

MIDNIGHT, JUNE 30, 1879.

Charles Tennyson Turner, in whose memory this poem was written, was the brother of Alfred Tennyson, and was himself a poet. He was born July 4, 1808. He graduated at Cambridge, in 1831, and became Vicar of Grauby. By the will of a relative, who bequeathed him a small estate, his surname of "Tennyson" was exchanged to that of "Turner." He died April 25, 1879. His brother, the poet-laureate, says of his sonnets that some of them have had all the tenderness of the finest Greek epigram, and that a few of them are among the noblest in our language.

I.

Midnight—in no midsummer tune
The breakers lash the shores;
The cuckoo of a joyless June
Is calling out of doors:

And thou hast vanished from thine own
To that which looks like rest,
True brother, only to be known
By those who love thee best.

II.

Midnight—and joyless June gone by,
And from the delirious park
The cuckoo of a worse July
Is calling thro' the dark:

But thou art silent under-ground,
And o'er thee streams the rain.
True poet, surely to be found
When Truth is found again.

III.

And now to these unsummer'd skies
The summer bird is still,
Far off a phantom cuckoo cries
From out a phantom hill:

And thro' this midnight breaks the sun
Of sixty years away.
The light of days when life begun,
The days that seem to-day.

When all my griefs were shared with thee,
And all my hopes were thine—
As all thou wert was one with me,
May all thou art be mine!

ALFRED TENNYSON.

DISPUTATIOLUSLY DISPOSED.

Montaigne avows his love for what he calls a strong and manly spirit of converse and controversy; he deemed it not vigorous and generous enough if it was not quarrelsome. "When any one contradicts me, he raises my attention, not my anger. I advance towards him that controverts, as to one that instructs me." He professed to choose by preference the company of those who ruffled him, rather than of those who were obsequious and submissive to him, for he accounted it a dull and hurtful pleasure to have to do with people who are all admiration for us, and who acquiesce in all we say. He could go on disputing enjoyably from morning till night, if only he had a capable opponent and one that stuck to the point, however hard he might hit—the harder the better. Goethe was charming to Jung Stilling whenever he indulged him in paradoxical debate, enlivened by all sorts of dialectic pugilism; "for I had an ungodly way of disputing everything," the master-genius of German literature is free to own. There is a desire after knowledge described by Henry Mackenzie which delights in nothing so much as in having one's own doctrines confronted with their opposites till they pommel and belabour one another without mercy—the contest having one advantage peculiar to battles of this kind, that each party, far from being weakened by its exertions, commonly appears to have gained strength, as well as honour, from the *rencontre*. The desire in question may however be strong in those who have no liking for argumentative discourse. It will scarcely be denied to Dickens; and of him we are assured, in Mr. Horne's *New Spirit of the Age*, that he hated argument; that, in fact, he was unable to argue—a common case with impulsive characters "who see the whole truth, and feel it crowding and struggling at once for immediate utterance." In contrast with this temperament may be placed Sheridan's characterisation of the controversialist who changes sides in all arguments the moment any one agrees with him. And, among other of Sheridan's lively sketches of character, there is the irresolute arguer, to whom it is a great misfortune that there are not three sides to a question—a libertine in argument, whose rakish understanding is soon satiated with truth, and is more capable of being faithful to a paradox; and there is the veering casuist, who the more he talks the farther he is off the argument, like a bowl on a wrong bias. Then, again, we have the sort of militant talker typified in the priggish philanthropist in *Edwin Drood*, who impounded a meek Minor Canon as an official person to be addressed, or kind of human peg to hang his oratorical hat on, and fell into the exasperating habit, common among such orators, of impersonating him as a weak and wicked opponent. Thus he would ask, "And will you, sir, now stultify yourself by telling me," and so forth, when the innocent man had not opened his lips, nor meant to open them. Or he would say, "Now see, sir, to what a position you are reduced! I will leave you no escape," etc., etc., whereas the unfortunate Minor Canon would look in part indignant and in part perplexed, while the rest of the company lapsed into a sort of gelatinous state, in which there was no flavour or solidity, and very little resistance. Under his mask as the *Spectator*, Addison professed to take particular care never to be of the same opinion with the man he conversed with; he wrangled and disputed for exercise, and had carried this point so far that he was once like to have been run through the body for making a little too free with his contradictoriness. But he also professes to have outgrown this bad habit.

