

sion of Byron was all concerned with and centered on self, while the passion of Shelley drowned self and saw only humanity. Byron touched on the problems of individual existence, Shelley wrote of the vast problems of race and intellect and society. Both continued to offend society, but Byron offended it rather by his life than by his works, while Shelley offended it by his opinions. In his later years, however, Byron joined Shelley in his revolt against the usages of society, and in "Don Juan" bitterly attacked those social restrictions and institutions which from the first had been so fiercely denounced by his fellow poet. But even in "Don Juan" the individual is never lost sight of, and Byron proclaims rather the wrongs of an injured man than the wrongs of humanity. Shelley spoke for the race. His hatred of kings and priests and despots sprang not so much from a sense of personal injury as from a deep and passionate sympathy for the unfortunate masses, whom history and observation had shown him had suffered so much from oppression. He loved the race with a passionate ardour. He saw the vast potentialities which lay dormant in humanity, "caged, cribbed, confined" by the chains of ignorance and the shackles of despotism. To know a wrong with Shelley was to proclaim it, and that in no faltering or uncertain tones. His life, like that of Byron, was characterized by a fierce current, but the expression of discontent in Shelley is more sustained and unwavering, and is couched in the same intense fire throughout, while that of Byron often weakens, sinks into puerile humour or careless satire, and only at times breaks forth into that fierce and intense passion which Shelley maintains throughout. The genius of Shelley is characterized by the presence, a subtle spiritual element never found in the works of Byron.

Between Shelley and Schiller we think there is in the method and character of their genius, perhaps a greater identity than between any other two poets of the period. The resemblance lies in the deep passion, the unwavering enthusiasm which is the common characteristic of their poems. The fiery and warm-hearted Schiller of the "Robbers" and the enthusiastic author of "Queen Mab" had a strong identity of interest as well in the nature as in the spirit of their revolt against the restrictions and rubrics of conventional society. But apart from their early works the resemblance of Shelley and Schiller lay rather in the nature of their genius than in the sentiments they expressed. Schiller was not so bold a rebel as Shelley, and even in the hot enthusiasm of his youth he was satisfied with rebelling against the powers of earth, and did not seek to assail the powers of Heaven. Schiller also was deeply tinged by that romanticism which seems a second part of the German nature. He had a profound reverence for the past. He was deeply imbued with the poetry of tradition, the age of chivalry, the days of tournaments, of gallant knights and lovely lady, of knight errantry, of romantic castles, were ever before his eye. The beautiful old legend of the Rhyne, the folk-lore of the different districts, the tales of the mystery-haunted forests—all these were deeply written on his mind and often reflected in his verse; and all combined to strengthen in his mind a very substantial reverence for the past. Very different was it with Shelley. To him the past was darkness; it was a night bright only in a few places where the torches of the brave sons of freedom gleamed fitfully among the vast shadows of superstition and dark clouds of ignorance. To him the mediæval castle that stood in romantic beauty by the side of Liston's to rivers or on the summit of forest-clad hills was a relic of an age of ignorance, a stronghold of despotism and folly, a reminder of the days when the lords ruled and the people cringed; a thing to be razed to the ground to make way for the great temple of humanity unchained. He had no reverence for the past, and so while Schiller often selected as his subjects, historic characters and events, Shelley never spoke of the past but to condemn it, and point a moral for the future. The genius of Shelley was more subtle and intangible than that of Schiller, less warm perhaps but more intense, and equally sustained in its energy. This characteristic of sustained unfaltering and unwavering passion is a very marked feature of the poetry of both these great intellects. The intensity of their genius seemed unquenchable and untiring, as warm in the last line as the first. Both were passionate to the last. Both were filled with the restless fire of genius, but the passion of one burnt like a subtle astral flame in the sight but not in the understanding of men, while the passion of the other sought like a warm caress fire through the pores of the intellect. Shelley soared like a disembodied spirit above the heads of his fellows. Schiller swept like the flame clad genius of his native forests through the haunts and the paths of earth. We like to think of Schiller as Coleridge has grandly pictured him:—

Wandering at even with finely frenzied eye  
Beneath some vast old tempest swinging wood.

But Shelley does not seem at home in the haunts and the pathways of men. We fancy him rather as a fire-clad spirit storming the battlements of Heaven. At the first sight there would seem to be little in common between the great incoherent and finally quiescent intellect of Coleridge and the vivid vernacular of Shelley, but Coleridge in his early days, when inspired by the revolution in France or prompted by the energy of his youth, wrote with a power and a beauty strangely akin to the verses of Shelley, and in the mystic harmonies of the "Ancient Mariner" and the weird ecstasy of "Kubla Khan," there is something of the same marvellous music which throbs in "The Ode to the Western Wind," "The Witch of Attar" and the dying lines of "Adonais."

