

rhetoric. Again and again one is struck with the severe articulation, the excessive plainness of passages that are yet marked by a power to impress that certainly can be referred to nothing but the inherent interest of the situation.

When all is said, however, it must be admitted that the main impression of "Queen Mab" is that of immaturity and lack of ballast. This is seen, first of all, in its diction. There is about Shelley's language in this instance an extravagance, a bombast, a revelling in the linguistic arts of the demagogue that an older man would have been apt to avoid, and that Shelley himself, indeed, repudiated when, with the precocity of genius, he arrived at maturity. For I must call your attention to the fact that in "Adonais," the eulogy pronounced by him upon Keats, he displays a classic severity of diction, a chasteness of imagery, an exquisiteness of taste and sentiment certainly unsurpassed in the realm of the elegy.

Shelley's lack of proportion is still more apparent in the attitude of uncompromising hostility he maintained towards existing institutions. One almost feels that for Shelley to hate a thing it is sufficient that it exist. There has never lived a more impassioned advocate of intellectual freedom, or a more impetuous opponent of the thralldom of tradition. And is this not something we are very apt to overlook? In these days of almost complete freedom from interference, are we not disposed to forget that we owe a large part of our immunities to the personal sacrifice made and the personal energy expended by the moral and intellectual leaders who have struggled for what we now enjoy?

It is perhaps unfortunate that Shelley ran the risk of prejudicing his readers by the well-nigh fiendish glee he evinces when called upon to refer to the evanescence of worldly creations. Palmyra's palaces, and Egypt's pyramids, and Salem's fanes have all passed, and he glories in their decay. But, after all, what quarrel can we have with him, when the only use he makes of it is to throw into bolder relief the eternity and the perpetuity of virtue. No poet in our language has given

more conspicuous place to the virtues of the resolute, fortified, determined will. Certainly, Shelley was no voluptuary. His was no effeminate or lethargic creed, but practical philanthropy conceived on a large scale.

I have said that Shelley's historical survey is marred by superficiality and inaccuracy. It is with absolutely indiscriminating rancor that he lashes Monarchy and the Church, nobles, priests and kings. Now, no student of history, with any pretensions to accuracy, can fail to see that the Church, in spite of its self-seeking and aggrandizement, has, nevertheless, at certain crucial epochs, played great and magnanimous roles. Neither can any student, with any claim to dispassionateness, fail to admit that, while democracy does make the stronger appeal to our sympathies, still there have been crises in the world's course when men, wearied and impotent to rule themselves, have found comfort and solace in the stable and conservative government of a few or of one. Needless to say of such qualifications Shelley takes no heed. The fact is there is a fundamental weakness in Shelley's point of view. He utterly fails to see that the happiness of the race depends less upon external forms of government than upon the healthy condition of that individual will, of which he was at times—may, often—a eloquent and distinguished an advocate. Oliver Goldsmith is very much more sound in the philosophic conclusion at which he arrives near the close of "The Traveller."

How small of all that human heart endures,

That part which laws or kings can cause or cure!

Still, to ourselves in every place assigned,

Our own felicity we make or find.

While the rapprochement of Shelley and Goldsmith is more or less adventitious, and merely suits my purpose for the moment, it is clear that, at least in this one case, the unsophisticated Irishman was more than a match for the brilliant young Englishman.

Of course, for all this lack of proportion there is no small palliation. Shelley