

Popular Songs

the political poems of 1819–1820

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY



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Popular Songs: The Political Poems of 1819-1820

Percy Bysshe Shelley

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Pg. 6: Illustrated portrait of Percy Bysshe Shelley, based on the painting of Alfred Clint, after Amelia Curran / Adobe.

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED TO
THOSE WHO HAVE FLED THEIR HOMELAND
AND THOSE WHO FIGHT OPPRESSION
SO WE MAY YET LIVE IN EQUALITY



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The Mask of Anarchy

Written on the Occasion of the Massacre at Manchester

- I As I lay asleep in Italy,
 There came a voice from over the sea,
 And with great power it forth led me
 To walk in the visions of Poesy.
- II I met Murder on the way —
 He had a mask like Castlereagh —
 Very smooth he look'd yet grim;
 Seven bloodhounds followed him:
- III All were fat; and well they might
 Be in admirable plight,
 For one by one, and two by two,
 He tossed them human hearts to chew,
 Which from his wide cloak he drew.
- IV Next came Fraud, and he had on,
 Like Lord Eldon, an ermined gown;
 His big tears, for he wept well,
 Turned to mill-stones as they fell;

FRAGMENT

To the People *of* England

People of England, ye who toil and groan,
Who reap the harvests which are not your own,
Who weave the clothes which your oppressors wear,
And for your own take the inclement air;
Who build warm houses...
And are like gods who give them all they have,
And nurse them from the cradle to the grave...

SONNET

England in 1819

An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying king, —
Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow
Through public scorn, — mud from a muddy spring, —
Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor know,
But leech-like to their fainting country cling,
Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow, —
A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field, —
An army, which liberticide and prey
Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield
Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay;
Religion Christless, Godless — a book sealed;
A Senate, — Time's worst statute unrepealed, —
Are graves, from which a glorious Phantom may
Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.