But the orthodox Coleridge, the conservative Coleridge, the quiescent Coleridge, blindly grouping in the mazes of Hegelian philosophy and seeking for the Trinity in the tangled metaphysics of Schelling, had nothing whatever in common with that fiery and faithful spirit which never faltered in its passionate devotion to the idol and the altar of its youth, the incarnate spirit of Humanity enthroned in the temple of nature.

It is a remarkable fact that of that great choir of English poets which hailed the outbreak of the French Revolution, Shelley alone remained faithful to his early convictions. Coleridge, Wordsworth and Southey, at first so enthusiastic in their greetings of the advent of the Revolution, grew cold as they witnessed its excesses and finally repudiated their last convictions. We fail to see how a logical mind which sympathized with the principles of the Revolution could be alienated by its excesses. The enmities were perpetrated by men and not by principles. The crimes of the revolutionists might darken their character, but could never stain their convictions. The latter were as true at the end of the Revolution as they were at the beginning, and while an observer might recoil from the method of their application he could never recoil from its justice. If the principles of democracy are true they are eternally true. The crimes of the Revolution were due to the frailty of men and not to the frailty of principles; the error was one of conduct not of opinions, of means and not of ends. The principles of liberty were committed to the hands of a restless and ignorant proletariat educated in ditches, drilled in slums and maddened by ten centuries of cruel and merciless oppression. What wonder if they dragged their idol in the dust or stained it with the hands that time had soiled.

The distinction between the genius of Goethe and that of Shelley is so great that one would almost seem the very antithesis of the other. It is true that Goethe of "Werther" would in the warmth and energy of his work seem to bear some resemblance to the fiery muse of Shelley, but the Goethe of later days, the cold, calm, classical Goethe had nothing whatever in common with that fiery and impassioned spirit which seemed to glow with a more intense and burning enthusiasm as the years passed on. What greater contrast could there be than between Goethe's "Helene" and the white fire of "Prometheus Unbound." In the former the characters are rather like marble statues than men, cold, quiet, passionless, with the blood frozen in their classical veins; in the latter the characters are the passions incarnate, they seem to live and move in an intense and spiritual atmosphere, a livid and subtle flame leaps and moves through their veins, they bow and bend and tremble under the influence of vast and incoherent emotions, and at last find utterance in that marvellous music which varies in its melodies from the terrible anthems of the rock-bound Prometheus to the tender melodies of the troubled Asia.

It is said that Goethe was the soul of his century. It might be better to describe him as the mirror of all centuries. His mind was receptive rather than creative. It was a mighty mirror in which all art and nature were reflected. It was like a vast ocean that had once been tempest tossed and finally sank into a great repose, catching and casting back the image of heaven from its surface. But if the term "soul" be used in the sense of something which acts and manifests itself in acting, which creates and is measured by its creative capacity, which not only receives art and reflects nature, but also adds to art and gives new moods to nature, which, not content with assimilating and co-ordinating the past phenomenon of mind, seeks to add its quota to the great revelation, then we are inclined to think that it is better applicable to Shelley than to Goethe.

Genius is essentially a revelation. It is mind revealing its moods. We can know the soul only by its manifestations, and must measure it by these. It is impossible to penetrate into the inner and mysterious world of mind and learn its nature by inspection. Here, as in nature, there is a momentum behind the phenomena, and our conception of the former must be guided by our knowledge of the latter. When we call a thinker "original," we mean that he has revealed a portion of mind not revealed before, that he has discovered and recorded a new region in the infinite world of mind, that he has penetrated into sources and the centre of moods, and brought a new mood to light, that in the ever varying and interacting phases and shades of thought he has detected a new and more subtle ray and translated it into the intelligible records of language.

A man of genius is to be judged, therefore, not so much by the variety as by the originality of his conceptions, not by what he has taken in, but by what he has cast out from his mind, or rather by that much of his output as is clearly and wholly his own. It is by this method, therefore, that Shelley must be judged. It might be thought that coming at so late a period of the world's history, after almost every imaginable phase of mind had been revealed by the vast poets from Homer to Shakespeare there would be little now to reveal. Dante had already shown the darkness of mind, Æschylus had pictured its sublimity, Aristophanes had written its humour, Anacreon had shown its levity, Horace its grace and its pathos, Chaucer its warmth, Shakespeare its breadth, Milton its majesty, and innumerable other minor poets its thousand varying moods and attributes. It might, therefore, be thought that there was little left for a new poet to reveal, of that vast over-soul which had already spoken in so many tongues.

