My dear Friend,

After a lull of some months I hasten to communicate to you the results of the interval. They will surprise, or if any degree of our ancient affection is yet cherished by you for a being apparently so inconsistent, I understand it as little is likely to you. You will regain that after struggles & privations which almost withered me to extremity, I enjoy an happiness, the most purest & sweetest that & & it suffices for any support to participations. That I am restored to energy & enterprise, that I have become again what I once promised to become, that my friendship with no longer be an enigma to my friends, you will rejoice; if the causes that produced my illness have not made you indifferent to their existence, my restoration to peace, liberty & virtue.

As soon as I returned from the continent (for I have travelled this France, Switzerland, Germany, Holland) I sought you to communicate what
I will now detail.

In the beginning of spring, I spent two months at Mrs. Roosevelt's without my wife. If I except the succeeding period these two months were probably the happiest of my life: the calmest the serenest, the most free from care. The contemplation of female excellence is the favorite food of my imagination. Here was ample scope for admiration: novelty added a peculiar charm to the intrinsic merits of the objects. I had been unaccustomed to the mildness, the intelligence, the delicacy, of a cultivated female. The presence of Mrs. Roosevelt and her daughter afforded a change in contrast to my own friendless and helpless condition. I suddenly perceived that the entire situation was such that I had resigned all prospects of utility, of happiness, to the single purpose of cultivating Harriet. Was this a gross and despicable superstition? Perhaps every degree of affectionate intimacy with a female, however slight, partakes of the nature of love. Love makes even quicksighted fools only call him by the name of love because he perceives the existence of relations invisible to others.
The full extent of the calamity which my rash & heedless
union with Harriet: an union so whore unwise might
justly be dreaded.

Lucinda: my Lorenzo! Which entailed
had produced. I felt, as if a dead & hirer body had lin-
bered together in brotherhood & hitherto communion. It
was no longer possible to practise self-deception. I believed
that one existing only yet remained to continue to deceive
my wife: I wandered in the fields alone. The season
was most beautiful. The evening was so serene & mirth-
some, had before felt so intensely the subterranean
whispers of the embryos of spring. Manifestation
of my approaching change tinged my waking
thoughts, I feared no seductive subject for the
visions of my head. I recollected that one day
I undertook to travel from Meathville to my
father's, (40 miles). A train of visionary
events arranged themselves in my imagination
until ideas almost acquired the intensity of
sensations. Already I had met the female
who was destined to be mine, already had
she replied to my exulting recognition, already
were the difficulties surmounted that opposed...
an entire union. I had even proposed to Farce to compose a letter to Hamlet on the subject of my departure for another. This was my real
resolution, at the conclusion of which I was hardly

In the month of June I went to London, that

I might accomplish some business with Johnson

that had been long depending. The remainder

often can acquire an almost constant

residence at his house. Here I met his

daughter Mary. The originality of her beauty

of Mary's character was apparent to me from

her very motions & tone of voice. The perspicacity

intensity & sublimity of her feelings showed itself

in her gestures and in her looks. Her smile, how

persuasive it was! how pathetic! How gentle, to be convinced & tender, yet not incapable

of earnest indignation & hatred. I do not

think that there is an existence which human

nature can arrive, that she does not indefinitely

hope, or of which her character does not

afford manifest intimations.
I speak thus of Mary... I am intimately one of her excellencies as if I were an eye-test refraining upon her own perfection. Then, how deeply does it affect my inferiority, how terrifying to reflect myself for satisfied in originality, in genuine elevation & magnificence of the intellectual nature until she consented to share her capabilities with me.

I secretly conceived an ardent aspiration to possess this inestimable treasure. In my own mind this feeling assumed a variety of shape. I disliked from myself the true nature of my affection. I endeavored also to conceal it from Mary; but without success. I was vacillating & in search of succor. I shuddered to remit a real duty or could not in this instanceisseric the boundaries by which virtue was separated from madness. True self-devotion became the very prosperity of devotion. The understanding was made clear by a spirit that sees into the truth of things. The affections preserved were a sacred from the contaminating contamination of vulgar speculations. This attachment can...
convey the utmost conception of the manner in which she cherished my detestors. The sublime and capricious moment when she confided herself mine, who had so long been held in secret, cannot be painted to mortal imaginations — let it suffice to you, who are my friend to know & to deplore that she is mine. Until at length I pressed the inaudible pleasure, that I sought to that I have found.

This implicitly watched & regarded with a suspicion one opportunity of frequent intercourse was all wanting. When we met, I would give you a more explicit detail of the progress of our intercourse: how in opposition to her father's wish, to Varietto's assertions we still continued to meet — how the Godwine himself induced us to prolong the period of our separation. How the cruelty & exposure with which we were treated inflamed us to disregard, in consideration that of the happiness of each other.

