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Mary Shelley

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Rambles in Germany and Italy, in 1840, 1842, and 1843 is a travel narrative by the British Romantic author Mary Shelley. Issued in 1844, it is her last published work. Published in two volumes, the text describes two European trips that Mary Shelley took with her son, Percy Florence Shelley, and several of his university friends. Mary Shelley had lived in Italy with her husband, Percy Bysshe Shelley, between 1818 and 1823. For her, Italy was associated with both

joy and grief: she had written much while there but she had also lost her husband and two of her children. Thus, although she was anxious to return, the trip was tinged with sorrow. Shelley describes her journey as a pilgrimage, which will help cure her depression. Shelley's trips to Italy were a way for her to revisit memories of her dead husband, Percy Shelley, and the children they had buried there. Moskal argues that Shelley needed to "expiate" her survivor guilt and Dolan that she needed to recover from a damaging trauma. Shelley writes about this in *Rambles*, using the trope of a pilgrimage; she believes that travelling to Italy and revisiting the scenes of her youth will cure her of her depression, writing, "Besides all that Rome itself affords of delightful to the eye and imagination, I revisit it as the bourne of a pious pilgrimage. The treasures of my youth lie buried here." Shelley's pilgrimage follows in the tradition of Chaucer as well as the nineteenth-century trend to visit spas for healing, and like most pilgrimage narratives, hers does not relate the journey home. For Shelley, ultimately the most helpful part of travelling and visiting spas was seeing the beautiful scenery. In *Rambles*, Shelley contends that interacting with picturesque scenery can heal the body. Both the 1840 and 1842 trips followed times of ill health for Shelley and she used them as a way to recover both emotionally and physically. She opens *Rambles* by describing her poor health and hoping that by travelling her "mind will ... renew the outworn and tattered garments in which it has long been clothed".