While a man is learning to fence, he practises both on friend and foe; but, when he is a master in the art, he never exerts it but on what he thinks the right side. Dr. Johnson may seem to be a too salient exception to this rule, for he would at times take up either side as the humor took him. When he and Dr. Campbell got talking at Rasay about Tull's *Husbandry*, a remark of the Scottish doctor's was at once disputed by the English one. "Come," said the former, knowing with whom he had to deal, "we do not want to get the better of one another; we want to increase each other's ideas." Johnson took it in good part, and the conversation then went on smoothly and instructively. Boswell applauds his great friend's candour in recalling this experience and his conduct on the occasion, as proving how easily he could be persuaded to talk from a better motive than "for victory."

Urged to confess what he really thought of Johnson as a table-talker, "He's a tremendous companion," said poor overburdened George Garrick; and this confession was in John Forster's mind when he charged Johnson with bringing into common talk too plain an anticipation of victory and triumph—wearing his determination not to be thrown or beaten, whatever side he might please to take, somewhat defiantly on his sleeve; and this sense it was, on his own part, of his eagerness to make every subject a battle-ground which moved him to declare, at a moment of illness and exhaustion, that, if he were to see Burke then, it would kill him. Against that antagonist it had been his desire on all occasions, from the first day of their meeting, to measure himself. "The club was an opportunity for both, and promptly seized, to the occasional overshadowing, no doubt, of the comforts and opportunities of other members"—though, for the most part, the wit-combats of these two seem not only to have interested the others, but to have improved the temper of the combatants and made them more generous to each other.

Although, by all accounts, Madame de Staël was rather more courteous to her opponent, she resembled Johnson in being so zealous a disputant, so determined an intellectual gladiator, so fond of eager and even violent contention, that her drawing-room at Coppet had been compared to the Hall of Odin, where the bravest warriors were invited every day to enjoy the tumult of the fight, and, after having cut each other in pieces, revived to renew the combat in the morning. These fierce controversies would seem to have comprised all sorts of subjects—politics, morals, literature, casuistry, metaphysics, and history—not excluding at one stage in her life such moving themes of pathos and passion as love and death and heroic devotion. Upon all there was a side to be taken, a war of words to be waged. Madame would have surely sympathised to some extent with De Quincey's alert friend who looked upon it as criminal to concede anything a man says in the process of a disputation, the nefarious habit of assent being the bane of conversation by causing it to stagnate. On this account the gentleman in question, another Sir Robert Bramble in his way, would often call aside the talking men among his guests before dinner, and conjure them with a pathetic earnestness not to agree with him in anything he might advance during the evening; and, when strangers were present who indulged too much in the habit of politely assenting to anything which seemed to demand no particular opposition, he would suddenly pause, with the air of the worst-used man in the world, and piteously demand, "Was there to be no end to this—was he never to be contradicted? He supposed matters would soon come to such a pass that his nearest kinsfolk would be perfidiously agreeing with him, that the very wife of his bosom would refuse to contradict him, and that he should not have a friend left on whom he could depend for the consolations of opposition." "I shouldn't like her half as much as I do, if she hadn't spirit enough to contradict me," muses Sir Oliver Oldstock, in the old comedy, respecting his daughter; "it's not one time in a hundred I can get anybody to contradict me." He considers the mind like a spring—the more you press it the more vigour you lend to its elasticity; ever since he could remember, it had been his delight to be of a different opinion from other people. "If I am to choose a friend and an agreeable companion, give me the honest fellow who contradicts me." So with that later knight, who tells a parting visitor how much he shall miss him, they have disagreed so delightfully over Bolingbroke and Voltaire, and to whom nothing was so satisfactory and stimulating as the society of a man whose views were flatly opposed to his own. "Oh, yes"—to quote Sir Oliver again—"contradiction's my hobby-horse; I mount him every hour of the day; and the more he kicks and flings, the greater delight I take in riding him." Contradiction is avowedly his element, as fire is the salamander's; he cannot have too much of it. Opposition is the very soul of an Englishman, he boasts to a foreigner—a boast which may put us in mind of Henri Beyle's dictum, that, as regards discussing the truth of a thought or the appropriateness of an expression, the English and the French, who for three centuries past have disputed about everything, enjoy a vast advantage over an Italian, who in respect of disputation, is a child without experience. So much the better for the Italian, some Italians might incline to say, convinced that there may be too much of a good thing, even as Sir Oliver in the comedy is constrained to allow; for there is one scene in one act which so far alters his

