (1792-1871) a curious mathematical genius. Like Byron he was a graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge, four years his junior. Like Byron he was a Whig (Liberal). He ran unsuccessfully for Parliament in 1832 and 1834. Perhaps for Ada there was some identification between these two men of outstanding originality with the gadfly in their makeup. It was at Cambridge, about 1812, that the first idea of calculating numerical tables by machinery occurred to Babbage.

His interest in the extension of mathematics was fantastic. His demand for statistical accuracy involved even poetry. It is said he wrote Alfred, Lord Tennyson, about a couplet in "The Vision of Sin":

Every minute dies a man  
Every minute one is born

as follows: "I need hardly point out to you that this calculation would tend to keep the sum total of the world's population in a state of perpetual equipoise, whereas it is a well-known fact that the said sum total is constantly on the increase. I would therefore take the liberty of suggesting that in the next edition of your excellent poem the erroneous calculation to which I refer should be corrected as follows:

Every moment dies a man,  
And one and a sixteenth is born

I may add that the exact figures are 1.167, but something must, of course, be conceded to the laws of metre". It is of interest that in editions after 1850, the word minute was changed to moment where it appeared twice in the couplet.

Babbage calculated tables of mortality and wrote on games of chance. He knew about the pulse and respiratory rates of animals and wrote a tract on "The Table of Constants of the Class Mammalia". He was interested in deciphering any and all codes and in constructing them. He could solve the riddle on any lock, and he constructed a plan to defeat his own method. He began a number of dictionaries. He tried his hand at apologetics, and in 1837 wrote "The Ninth Bridgewater Treatise", the original eight having been supported by

a bequest that sought evidence in favor of natural religion. Babbage at his own expense argued the opposition - that is, that the pursuit of science, and particularly mathematics, are unfavorable to religion.

Babbage once said he would gladly give up the remainder of his life, if he could be allowed to live three days 500 years hence and be provided with a scientific guide to explain the discoveries made since his death. The wide range of his practical and scientific interests and his clear commitment to the notion that careful analysis, mathematical procedures, and statistical calculations would be reliable guides to almost all facets of practical and productive life give him still a wonderful modernity.

One of Babbage's remarkable accomplishments was to persuade the British government to underwrite to a considerable sum his experiments with calculating engines. This makes his genius not only the forerunner of the computer, but also of application of science to politics. The government derived little tangible for its money, though there are some fragmentary portions of his engine in the South Kensington Museum. Somewhat like that greatest of geniuses, Leonardo, he was not of a mind to complete anything. He was ever off on thoughts about newer models. In this sense, he anticipated Detroit. Babbage's speculative mind outran the capacity of mechanics to resolve them in metal. It is significant that he had the respect of the Royal Society, though he was consistently badgering it to mend its ways. His propensity as gadfly was not unlike Byron's.

But to get back to Ada, who in her teens was absorbed in mathematics and visiting her friend Babbage in his workshop and listening to his explanations of the structure and uses of his engines. Babbage was too much concerned with their development to publish any description of them.

In 1840 he was invited to Turin to discuss his analytical engine. Among the audience was L. F. Menabrea, later to become a general in the army of Garibaldi, who summarized and published Babbage's ideas in 1842. Menabrea's paper was then translated and extensively annotated by Ada, then Countess of Lovelace, who was not yet 28. Her paper appeared in Taylor's Scientific

Memoirs (iii, 666). By all odds it is the best contemporary account, as Babbage himself recognized.

I will skip over the scientific explanations and mathematical formulae in her treatise which are largely beyond my appreciation to quote one or two of her annotations at length. I ask that you listen carefully to these long Victorian sentences for the influences of the father she never knew, whose poetry contains so much philosophy.

"Those who view mathematical science, not merely as a vast body of abstract and immutable truths, whose intrinsic beauty, symmetry and logical completeness, when regarded in their connexion together as a whole, entitle them to a prominent place in the interest of all profound and logical minds, but as possessing a yet deeper interest for the human race, when it is remembered that this science constitutes the language through which alone we can adequately express the great facts of the natural world, and those unceasing changes of mutual relationships which, visibly or invisibly, consciously or unconsciously to our immediate physical perceptions, are interminably going on in the agencies of the creation we live amidst; those who thus think on mathematical truth as the instrument through which the weak mind of man can most effectually read his Creator's works, will regard with especial interest all that can tend to facilitate the translation of its principles into explicit practical forms.

"The distinctive characteristic of the Analytical Engine, and that which has rendered it possible to endow mechanism with such extensive faculties as bid fair to make this engine the executive right hand of abstract algebra, is the introduction into it of the principle which Jacquard devised for regulating, by means of punched cards, the most complicated patterns in the fabrication of brocaded stuffs . . . We may say most aptly, that the Analytical Engine weaves algebraical patterns just as the Jacquard-loom weaves flowers and leaves.

