

tion, the present aspects of Socialism. Says Shelley, "The cultivation of poetry is never more to be desired than at periods when, from an excess of selfish and calculating principle, the accumulation of the materials of external life exceed the quantity of the power of assimilating them to the internal laws of human nature. The body has then become too unweildy for that which animates it."

On such a full sea are we now afloat, and the result may be a universal deluge, wherein the spirit of progressive truth will be the first to "lose its ventures."

Too much familiarity breeds contempt. Are we not sometimes forced to think, when viewing the antics of certain revivalist mountebanks round the drum-heads of their fallacies, how very familiar these same levellers would be in their personal addresses to the Most High, and with what a very much at home air they would perambulate the "mansions" of Elysium and appraise the treasures in their luminous halls? So, are not we sometimes forced to the conclusion, when our eyes fall upon the rhymed vagaries and stanzaic absurdities of the popular driveller or advertising poetaster, or the deformed and crippled metres of the local comic simpleton, that their authors, the harlequins of literary aberration, take just such familiarities in the galleries of true poetic art, and approach the elbow of Dante and Shakespeare in much the same spirit that one of the "saved" would clap St. Peter on the back at the celestial gate, and enquire after the health of the family within?

When reverence fails, when the lofty is parodied without wit or reason, when genius is lampooned to serve ignoble ends, when the carrion crow of buffoonery battens upon the festering carcase of public honour, when the highest art is abased as an excuse for commercial gain, when

poetry is wrested from its divine office to further the ends of a commonplace and sordid traffic, then is the genius of true verse in danger of annihilation; indeed it must be already dead, else its phantom, the wasted spectre of its former glory, would not now be haunting the pages of contemporary life, an abiding witness to its own dissolutions—poor, unquiet spirit, that must be laid ere a renewed substance can hope to spring, phoenix-like, from the ashes over which at present the mere *ignis fatuus* of a corrupt and still decaying taste sheds its baleful and misleading light!

It has been well said that poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration. We may go further and add that poets are the high priests of the truest religion, the religion of nature and nature's God. They are the apostles of culture, carrying their gift into the realms of universal perception—Sanhita or Seer, Iliad or Æneid, Beowulf or Hafiz, Divinia Commedia or Hamlet, Faust or Paradise Lost, Childe Harold or Adonais, In Memoriam or Evangeline—they go out into all the ages, the pioneers of civilization, the exponents of the highest order of spiritual expression in man. They are the conservers of the true and the worshippers of the natural.

Call it not vain, they do not err,
Who say that when the poet dies
Mute Nature mourns her worshipper
And celebrates his obsequies.

They are the true artists of imagination, painting in burning words that which defies the pencil and the brush, these can but portray substance, idealized it may be, but still matter; the poet's fancy ranges over immaterial heights and gauges immaterial deeps, embodying and immortalizing conceptions that are more than of the earth, earthy, that require no vulgar simile of material pinions to bear them aloft, they soar by divine right of inspiration,