**Rogers and His Contemporaries**

Second tour

In Paris with sister, August 1821 (308); in Switzerland with sister Sarah and niece Martha, September (311). Sarah returned to London to supervise publication of “Italy Part 1” (311). Entered via Simplon (312): Baveno at Maggiore, Arona at Como, Milan (312-14), Venice, Bologna, Florence (314). Rome (326)

Pray, when you go to St. James's Place, search in the
drawer of the table that stands in the middle of my bed-
room, and I think you will find a thin blue copy-book in
a blue cover, as blue as the inside of a band-box.
It contains "The Brides of Venice." If you find it, print
it in its place. If not, it must be left out altogether, as
I have forgot it, and have in vain tried to recall it.
Among the chapters is one entitled " A Retrospect." Pray
entitle it " The Alps " instead. I have ventured to send
some lines on Mont Blanc for a note. If you don't think
them tolerable, don't let them be printed. Which do
you like best, the sixth line, those or this—
'Only less bright, less glorious than himself.

'My love to all. Ever yours,
'S. R.
'Pray find fault through the whole work.
'I.
'the mirror of all beauty.
[Note.—There is no describing in words, but the
following lines were written on the spot, and may serve,
perhaps, to recall to some of my readers what they have
seen in this enchanting country—
I love to watch in silence till the sun
Sets; and Mont Blanc, arrayed in crimson and gold, [end 317]

318 ROGERS AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES
Flings his broad shadow half across the Lake;
That shadow, though it comes through pathless tracts
Of Ether, and o'er Alp and desert drear,
Only less glorious than Mont Blanc himself.
But while we gaze, 'tis gone! And now he shines
Like burnished silver; all below, the Night's—
Such moments are most precious, yet there are
Others, that follow them, to me still more so;
When once again he changes, once again
Clothing himself in grandeur all his own;
When, like a ghost, shadowless, colourless,
He melts away into the Heaven of Heavens;
Himself alone revealed, all lesser things
As though they were not I]
'H.
'But the Bise blew cold;
And, bidden to a spare but cheerful meal,
I sate among the holy brotherhood
At their long board. The fare, indeed, was such
As is prescribed on days of abstinence,
But might have pleased a nicer taste than mine,
And through the floor came up; an ancient matron,
Serving unseen below; while from the roof
(The roof, the floor, the walls of native fir)
A lamp hung flickering, such as loves to fling
Its partial light on Apostolic heads,
And sheds a grace on all. Theirs Time as yet
Had changed not. Some were almost in the prime;
Nor was a brow o'ercast. Seen as I saw them,
Banged round their hearthstone in a leisure hour,
They were a simple and a merry race,
Mingling small games of chance with social converse,
And gathering news of all who came that way,
As of some other world.

[end 318]

THE FIRST PART OF 'ITALY' 319
'Italy.
(This to be the title to this chapter.)
'Am I in Italy? Is this the Mincius? &c.
down to "and self-congratulation." Then what follows is
to be in a new paragraph.
'0 Italy! how beautiful thou art!
Yet I could weep—for thou art lying, alas,
Low in the dust; and they who come, admire thee
As we admire the beautiful in death.
Thine was a dangerous gift, the gift of Beauty;
Would thou hadst less, or wert as once thou wast,
Inspiring awe in those who now enslave thee!
—But why despair? Twice hast thou lived already;
Twice shone among the nations of the world,
As the sun shines among the lesser lights
Of heaven; and shalt again. . . .'

From 323-

You will here receive three more things. On
second thoughts I think something more is wanting
(considering the material) to give it any importance, so
pray add them at the end, printing the notes in their
place among the rest—all together numerically—and
not broken by the heads of this chapter or that. The
printer to use a figure or a letter of reference as he
pleases. The notes to be cn masse at the end, lumped
together. I have been sadly perplexed by information,
true and false. Till my second visit to Padua I could
not learn the truth about Ezzelino's tower. You will
here receive the lines about it as they are to stand. The
opening of "Venice," too, must be changed, or I should
be found out. You will here receive a new one to as far
as "by many a dome," omitting all before. I have also
been obliged to alter about Masaccio and the sons of
Cosmo, as you will see, having found out the portraits
with much trouble in another house, and finding no
tombstone of Masaccio in the chapel, though he lies
thereabouts. You must be heartily sick of your com-
mission by this time. Pray don't send me these three
new ones unless you are much perplexed about them in-
deed, which I hope you will not [be], or think the new lines
so bad as to want alteration. When I return the sheets [end 323]

324 ROGERS AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES
of the others they will help you much with these, and
sending them would, I fear, cause a great delay of two
months at least.

. . .

 I hope you have found "The Brides of Venice." If not, I
think I must have locked it up in the secretaire in the [end 324]

[325] dressing-room, the key (a gold one, a patent) is, I believe,
lying in one of the drawers, hid.

[331]

I sent you another long letter and large budget from
Florence, directing it to Henry. I hope it arrived. It contained three more parts : "Ginevra," "Florence,"and
"Don Garzia." I am glad you have found the "Brides."
Many, many thanks to you for your great kindness and
patience under such an affliction. You will now taste
some of the miseries of an author, with none of his vanity
to support you under it. I am reading " Corinne" again,
and with new pleasure, and get on with Sismondi toler-
ably well. Inclosed you will receive another, "Arqua."
Pray insert it after " St. Mark's Place." . . .

Samuel Rogers to Sarah Rogers.
'Rome: 6 Dec, 1821.
'My dear Sarah,—You have done it admirably. I
wish the printer had done half as well. Pray see he
begins his new paragraphs at the top of a page thus—in
page eight—

332 ROGERS AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES
'Day glimmered and I went, a gentle breeze
Ruffling the waters of the Leman Lake;
the second line standing out before the first in the
margin. How otherwise could it be known as a new
paragraph? . . . Formerly all new paragraphs began
so, as you will see by turning to any books of poems
—see Crowe. Perhaps it is not worth while to alter the
rest. Pray, too, see that he makes the paper no bigger, or
the page, than Crowe or " Human Life." He seems to
print fifteen lines, and Crowe, I believe, prints fourteen;
at all events, don't let it be larger than " Human Life."
Your criticism is excellent, I wish you gave me more.
'I hope you have received a letter from Florence,
and another from Rome inclosing " Arqua," " Ginevra,"
"Florence," "Don Garzia." If that from Florence has
failed, pray go to press with the inclosed and no more,
and whenever you are in any doubt pray consult your own
judgment and I shall be satisfied. The paper is so thin
that I much fear the marks on one side will pass for
marks on the other, but I shall trust to your judgment,
and pray don't send me the additional sheets, if you
feel pretty sure about them. If you don't like "Arqua,"
leave it out. If you send me the new sheets, pray correct
them to the full, as two or three days make little or no
difference. But perhaps you have done it and sent them
before this arrives. If you find "Foscari" forthcoming
immediately, don't wait for the new sheets,[[1]](#footnote-1) though they
may be printed, but let it be published in its present
size directly. But, I suppose, Moore knows pretty well
about them.

1. In earlier letters from this tour, which I haven’t copied, SR was worried about Byron publishing his “Foscari” before his own. Not sure whether he’s referring to his poem or Byron’s drama. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)