

Pisa - 23. July 1822.

Dear Sir,

You will have heard by this time, the dreadful news wh'ch still seems ringing here in all ears, - the loss of Mr Shelley & his friend Capt. Williams in their boat off Vika Reggia. What you will have felt on hearing it, I am sure I know; & by this you will judge of what we all feel, - except indeed the women, whose anguish must have surpassed conception. They are better, but still suffering piteously.

I have been writing, at Mrs Shelley's request, to Hogg & Peacock respecting ~~Mr~~ Shelley's will, & some alterations he afterwards made in it. Mrs S. thinks she recollects that a correspondence ~~was~~ passed between you & him respecting it, & that you may be able to furnish some information to Hogg & Peacock, who are requested to apply to you accordingly. Mrs S. is now searching among her husband's papers for <sup>altered</sup> the will; but it has struck her, that perhaps he consigned it to you, when you left Italy.

Mrs Hunt, who sends her best remembrances with mine to Mrs. Siborne & yourself, is better; & we still better, till this common calamity of all kind hearts occurred. Yours, my dear Sir, very truly,  
Leigh Hunt.



A circular postmark with a dotted border. The text "A. U. P. O." is arranged in a semi-circle at the top, and "1822" is at the bottom.

A circular library stamp from the University of Michigan Library, dated 1900. The stamp is embossed in a reddish-brown ink. It features a central five-pointed star surrounded by a circular border containing the text "UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LIBRARY" and the year "1900".

any letter.

John Osborne Esq<sup>r</sup>

23. King Street West

Proprietors Share

London,

*Agave americana.*

*England.*

Quif:

Hugh Brown  
 Wm. B. Church. 18  
 Wm. Pitts

LEIGH HUNT, A. L. S., 23 July 1822, to John Gisborne.

Pisa—23 July 1822.

Dear Sir,

You will have heard by this time, the dreadful news which still seems ringing here in all ears,—the loss of Mr. Shelley & his friend Capt. Williams in their boat off Villa Reggia. What you will have felt on hearing it, I am sure I know; & by this you will judge of what we all feel,—except indeed the women, whose anguish must have surpassed conception. They are better, but still suffering piteously.

I have been writing, at M<sup>rs</sup>. Shelley's request, to Hogg & Peacock respecting Mr. [deleted] Shelley's will, & some alterations he afterwards made in it. M<sup>rs</sup>. S. thinks she recollects that a correspondence [indecipherable word deleted] passed between you & him respecting it, & that you may be able to furnish some information to Hogg & Peacock, who are requested to apply to you accordingly. M<sup>rs</sup>. S. is now searching among her husband's papers for the altered will; but it has struck her, that perhaps he consigned it to you, when you left Italy.

M<sup>rs</sup>. Hunt, who sends her best remembrances with mine to M<sup>rs</sup>. Gisborne & yourself, is better; & was still better, till this common calamity of all kind hearts occurred.

Yours, my dear Sir, very truly,

Leigh Hunt.

[flourish]

ALS, 1 page. Double sheet, 25 x 19 cm.

Wove paper. Watermarks: (first leaf) PARODI; (second leaf) BENIDETT[O].

Seal removed.

Postmarks: 1. PISA; 2. FPO | AU.6 | 1822 [receiving stamp];  
3. 12 O'Clock | · AU.6 · | 1822 NO[four badly blurred letters].

Address: "Angleterre" upper right corner; "Inghilterra" lower left corner. John Gisborne Esq<sup>re</sup>. | 33. King Street West, | Bryanstone Square, | London, | England.

Docket: (upper right corner verso of second leaf) Leigh Hunt |  
rec. 6' Aug. 1822 | Ans: *Ditto*.

Provenance: W. Gisborne (the letter is tipped onto a manila  
backing with the MS penciled notation, at top: Presented to us  
by W. Gisborne—). In an American Art Association folder.

Published by Lyle H. Kendall, Jr., "Leigh Hunt on Shelley's  
Missing Will: An Unpublished Letter," *Keats-Shelley Journal*,  
XV (1966), 6-7.

Notes: 1. Shelley died on 8 July 1822 after having executed several wills:  
the first 24 September 1816, the second 18 February 1817 (after Harriet's  
death), and a new or altered instrument either 28 February or 20 April 1820.  
This document has yet to surface.

2. Hunt's first letter on Shelley's death was written to Elizabeth Kent, 20  
July. She is requested to show or send the letter to Thomas Jefferson Hogg.  
His "letters" to Hogg and Thomas Love Peacock were a single communication,  
dispatched on the same day that he wrote Gisborne (who witnessed the "third"  
will), sent to Peacock for transmission to Hogg (unpublished, in the Carl H.  
Pforzheimer Library).

3. Gisborne wrote to Hogg on 12 August, and Mary Shelley to Peacock on  
29 September. Since their efforts failed to uncover the lost papers, the second  
will took effect—but not until 1844. On the twentieth of April in that year  
Mary wrote Hunt that he would thenceforth have 120 pounds annually "in  
memory of what Shelley's intentions were" (see *The Letters of Mary W.  
Shelley*, ed. Frederick L. Jones [Norman, 1944], II, 218; Frederick L. Jones,  
"Shelley's Revised Will," *Modern Language Notes*, LIX [1944], 542-544).  
Hunt, that is, had a personal interest in locating the fugitive testament.

4. Here published by permission of Daniel Whitten, Editor, *Keats-Shelley  
Journal*.



"THIS COMMON CALAMITY..."

Leigh Hunt, with his wife, had come to Pisa early in July, 1822, anticipating a delightful summer in the company of the Shelleys, Byron, and Trelawny. Less than two weeks later this celebrated literary group was overwhelmed with the tragic loss at sea of Shelley and his friend, Capt. Williams.

Hunt placed himself at Mary Shelley's services. We have one of his letters, written <sup>to John Gisborne,</sup> on her behalf, only a few days after Shelley's death. The first few lines speak with such eloquent restraint and understanding for "this common calamity of all kind hearts" that we quote them in full: "You will have heard by this time, the dreadful news which still seems ringing here in all ears,--the loss of Mr. Shelley and his friend Capt. Williams in their boat off Villa Reggia. What you will have felt on hearing it, I am sure I know; & by this you will judge of what we all feel,--except indeed the women, whose anguish must have surpassed conception. They are better, but still suffering piteously..."

The rest of the letter, written on one page, quarto, dated from Pisa, July 23, 1822, refers to alterations in Shelley's will on which ~~Mary~~ Mrs. Shelley thought Gisborne could throw some light.

(COPY)

Pisa 23 July 1823

Dear Sir;

You will have heard by this time, the dreadful news which still seems ringing here in all ears,--the loss of Mr. Shelley & his friend Capt. Williams in their boat off Villa Reggia. What you will have felt on hearing it, I am sure I know; & by this you will judge of what we all felt,--except indeed the women, whose anguish must have surpassed conception. They are better, but still suffering piteously.

I have been writing, at Mrs. Shelley's request, to Hogg & Peacock respecting Shelley's will, & some alterations he afterwards made in it! Mrs. S. thinks she recollects that a correspondence passed between you & him respecting it, & that you may be able to furnish some information to Hogg & Peacock, who are requested to apply to you accordingly. Mrs. S. is now searching among her husband's papers for the altered will; but it has struck her, that perhaps he consigned it to you, when you left Italy.

Mrs. Hunt, who sends her best remembrances with mine to Mrs. Grisbone & yourself, is better; & was still better, till this common calamity of all kind hearts occurred.

Yours, my dear Sir, very truly,

(Signed) LEIGH HUNT.