

were taken to Rome and buried in a new part of the Protestant cemetery not far from Keats's grave. In 1881 Trelawney, adventurer, author, and friend of Shelley, was buried there beside him.

Of the famous trio, the romantic and adventurous Lord Byron was the most convincing proof that a poet—and poetry was always his chief passion—is not necessarily effeminate.



Lord Byron (1788-1824)

Though lame from infantile paralysis suffered in childhood, he became a good boxer, played cricket for Harrow at Lord's and in later life joined the select few who have swum the Hellespont. By his personal charm and the appeal of his poetry, he early won such widespread popularity in England that all the young bloods of his day aped him, imitating his style of dress and even his limp.

However, his private life and rebel spirit did not suit the conventional mind of the England of that time, and from the age of 21, he spent most of his life on the Continent, where he travelled extensively. In Italy, where he lived from 1816 to 1823, he wrote much of his best work, including *Don Juan*. Who can say whether he owed his inspiration more to Italy or to Teresa, Countess Guiccolli—but that is another story.

Byron lived for various periods in Venice, Ravenna, Bologna, Pisa and Genoa. In 1823 he left Italy to take an

active part in the struggle of the Greeks in their fight for freedom against the Turks, and the following year, at the age of 36, died of marsh fever contracted on a campaign at Missolonghi.

He reveals something of his appreciation of Italy, of the Italian tongue, and also of feminine charms, in the following extract from *Beppo*:—

I love the language, that soft bastard Latin,
Which melts like kisses from a female mouth,
And sounds as if it should be writ in satin
With syllables which breathe of the sweet south.

Robert Browning and his wife, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, herself a poetess, lived in Italy from 1845 till 1861 when she died. It was largely for her health that they came to Italy, but apart from that she was always keenly interested in Italy and in the Italian struggle for freedom. As for Browning, no attempt can be made here to do justice to his literary greatness. He has shown his feelings for Italy in the lines from *De Gustibus*:—

Open my heart and you will see
Graved inside of it *Italy*.

For all these poets, probably the least important fact, as far as their work is concerned, is that they lived in Italy.



Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)