

It is said that a man's power is measured by his ideas multiplied by his personality. A man may have some great ideas and not be a great man. But, in the largest sense, it seems to have been held since Milton's day, that he who would write a great poem must first be a great poet. Now, Tennyson, in his writing gives the impression of strength. Seeley thinks that *Paradise Lost*, great as it is, gives no measure of Milton's powers, that the Puritan poet could have made something far greater. In like manner we never feel that Tennyson is exerting all his strength or that he is unequal to his task. His descriptions of various lands and climes, whether of the

"Discay, roughly riding eastward,"

or the brilliancy of the orient,

"The glows

And glories of the broad belt of the world,"

or

"The dewy meadowy morning—breath of England."

are always the strokes of the master hand, a simple touch of which is enough. The heights of human joy and the depths of human sorrow are portrayed with equal facility; the poet's life is evidently far beyond all these experiences. His mind embraces so much of human nature that no one feels himself a stranger when he comes with a hungry heart to this great prophet. If he is not myriad-minded, like Shakespeare, his soul has, it would seem, been pierced with a sword that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed. He desires to have a life truly human. He seeks to blend the strength of man with the spiritual sensitiveness of woman. This idea which is fully realized only in Christ, who is human nature in its fullness and not merely *a man*, is wrought out in the *Princess*, is evident in *In Memoriam*, and in the *Idylls of the King*. In his view "man must realize a womanly manliness and woman a manly womanliness." Embodying so much of life in his own personality and charged with so direct a message to men he seems to say, as we read his poems, "I am come that ye may have life."

The power of this personality is revealed in all his work. He is extolled for "his sense of music, his delicate ear for the subtle cadences of harmonious rhythm and melodious words and his obedience to that law that the sound should be an echo to the sense." But compare, for example:

"The moor of doves in immemorial elms  
The murmur of innumerable bees—"

with Pope's faultily faultless couplets or with Dryden's long-resounding line, and you feel the same kind of difference that separates the nest built by the bird itself from the tiny house the kindhearted boy provides for its home. The one is nature; the