exists that an aged Italian seaman on his deathbed confessed that he had been one of the crew of the fatal felucca, and that the collision was intentional, as the men had plotted to steal a sum of money supposed to be on the “ Don Juan,” in charge of Lord Byron. In fact there was a moderate sum there, but Byron had neither embarked nor intended to embark. This may perhaps be the true account of the tragedy; at any rate Trelawny, the best possible authority on the subject, accepted it as true. He it was who laboriously tracked out the shore- washed corpses of Williams and Shelley, and who undertook the burning of them, after the ancient Greek fashion, on the shore near Via Reggio, on the 15th and 16th of August. The great poet’s ashes were then collected, and buried in the new Protestant cemetery in Rome. He was, at the date of his untimely death, within a month of completing the thirtieth year of his age—a surprising example of rich poetic achievement for so young **a** man.

The character of Shelley can be considered according to two different standards of estimation. We can estimate the original motive forces in his character; or we can form an opinion of his actions, and thence put a certain construction upon his personal qualities. We will first try the latter method. It cannot be denied by his admirers and eulogists, and is abundantly clear to his censors, that his actions were in some considerable degree abnormal, dangerous to the settled basis of society, and marked by headstrong and undutiful presumption. But it is remarkable that, even among the censors of his conduct, many persons are none the less impressed by the beauty of his character; and this leads us back to our first point—the original motive forces in that. Here we find enthusiasm, fervour, courage (moral and physical), an unbounded readiness to act upon what he considered right principle, however inconvenient or disastrous the consequences to himself, sweetness and indulgence towards others, extreme generosity (he appears to have given Godwin, though sometimes bitterly opposed to him, between £4000 and *£5000),* and the principle of love for humankind in abundance and superabundance. He respected the truth, such as he conceived it to be, in spiritual or speculative matters, and respected no construction of the truth which came to him recommended by human authority. No man had more hatred or contempt of custom and prescription; no one had a more authentic or vivid sense of universal charity. The same radiant enthusiasm which appeared in his poetry as idealism stamped his speculation with the conception of perfectibility and his character with loving emotion.

In person Shelley was attractive, winning and almost beautiful, but not to be called handsome. His height was nearly 5 ft. 11 ; he was slim, agile, and strong, with something of a stoop; his complexion brilliant, his hair abundant and wavy, dark brown but early beginning to grizzle; the eyes, deep blue in tint, have been termed “ stag-eyes ”—large, fixed and beaming. His voice was wanting in richness and suavity—high-pitched, and tending to the screechy; his general aspect, though extremely variable according as his mood of mind and his expression shifted, was on the whole uncommonly juvenile. The only portrait of Shelley, from which some idea of his looks used to be formed, is that painted by an amateur, Miss Curran, in 1819; Mrs Shelley, later, pronounced it to be “ in many things very like.” This is now in the National Portrait Gallery, together with a quasi- duplicate of it painted by Clint, chiefly from Miss Curran’s likeness, and partly from a water colour (now lost) by Lieutenant Williams. In 1905 (*Century Magazine)* another portrait was brought forward: a pencil sketch taken in the last month of the poet’s life by an American artist, William E. West, followed by an oil-painting founded on that sketch. The two works differ very considerably, and neither of them resembles Miss Curran’s portrait, yet we incline to believe that the sketch was really taken from Shelley.

If we except Goethe (and leave out of count any living writers, whose ultimate value cannot at present be assessed), we must consider Shelley to be the supreme poet of the new era which, beginning with the French Revolution, remains continuous into our own day. Victor Hugo comes nearest to him in

poetic stature, and might for certain reasons be even preferred to him; Byron and Wordsworth also have their numerous champions —not to speak of Tennyson or Browning. The grounds, however, on which Shelley may be set highest of all are mainly three. He excels all his competitors in ideality, he excels them in music, and he excels them in importance. By importance we here mean the direct import of the work performed, its controlling power over the reader’s thought and feeling, the con- tagious fire of its white-hot intellectual passion, and the long reverberation of its appeal. Shelley is emphatically the poet of the future. In his own day an alien in the world of mind and invention, and in our day but partially a denizen of it, he appears destined to become, in the long vista of years, an informing presence in the innermost shrine of human thought Shelley appeared at the time when the sublime frenzies of the French revolutionary movement had exhausted the elasticity of men’s thought—at least in England—and had left them flaccid and stolid; but that movement prepared another in which revolution was to assume the milder guise of reform, conquering and to conquer. Shelley was its prophet. As an iconoclast and an idealist he took the only position in which a poet could advantageously work as a reformer. To outrage his contem­poraries was the condition of leading his successors to triumph and of personally triumphing in their victories. Shelley had the temper of an innovator and a martyr; and in an intellect wondrously poetical he united speculative keenness and humani- tarian zeal in a degree for which we might vainly seek his precursor. We have already named ideality as one of his leading excellences. This Shelleian quality combines, as its constituents, sublimity, beauty and the abstract passion for good. It should be acknowledged that, while this great quality forms the chief and most admirable factor in Shelley’s poetry, the defects which go along with it mar his work too often—producing at times vagueness, unreality and a pomp of glittering indistinctness, in which excess of sentiment welters amid excess of words. This blemish affects the long poems much more than the pure lyrics ; in the latter the rapture, the music and the emotion are in exquisite balance, and the work has often as much of\* delicate simplicity as of fragile and flower-like perfection.

Some of Shelley’s principal writings have already been mentioned above; we must now give a brief account of others. Of his early work prior to *Queen Mab*—such romances as *Zastrozzi* and *St Irvyne,* such verse as the *Poems by Victor and Cazire,* and the *Fragments of Margaret Nicholson—*we can only here say that they are intrinsically worthless. *Alastor* was succeeded (1817) by *The Revolt of Islam,* a poem of no common length in the Spenserian stanza, preaching bloodless revolution; it was written in a sort of friendly competition with Keats (who produced *Endymion)* and is amazingly fine in parts, but as a whole somewhat long-drawn and exhausting. This transcendental epic (for such it may be termed) was at first named *Laon and Cythna, or the Revolution of the Golden City,* and the lovers of the story were then brother and sister as well as lovers— an experiment upon British endurance which the publishers would not connive at. The year 1818 produced *Rosalind and Helen,* a comparatively weak poem, begun in England and finished in Italy, and *Julian and Maddalo,* a very strong one, written in the neighbourhood of Venice—demonstrating in Shelley a singular power of seeing ordinary things with direct- ness, and at once figuring them as reality and transfiguring them into poetry. In each of these two poems Shelley gives a quasi- portraiture of himself. The next year, 1819, was his culmination, producing as it did the grand tragedy of *The Cenci* and the sublime ideal drama *Prometheus Unbound,* composed partly on the ruins of the Baths of Caracalla in Rome. This last we have no hesitation in calling his masterpiece. It embodies, in forms of surpassing imagination and beauty, Shelley’s deepest and most daring conceptions. Prometheus, the human mind and will, has invested with the powers proper to himself Jupiter, the god of heaven, who thereupon chains and torments Prometheus and oppresses mankind; in other words, the anthropomorphic god of religion is a creation of the human mind, and both the