We left England & proceeded to Switzerland & returned then to Holland. Our return...
have helped since this new state of being con-

isured. How wonderfully I am changed! I am

a disembodied spirit can now understand and con-

sider myself as an electrical current rather than as an eternal substance or a constant force. Above all, most sincerely

do I receive the truth of my own worth and

just as depending on another. And I am
deeply persuaded that these enabled me to

become a more true and constant friend,

more useful and kind of mankind, a more constant

defender of truth and virtue... above all more

consistent, more intelligible, more true.

My dear friend, I entreat you to write to

me soon. Even in this full and celestial

happiness I am not contented until I hear

from you. Most affectionately yours,

P.B. Shelley
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY, A. L. S., 4 October 1814, to Thomas Jefferson Hogg.

5 Church Terrace Pancras London
October 3, 1814.

My dear Friend

After a silence of some months I hasten to communicate to you the events of the interval. They will surprise, & if any degree of our ancient affection is yet cherished by you for a being apparently so inconsistent & indisciplinable as me, will probably delight you. You will rejoice that after struggles & privations which almost withered me to idiots, I enjoy an happiness the most perfect & exalted that it is possible for my nature to participate. That I am restored to energy and enterprise, that I have become again what I once promised to become... that my friendship will no longer be an enigma to my friend, you will rejoice... if the causes that produced my errors have not made you indifferent to their reformation, & my restoration to peace liberty & virtue.

As soon as I returned from the Continent, (for I have travelled thro' France, Switzerland, Germany & Holland) I sought you to communicate what [p. 2] I will now detail.

In the beginning [deleted] beginning of spring, I spent two months at Mrs. Boinville's without my wife. If I except the succeeding period these two months were probably the happiest of my life: the calmest the serenest the most free from care. The contemplation of female excellence is the favorite food of my imagination. Here was ample scope for admiration: novelty added a peculiar charm to the intrinsic merit of the objects: I had been unaccustomed to the mildness the intelligence the delicacy of a cultivated female. The presence of Mrs. Boinville & her daughter afforded a strange contrast to my own [deleted] former friendless & deplorable condition. I suddenly perceived that the entire devotion with which I had resigned all prospects of utility or happiness to the single purpose of cultivating Harriet was a gross & despicable superstition.—Perhaps every degree of affection-

Transcription from:
ate intimacy with a female, however slight, partakes of the nature of love. Love makes men quixsighted, & is only called blind by the multitude because he percieves the existence of relations invisible to grosser optics. I saw [p. 3] the full extent of the calamity which my rash & heartless union with Harriet: an union over whose entrance might justly be in[s]cried

Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch’entrate!

had produced. I felt as if a dead & living body had been linked together in loathsome & horrible communion. It was no longer possible to practise self deception: I believed that one revolting duty yet remained, to continue to deceive my wife.—I wandered in the fields alone. The season was most beautiful. The evenings were so serene & mild—I never had before felt so intensely the subduing voluptuousness of the impulses of spring. Manifestations of my approaching change tinged my waking thoughts, & afforded inexhaustible subject for the visions of my sleep. I recollect that one day I undertook to walk from Bracknell to my father’s, (40 miles). A train of visionary events arranged themselves in my imagination until ideas almost acquired the intensity of sensations. Already I had met the female who was destined to be mine, already had she replied to my exulting recognition, already were the difficulties surmounted that opposed [p. 4] an entire union. I had even proceeded so far as to compose a letter to Harriet on the subject of my passion for another. Thus was my walk beguiled, at the conclusion of which I was hardly sensible of fatigue.—

In the month of June I came to London that I might [these three words deleted] to accomplish some business with Godwin that had been long depending. The circumstances of the case required an almost constant residence at his house. Here I met his daughter Mary. The originality & loveliness of Mary’s character was apparent to me from her very motions & tones of voice. The irresistible wildness & sublimity of her feelings shewed itself in her gestures and her looks—Her smile, how persuasive it was & how pathetic! She is gentle, to be convinced & tender; yet not incapable of ardent indignation & hatred. I do not think that there is an excellence at which human nature can arrive, that she does not indisputably possess, or of which her character does not afford manifest intimations.

