

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

the enlightenment of the ruling classes. But the advance in the development of the larynx marks off definitely man from monkey, and the perfecting of the weapon of speech by Shelley made the essential difference between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in England. The issue is masked for the moment by the Press. The English language is fallen into disrepute and impotence. But the wood pulp period of brain and paper will soon pass. Unless England is destroyed altogether by the vermin that are gnawing at her entrails, unless the speech of the greatest minds on earth since the Fall of Rome is rotted through by the cancer of senseless slang, venal vulgarity, alien abominations, the weapon of Shelley will wing its way through the centuries, and enable mind to inform mind by virtue of subtle cadences, harmonies, and hammer-strokes.

That is, above all, the problem of the day, now that the "hard facts" of materialism are thawing into a gossamer dew. It is becoming impossible to write sober science in prose: the subtleties of Nature demand rhythm to respond to, and to record, their own. By Wisdom, that is, by the Word, He created the worlds; and the Wonder-World of to-day has been created by the Word of the Winged Serpent, whom the men of his own day took to be Satan, him whose centenary we celebrate under his pseudonym of Percy Bysshe Shelley.