"In enabling mechanism to combine together general symbols in successions of unlimited variety and extent, a uniting link is established between the operations of matter and the abstract mental processes

of the most abstract branch of mathematical science. A new, a vast, and a powerful language is developed for the future use of analysis, . . ."

And in another remarkable commentary which is as contemporary as tomorrow concerning the analogy of Babbage's analytical engine to thought, she said: "The Analytical Engine has no pretensions whatever to originate anything. It can do whatever we know how to order it to perform. It can follow analysis; but it has no power of anticipating any analytical relations or truths. Its province is to assist us in making available what we are already acquainted with".

This remains the answer for those who would find the mind in the machine. These and other commentaries concerning analytical machines reveal a marvelous mind of flashing intelligence and philosophical bent.

I have mentioned some resemblances between Ada and her father whom she never knew in the physical sense. Lord Byron's mother-in-law, Lady Noel, provided in her will that Ada was not to see his portrait until her 21st year. Yet many of her expressions were his, perhaps a reflection of her reading them. Ada even had her father's wonderfully musical voice. There is some of his high tragedy in her end. She shared with her husband an interest in horse racing, characteristic of the English gentry. With Babbage she worked on a system for backing horses and conceived what she thought was an infallible system for betting. In fallibility did not transcend the Byronic, a crude model for the free spirit.

It was gambling that brought to physics and mathematics the first real problems in unpredictability. Although dice, cards and roulette bow to the laws of mechanics quite accurately as Pascal showed in his studies of statistical probabilities as early as 1650, horse racing is another matter. Perhaps the horse resembles man in unpredictability, and as we look at the problem, man is more in evidence than the horse. It occurs to me that someone has defined horse sense as that faculty that keeps horses from betting on men.

Ada's husband, the Earl of Lovelace, and Babbage apparently stopped their wagering in time. But Ada

obstinately persisted and her losses were of such magnitude that she found it impossible to tell her husband. Unbeknownst to her husband, her mother came to her rescue by pawning the family jewels. There is much that is evil in the story, with its touts and confidence men, but - saddest of all - there resulted a split between Lady Byron and Ada's husband, the Earl of Lovelace, right along the Byronian tradition.

In the summer of 1852, Ada was stricken with abdominal carcinoma. She died at the same age as her father (and parenthetically his father, "Mad Jack" Byron), thirty-six years and a few months, survived by a daughter, Annabella, and two sons. The eldest, named Byron (Lord Ockham), was a silent and gentle rebel against the whole system of society, in this resembling his grandfather whose methods of demonstration, however, were quite direct. Ralph, the youngest child, went to live with his grandmother, Lady Byron, when he was 9 years of age, 4 years before Ada's death. Authors have commented on his odd and angular personality. He became "an eccentric man, with a strain of the authentic family violence". It was he who wrote the book Astarte, a quixotic attempted vindication of Lady Byron which appeared in 1905 with its indictment of his grandfather for incest. This charge was promptly and vigorously refuted by Sir John Murray, the grandson of Byron's publisher with his book "Lord Byron and His Detractors" dated 1906. The dialogue, better termed argument, continues.

In the closing stanzas of Canto III of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, completed in 1816, we find some predictions about Byron's then infant daughter Ada.

I see thee not, - I hear thee  
 not, - but none  
 Can be so wrapt in thee; thou art  
 the friend  
 To whom the shadows of far years  
 extend:  
 Albeit my brow thou never  
 should's't behold,  
 My voice shall with thy future  
 visions blend  
 And reach into thy heart, - when  
 mine is cold, -

I know that thou wilt love  
 me; though my name  
 Should be shut from thee, as  
 a spell still fraught  
 With desolation, - and a  
 broken claim:  
 Though the grave closed between  
 us, - 'twere the same,  
 I know that thou wilt  
 love me;

From what can be learned about her, these lines anticipated Ada. By her own request she was buried beside her father in the church at Hucknall Torkard in Nottinghamshire, near Byron's family seat. She was, as her father said in the last stanzas of the Third Canto:

The child of love, - though  
 born in bitterness  
 And nurtured in convulsion.  
 Of thy sire  
 These were the elements, - and  
 thine no less.  
 As yet such are around thee, -  
 but thy fire  
 Shall be more tempered, and thy  
 hope far higher.

Ada's fire was more tempered but was fire enough for an intellectual lady of the early Victorian era? And there has passed along to succeeding generations the controversy born in bitterness and nurtured in convulsion that, try as he might, the great poet could not resolve.

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