

SONNET: ENGLAND IN 1819

Percy Bysshe Shelley

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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 leechlike 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 whom 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.