

Hobhouse sails home, July 17th–October 16th 1810

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Hobhouse, Sir Robert Adair, Captain Bathurst and the *Salsette* leave Byron on Zea on **July 17th** 1810. Hobhouse reaches Falmouth (whence he and Byron had started out) on October 17th of the same year.

They pass Crete on **July 21st**, and are within sight of Malta by **July 27th**. Hobhouse stays on the island until **August 5th**. He writes Byron a letter from Malta on July 31st (BB 35-9). He renews his acquaintance with General Oakes, Colonel Dickins, Launder (with whom he stays), Galt, and Frazer, and meets Michael Bruce, with whom he is to experience the Hundred Days in 1815. The only reference to the Ionians is from a “Colonel More who was at the taking of Santa Maura” in March, and who speaks “of the bad behaviour of Major Church’s Albanian regiment”. On **August 1st** Hobhouse goes to the opera, and on **August 4th** to the play; he names neither. He likes the people of Malta, of whom he writes, “Their laws are very mild or rather dilatory – a man condemned to be hanged appears twice and is not executed till a year afterwards – positive evidence required and as the torture is given up and the old law not altered there is much difficulty getting at a fact.”

Michael Bruce is the lover of Lady Hester Stanhope, who is not to Hobhouse’s conservative taste. He describes her as “a masculine lady who says she would as soon live with Pack-Horses as women” and as “a violent vulgar woman”.

On **August 4th** he records, “Saw a Mr Langford, consul at Tunis. He told me the Bacha shot his brother at a meeting appointed for a reconciliation with him in presence of his mother and dethroned his second brother. The Bacha’s sons frequently quarrelled and frequently threaten each other to kill one another as their father did his brother.”

From **August 5th** to **14th** he is at sea; to wile away the time, he reads Hume’s *Reign of Charles I and of the Commonwealth*, and writes a ten-and-a-half-page analysis of the subject.

On anchoring off Cagliari, Sardinia, they find a famous person to be quasi-prisoner there:

Lucien Bounaparte and a large suite, forty persons in all, with wife and family, is on board an American now in this Harbour ... Lucien was offered to be made King of Rome or to leave the Empire – he chose the latter and went to Civita Vecchia – thence set a letter to Mr Hill for passports to Cagliari to which Hill

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returned for answer that he could do no such thing – He then sent another messenger to Hill to get the King of Sardinia’s consent. Whilst they – Hill and the King – were deliberating – Lucien arrived – Mr Smith has had an interview with him as had Mr Adair, this day – Lucien is a handsome man, good height – hook nose – wears spectacles – he says he wishes to go to America or to England – Mr Hill has resolved against Mr Adair’s advice to send him to Malta under charge of Captain Barry in the *Pomone* – Lucien declares that if he be sent back to Civita Vecchia he shall endeavour to escape, as he cannot live under his brother’s government.

Mr Hill is William Hill, Consul in Genoa during Byron’s stay there in 1823. On **August 15th** Hobhouse writes a letter to Byron (BB 42-4). On the same day he sees the King and Queen of Sardinia. The next day they sail for Gibraltar, and on **August 18th** fire on a French vessel, which they capture. On **August 24th** they meet up with the English Mediterranean Squadron, which is blockading Toulon, and dine with some officers from it. On **August 25th**, Admiral Hood comes on board.

Having exhausted Hume, Hobhouse translates a Horace satire (I, x), and, emboldened, embarks on the *Ars Poetica*, unaware that Byron is making a version (*Hints from Horace*) of the same work. In fact Byron writes to Hobhouse on July 29th, August 16th and 23rd, September 25th, and October 4th (BLJ II 5-8, 9-11, 11-14, 14-17, and 21-3), but the diary mentions none of these letters. He finishes roughing it out on **September 6th**, just as they reach Gibraltar. He goes on shore for a short time, buys “lives of classic authors,” and on **September 7th**, with “M. Chamber a Clapham fay of mine, hermoso muchacho,” they beat out of the bay, their destination Cadiz. They anchor in Cadiz harbour on **September 9th**. The city is under siege by the French. Ships are subject to sporadic French bombardment, which continues without much effect throughout. On **September 25th**, Hobhouse rides out of town and comes within three hundred yards of the French lines.

