

and Tennyson. Readers of English literature will feel in their loss a void which cannot be filled by any living writers. As poet, Tennyson no doubt reached a higher plane; but as prophet and reformer the palm will be conceded to Whittier.

### WHITTIER AND TENNYSON.

[1807-1892.]

[1810-1892.]

#### A COMPARISON.

In this two months two of the greatest poets of the last generation have passed away, Whittier and Tennyson. Both were ripe in years, Whittier 85, and Tennyson 82. Both lived to see their names established in the world and their fame secured. Time will only serve to brighten their glory. Both names are familiar as household words wherever the English language is read. Not a few of their poems have found their way into many a foreign tongue.

A comparison between the two might better have waited till time, the truest critic, had performed the greater part of the judging. But, were it not for the nearness together of the times of their deaths, no other cause perhaps would have associated them together. We, therefore, may be pardoned for embracing this opportunity of making a short and, of necessity, an inadequate comparison of the two great men and poets.

The illustrious saying of Horace "*Poeta nascitur, non fit*," a poet is born, not made, is accepted to day as a self-evident truth. Neither, perhaps, like Pope, lisped in the cradle, but we see the boy Whittier thrusting a poem stealthily and timidly under the door of Garrison's printing office, and Tennyson, at the same age of nineteen, awarded the Chancellor's medal for a poem in blank verse called "*Timbuctoo*." Especially does Whittier verify this axiom, for his scholastic education was very limited, while Tennyson's, on the other hand, was very complete. Indeed, these two poets have much more

in contrast than in similarity. While Whittier was contented to be despised because he dared to defend unpopular truths and espouse the cause of the downtrodden of his race, Tennyson basked in the position of "*Poet Laureate*," pensioned by the Royal family. Tennyson rather enjoyed his honors and titles, while Whittier was happy in the consciousness of doing good.

If the two poets were measured by the square and plummet; if poetry dealt solely with the beautiful, and its object was solely to please, Whittier would have to yield the palm to Tennyson, for Tennyson's poems show faultless workmanship and rich poetic embellishments, but the foundation in places lies in the sand. Whittier dug down to the solid rock. His building rests everywhere upon the eternal truth. He was helped in this by the genius of his religion. He was born into a religion that recognized the workings of God in the soul of man and in the heart of nations. He listens for and obeys the voice of God within, while Tennyson was enticed to wander at times to delight courtiers and catch the flattery of the great.

Whittier's poems are not gems of art, but gems of nature. His poetry, if judged by poetic rules, is often faulty. He used poetry not for the love of poetry, but as a means to an end. Poetry to Whittier was a secondary consideration. His soul was stirred with an intense, almost burning desire to right the wrongs of his fellowmen. He saw millions of his brothers dragging out the base lives of slaves. He resorted to poetry to convince the nation that freedom was the God-given birthright of every being. He sang of peace and arbitration, not for the song's sake, but for the sake of peace, because he was not only a professed but a true follower of the Prince of Peace. Tennyson's "*Duke of Wellington*" and "*Charge of the Light Brigade*" are perfect gems of poetic beauty, but that is all. Their effect is