And yet the reader of Shelley will be strongly impressed by the presence in his poems of a new and

more subtle element not found in the works of his predecessors. His genius seems of a finer and less material type than theirs. His verse touches with a strange and mystical music which sweeps in maddened ecstasy along the lines, and glows with a terrible intensity into a weird white passion, which dazzles all sense and strikes a new chord in the mind. Light, heat, energy, beauty are all present in his verse, but to these there seems superadded a new and more subtle element which blends with and beautifies the rest, and into which they seem at times to pass. This element is most strongly present, perhaps, in "Epipsychidion." It glides like a silvery thread through the mingling emotions of "Adonais," and bursts into a dazzling and ethereal flame in the last stanza of that marvellous requiem. The poet seems at times to be swayed and tortured by some mighty inspiration which he can indicate but not express. Innumerable harmonies mingle in his verses and blend into musical colours, which dazzle as well as entrance; and beneath the restless surface of the enchanted sea there seems to rage and tremble a mighty undercurrent. The musical waves keep time to a vast undertone, and swell like echoes of wild spirit voices singing an anthem in the soul's deep sea. From the vaults and the valleys of the spirit-haunted mind there flows sad strains of music weirdly beautiful. The reader is moved by a sense of haunting melodies of light and shadow, strangely mingling of invisible presences haunting the valleys of space, of brooding spirits hovering in the vaults of the midnight, of purple rivers flowing through the veins of the air, of strange hurrying to and fro of invisible feet, of babblings of angel voices in a strange and mystical universe which the wand of the poet has made near.

And yet it was in the mind that these things had their being. Nature never changed her form at the bidding of the poet. He clothed her in a new and radiant garment. The marvellous images which he has crystallized in verse were not reflections of the world without, but were revelations of the world within. It was in the mind's deep universe that the maddened music had its home, and there too were the tremulous shadows of thought, the shifting light's flame, the burning passions of the self-torturing soul, the sublime cognition of an eternal truth, the varying visions of a spirit world, the changing chimes of innumerable bells hung in the belfry of the intellect, the trumpet call of a beleaguered truth, the war between the powers of night and light, the vast darkness that at time prevailed and clothed its orders in crape before sending them forth to the world, and behind the darkness, like the sun behind the night, a radiant and beautiful soul which wore its sorrow like a veil, and ever and again ordained deep silence in the mind, recalled the militant ideas, absorbed all modes and music, and in the ecstasy of dull introspection realized itself as the eternal Ego.

Such as his poems reveal it was the mind of Shelley. To all who live and love and feel, it is a precious heritage. To all who live and love and think, it is a priceless one, for by these it is doubly valued, as well for its suggestion as by its revelation. It is of all human intellects in many respects the most interesting to the student of psychology, as it presents the most subtle mental phenomenon yet displayed within the compass of one mind, a phenomena which the hypothesis of the school of Condylas is wholly inadequate to account for, and which offers in many respects a singular confirmation of the mental philosophy of Gottlieb Fichte.

One of the most striking features of Shelley's character is his passionate devotion to democracy. In this he never faltered. His earliest verses were dedicated to freedom, and his latest poems throb with the same deep sympathy with the cause of the struggling masses. He served democracy in the hours of her tribulation, at a time when to serve her was treason, and to praise her was blasphemy. When all the world seemed against her he fearlessly sprang to her side and brought all the splendid resources of his intellect to her service. He welcomed her uprising in Spain. He glorified her revolution in France. He extolled her struggle in Greece, and defended her character in England. It is on this account perhaps that the warmest admirers of Shelley are generally found in the ranks of the friends of progress. He honoured democracy militant, and democracy triumphant honours him; and indeed it seems altogether fitting, now that freedom has come to her throne, that Shelley should be first minstrel at the court of her mistress when he loved with such passionate devotion in the hour of her tribulation.

The present century, particularly in its later years, has done great honour to the name of Shelley, but yet we cannot read his poems without being impressed by the conviction that to other and happier ages will be reserved the task of rendering to him the full measure of that homage which is justly his due. The years which have followed his death have witnessed many a triumph for the cause he loved. Democracy is advancing day by day more swiftly on the paths he indicated. Humanity already sees afar the breaking of the morning whose brightness he foresaid, but yet our light is darkness and our years are midnight hours compared to the radiance of the golden destiny which he predicted for the race he loved. And when that destiny ceases to be more than a dream, when the sublime reality of that vast ideal dawns on the eyes of men, then only will Shelley be truly known and supremely honoured.

Meanwhile at this, the first century of his birth, looking back at the vast change which time has worked in public opinion concerning him, and at the universal homage that is now rendered to his genius, we cannot but think