style as to elicit this confession: "Partial as I am to a polemical mode of discourse, I find that there may be sometimes even too much contradiction." But it takes a very strong dose indeed to stir the bile of some temperaments, and many cannot get on at all without a liberal allowance of opposition. Cobden found it comparatively difficult to argue with an audience which was convinced before he opened his mouth; hence his best speeches on the Corn Laws were addressed to the House of Commons, not to the meetings of the League. "It is heavy work," he once said, "to come into these enthusiastic meetings and talk of this question, for we meet no opponents. I do not know how it is; but I have that quality of combativeness, as phonologists call it, and unless I meet with some opposition I am as dull as ditch-water." It is easy to understand how the advent of a contradictory Felix Holt was welcome to Rufus Lyon, who found the talking with him like a good bite to stony teeth after a too uniform allowance of spoon meat. To cultivate his society with a view to checking his erratic tendencies was a laudable purpose; but there can be no doubt that, if Felix had been rapidly subdued and reduced to conformity, little Mr. Lyon would have found the conversation much flatter. So with Dr. Evelyn in Plumer Ward's *Tremaine*, whose heart warmed to the work of refuting the hero's scepticism, and who loved arguing as he loved exercise, which he always held to be as necessary for the health of the mind as of the body. But there was little about either of these two reverend seniors to recall the kirk minister of Abernethy whom, in Dr. James Hamilton's biography, we see in the act of holding a spoonful of porridge in transit between the dish and his mouth for a full half-hour, until he has finished a dispute on the doctrine of reprobation. Lord Cockburn tells us of Dr. John Thomson that not even the burden of fourscore and two years could quench his ardour in discussing vexed questions in science, politics, or morals. "How he enjoyed a dispute!" Robert Hall and Sir James Mackintosh, in their college days, for night after night and month after month met only to dispute, without even an unkindly feeling ensuing; the process seemed rather like blows in that of welding iron to knit them closer together—all the more creditable to Hall, because of his avowed and lamented impetuosity in argument. The word "disputations" is generally used as a word of reproach, Macaulay remarks; but he claims for Lord Holland the character of being most courteously and pleasantly disputations; to him, as to his uncle C. J. Fox, the exercise of the mind in discussion was a positive pleasure. A noble lord of the Earl of Beaconsfield's portrayal found it difficult to secure a sufficient stock of opposition; but, as he lay in wait and with wonderful alacrity seized every opening, his friends were apt to give up, well aware that his passion for controversy was only equalled by his love of conquest. The same author's imposing Sidonia, on the other hand, is distinguished by his avoidance of serious discussion; if pressed for an opinion he took refuge in rallery, or threw some grave paradox with which it was not easy to cope. So Clarendon tells us of the Marquis of Hertford that he "cared not to discourse and argue on those points which he understood very well, only for the trouble of contending." Dugald Stewart, on Francis Horner's showing, "never would condescend" to be original or profound in company, and shunned the least approach to discussion. Horner was struck with the like abstention on the part of such celebrities in good fellowship as Romilly, Robert (Bobus) Smith, Conversation Sharp, and Scarlett; he had looked for a display of argument and all the flourishes of intellectual gladiatorialship; but all discussion of opinion was studiously avoided at the King of Clubs. If Horner was disappointed, it was because he could not help thinking that the candid, liberal, and easy discussion of opinions is the most rational turn that can be given to the conversation of well-educated men. Some years later, however, we find him, in one of his letters to Lord Murray, assuming his correspondent's knowledge of his "declared hostility to all argument and controversy in conversation." At no period of his life—a life in earnest—was Francis Horner likely to be in love with the sort of colloquial polemica once in such high favour in society—the sort of thing affected by Richardson's Belford and Belton, who were so ostentatious of their delight in "a logical way of argumentation," and expected the rest of the company to look on and listen in admiring silence. It is many years ago now since the author of the *New Phœdo* took note how very much less the love of conversational argument is the mode in the nineteenth than it was in the eighteenth century, when it made a celebrity; and it is quite as many since De Quincey insisted that in high-bred society all disputation whatsoever—nay, all continued discussion—is outrageously at war with the established tone of conversation; for a dispute must be managed with much more brilliancy, much more command of temper, a much more determinate theme, and a much more obvious progress towards a definite result in the question at issue than are commonly found not to prove grievously annoying to all persons present except the two disputants. If social pleasure be the end and purpose of society, whatsoever interferences with it should be scourged out of all companies; and good sense ought therefore to be sufficient, without any experience at all of high life, to point out what De Quincey calls the "intolerable absurdity" of allowing two angry champions to lock up and sequester, as