[p. 5] I speak thus of Mary now. & so intimately are our natures now united, that I feel whilst I describe her excellencies as if I were an egotist expatiating upon his own perfections—Then, how

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From Kendall, 1970
deeply did I not feel my inferiority, how willingly confess myself far surpassed in originality, in genuine elevation & magnificence of the intellectual nature until she consented to share her capabilities with me. [2-inch space] I speedily conceived an ardent passion to possess this inestimable treasure. In my own mind this feeling assumed a variety of shapes. I disguised from myself the true nature of my affection. I endeavored also to conceal it from Mary: but without success. I was vacillating & infirm of purpose: I shuddered to transgress a real duty, & could not in this instance perceive the boundaries by which virtue was separated from madness, where self devotion becomes the very prodigality of idiomism. Her understanding was made clear by a spirit that sees into the truth of things, & affections preserved pure & sacred from the corrupting contamination of vulgar superstitions. No expressions can [p. 6] convey the remotest conception of the manner in which she dispelled my delusions. The sublime & rapturous moment when she confessed herself mine, who had so long been her's in secret, cannot be painted to mortal imaginations—Let it suffice to you, who are my friend to know & to rejoice that she is mine: that at length I possess the inalienable treasure, that I sought & that I have found.—

Tho' strikty watched, & regarded with a suspicious eye, opportunities of frequent intercourse were not wanting.—When we meet, I will give you a more explicit detail of the progress of our intercourse: How in opposition to her fathers will, to Harriets exertions we still continued to meet.—. How Her [deleted] Godwin's distress induced us to prolong the period of our departure. How the cruelty & injustice with which we were treated, impelled us to disregard, all consideration but that of the happiness of each other.

We left England & proceeded to Switzerland & returned thro Germany & Holland. Two months [p. 7] have passed since this new state of being commenced. How wonderfully I am changed! Not a disembodied spirit can have undergone a stranger revolution! I never knew until now that contentment & [deleted] was any thing but a word denoting an unmeaning abstraction. I never before felt the integrity of my nature, its several [deleted] various dependencies, & learned to consider myself as an whole accurately united rather than an assemblage of inconsistent & discordant portions. Above all, most sensibly do I perceive the truth of my entire worthlessness but as depending on another. And I a[m] deeply persuaded that thus ennobled, [I shall] become a more true & constant friend, a more useful lover

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From Kendall, 1970
of mankind, a more ardent asserter of truth & virtue... above all more consistent, more intelligible more true.—

My dear friend I entreat you to write to me soon. Even in this pure & celestial felicity I am not contented until I hear from you.

Most affectionately yours

P B Shelley

ALS, 7 pages. Two double sheets, 22.6 x 18.8 cm.
Laid paper. Watermarks: F EDMUNDS | 1811 (first sheet); crowned coat of arms (second sheet).
Seal removed.
Postmarks: : Two Py Post : | Unpaid | Clarendon SQ [Penny Post Receiving House]; C · OC · | 5 | 814 [evening duty]; C · OC : | 6 | 814 [evening duty]; [indistinguishable—Penny Post Main Office?]; [indistinguishable morning duty]. Postal fees: 2 (on Receiving House stamp); 2/2.
Provenance: Hogg sale, Sotheby, 30 Jun 1948 (no. 50). Not listed in De Ricci.
Published in Scott, pp. 75–79 (no. 32); Jones, I, 401–403 (no. 265), with 1 substantive and 14 accidental variations from the Lewis MS.

Notes: 1 After the number 5 in the heading, a letter or number has been deleted. Brackets indicate seal removal damage.
2. For background consult White, I, 305–372.
3. The letters to Hogg thus far catalogued are in a folio buckram case, spine gold lettered on leather: AUTOGRAPH LETTERS | OF | PERCY B. SHELLEY | TO | THOMAS JEFFERSON | HOGG | AND OTHERS.
A. L. s. "P. B. Shelley", 7 pp. 4to, 5 Church Terrace, Pancras, London, October 3, 1814, to T. Jefferson Hogg (Harriet and Mary, p. 39, not in Ingpen)

** A LETTER OF THE GREATEST INTEREST, describing the origins and method of his elopement with Mary Godwin:

"In the beginning of Spring, I spent two months at Mrs. Boinville’s without my wife. If I except the succeeding period these two months were probably the happiest of my life: the calmest, the serenest, the most free from care. The contemplation of female excellence is the favourite food of my imagination. There was ample scope for admiration... I suddenly perceived that the entire devotion with which I had resigned all prospects of utility or happiness to the single purpose of cultivating Harriet was a gross and despicable superstition...."

"In the month of June I came to London to accomplish some business with Godwin which had been long depending... There I met his daughter Mary... Tho’ strictly watched, and regarded with a suspicious eye, opportunities of frequent intercourse were not wanting", etc.

Describes all the circumstances of his breach with Harriet, and elopement with Mary in the fullest detail.