

Keats, Browning, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Whittier and Tennyson, among the grandest of poetical geniuses? Shelley, among the sweetest of singers, is superior to most poets and inferior to none in the height and depths of his mind's music. Whittier is admitted by all men to have been born a poet. He is less indebted to adventitious aids than any of his brethren. "To him 'the universe swims in an ocean of similitudes' and the images he sees and embodies in verse appear to him unsought." But Whittier is the poet of man as well as of nature. His poems enthuse us with the spirit of the brotherhood of man.

But what shall we say of Tennyson's poetry? In this age when the mind never seemed more engaged with the things pertaining to worldly wisdom, and men need relaxation from all pursuits, the poetry of Tennyson refreshes them as the dewy cool of the evening does the drooping flowers. The colors are as harmoniously blended in his portrayals as the crimson and gold of the sunset. With artistic skill he enters into the spirit and feeling of every age. A great writer has declared that nothing so perfect has been seen since the days of Shakespeare. But Shakespeare has never produced anything more sentimental than Tennyson's Princess. The characters of even a Shakespeare are not so truly beautiful as those of Tennyson. In everything he finds pleasure, and to him belongs the power of transmitting that pleasure to others.

In his "Idylls of the King," Tennyson, with admirable art, carries us to the primitive ages of civilization. Here he becomes epic like Homer. "The distinguishing mark of the ancient epic is clearness and calm. Its simplicity and peace are strange and charming. But of all epics, this of the Round Table is distinguished by purity." Tennyson is truly a born poet. He seems to come very near the ideal poet in his endeavour to let nothing but the beautiful and ornate enter into his poetry. He is eminently a national poet, loved by all.

How shall we then say that poetry declines as civilization advances, when such a genius has lived, and still lives through his poetry, in our own age!

H. E. M., '94.