it were, the whole social enjoyment of a large party, to compel them to sit in "sad civility," witnesses of a contest which can interest the majority neither by its final object nor its management. This protest comes with the more force from one who was so consummate a master of fence, but of whom strangers and casual acquaintances might have thought and said, what his intimates said of Southey, that he was averse from argumentation, and would commonly quit a subject when it was passing into that shape, with a quiet and good-humoured indication of the view in which he rested. Dr. John Brown the younger tells us of his father that he disliked arguing or debating, had no turn for it, and was indifferent in the exploits of a nimble rhetoric. He could not fence with his mind, much less with his tongue; but he could and would think out a subject, and get it well "bottomed," as Locke would say. Conversation is justly described by John Forster as a game where the wise do not always win; for, where men talk together, the acute man will count higher than the subtle man; and he who, though infinitely far away from truth, can handle a solid point of argument will seem wiser than the man around whom truth "plays like an atmosphere," but who cannot reason as he feels. There is something pathetic as well as quaint in the characteristic avowed Goldsmith made of himself, that he disputed best when nobody was by, and always got the better when heargued alone.

TERESA CARRENO AT THE OPENING OF QUEEN'S MUSIC HALL IN MONTREAL.

Teresa Carreno's performance on the new Weber Grand Piano at the opening of the Queen's Hall, in Montreal, is characterized as extremely fine, and gave great delight to the very critical audience present, who called and recalled her several times. "Her playing," says the *Star*, "was a marvel of execution. Grand chords, full of rich harmony, followed by rippling melodies, soft and sweet, were swept from the key-board of the Weber Grand by the hands of a queen." The *Wine* says: "Sir Hugh Allan is entitled to the gratitude of the public for placing at their disposal a hall which few cities can equal. It is also to be furnished with a fine organ, now being built."

The Grand Piano, on which Carreno performed at the opening, was purchased by Sir Hugh, of the celebrated Albert Weber, of New York, through the N. Y. Piano Co., who are the Dominion agents of Weber, and is to remain in the hall. It is a marvel of power, purity and sweetness of tone. There is no doubt that amidst the great attractions presented to the public on the opening night, Carreno's performance on this piano was that which elicited greatest applause; hence the desire to hear the gifted artist in a more extended performance, which would give the music-loving community an opportunity of judging the powers, both of her and the instrument, in rendering the lofty creations of the great masters. This opportunity the recital on Saturday afternoon afforded, and we are bound to say that so rich a musical treat has seldom been presented to an audience. The hall, perfect in its acoustic arrangements, conveyed to the attentive ears of the vast audience the most minute and delicate touches: so soft and sweet, and yet so perfect were the tones brought out, that at such times the enraptured audience absolutely held their breath until the swell of the grand forte would bring relief, as if ten—twenty—a whole orchestra of instruments was bursting into one grand harmonious chorus. During the performance of the last piece—Liszt's Grand Fantasia on "Faust,"—the magnificent instrument fairly trembled under the fingers of the artist.

It is here, if anywhere, above and beyond all other instruments, the Weber piano-forte asserts its power.

Surely the *New York Times* estimated correctly when it stated that the grand achievements of Albert Weber reflected more glory on their city and country than the Astors, the Stewarts, or the Vanderbilts, with all their wealth could ever do. It is not alone for his noble pianos the name of Weber is revered. He brings out, encourages, and sustains the young artist, with a liberality and wholeheartedness that has won for him their esteem and gratitude. We regret to see a recent, and somewhat stupid attempt, made to dim the lustre of his fame by would-be critics and penny-a-liners "who cannot teach and will not learn." The best answer to such is the fact that the pianos of Weber are now almost exclusively used by the leading pianists and musical people, both in Europe and America. The possession of so fine an instrument is an additional attraction to this beautiful Hall.

A VERY Solomon!—Teacher with reading-class. Boy reading: "And as she sailed down the river—" Teacher: "Why are ships called 'she'?" Boy (precociously alive to the responsibilities of his sex): "Because they need men to manage them."

"LIES! BIG LIES!"

Not so fast, my friend; for if you would see the strong, healthy, blooming men, women and children that you have raised from beds of sickness, suffering and almost death, by the use of Hop Bitters, you would say, "Truth, glorious truth." See "Truths," in another column.