He remains in Cadiz until **October 7th** – just under four weeks, writing Byron a letter from Malta on October 6th (BB 49-54). He fair-copies his translation / version of the *Ars Poetica*, and begins another work provisionally entitled *Rota Rapita*, of which we hear very little more.

His social life is full, though he does complain of a lost day on September 23rd. He reports Don Diego Duff to be dying.

Symbols other than “χαμιατρη” perhaps indicate encounters with Ladies of Cadiz on **September 30th** and **October 3rd** (the latter symbol a double version of the former). He is “very ill indeed”, with sweats and headaches, from **September 12th** onwards. He takes calomel, cream of Tartar, and “salts”; but none except the last seem to be effective against whatever it is that he is suffering from. A toothache later compounds his discomfort.

Hobhouse sails home, July 17th–October 16th 1810

The most important political event in Cadiz is the opening of the Cortes or parliament, by which Hobhouse is impressed, and which he attends on **September 24th** and **25th**. Here is his account of the first meeting:

The meeting of the Cortez here this day commenced by a solemn function, and the firing of cannons. Dined at the General's, a large party – after dinner went to the Cortes. They assembled in a kind of long oval theatre with two galleries high for strangers, and a bar, beyond which a great crowd standing. [The] president an old priest with a [] bell – and two secretaries, members of the Cortes, de Castro, late ambassador to Portugal, one – a very active man, who drew up the proposed resolutions, read and put them to the vote by desiring those to stand up who were for them. A great many young men there and about twenty-two priests, who seemed very liberal. There were two tribunes near the bar, where the speakers, some of them, ascended. They were all very fluent and unabashed, sometimes five up at a time, but no great disturbance. There was a throne elevated by two steps and under the canopy the King Ferdinand's picture, a full-length one, each side of which was a guard with one epaulet and a drawn sword. It was immediately moved to dismiss the guard, but this point was deferred. A young deputy of Quito the most active.

They did a great deal the first day – made themselves inviolable with the title of Majesty – received the power of the Regency and gave it to them again with the title of Highness. They were about a hundred in number, and all seemed animated with the same desire of doing good with no violence however and very little cant. They sat the first night till near twelve o'clock.

On **October 7th** Hobhouse embarks on the *Nocton* packet (“155 dollars!!! oh oh oh”). On **October 9th** they pass Cape St Vincent, and, after a rough crossing of the Bay of Biscay, enter Falmouth harbour at one o'clock on **October 16th**.

Here are some roughed-out poems with which Hobhouse decorates the endpapers of this volume:

Song

Why this fervour to undo me
 Why this art to undermine
 Cease thus eager to pursue me
 Hope I shall not ere be thine

Hobhouse sails home, July 17th–October 16th 1810

When to win the virgin's favour
 Such perfidious arts are tried
 Kindly Pride steps in to save her
 All her passion yields to pride

Then away unworthy lover
 Cease to give a maiden pain
 Sighs and tears and vows may move her
 Not to love but to disdain.

(Cadiz Oct. 1 1810)

As long as serving men shall cheat
 And *fathers not forgive*
 Whilst bawds are bold and whores are kind
 Menander! thou shalt live!

(Ibid)

Corinne Concubitus

'Twas summer and the middle hour of day –
 On my soft couch with weary limbs I lay
 The partial beams through half shut curtains strove
 Such is the doubtful glimmer of the grove
 Such at the evening hour the sober light
 Betwixt the parting day and coming night
 And such the paler face of morning grey
 Betwixt the parting night and coming day
 This friendly gloom befits the bashful maid
 Whose modesty requires a useful shade
 And lo Corinna² comes one robe alone
 With flowing tresses oer her shoulders thrown

¹: Menander: Greek comic playwright (343-291 BC) some of whose eternal themes are sung by the poem. In Hobhouse's time his work was known only in fragments.

²: Corinna is the name given by Ovid to his mistress in the *Amores*.

