

greatest delight was in energy nobly controlled, and activity rendered orderly by experience. The loss of two such writers leaves English literature poor indeed; and of the two losses the more recent is the more keenly felt. Tennyson was the more readily and more widely intelligible, and was far more closely in touch with the scientific thought of his time than Browning ever was; while his unrivalled mastery of style and musical expression long ago secured for him a high place of distinction, not only amongst his contemporaries, but also amongst the choicer few who are recognised by every one as great in English literature.

Most of us, no doubt, are aware of the attitude which poets, and imaginative writers generally, in the early part of this century, took up with regard to the new and correcter knowledge of the earth and of natural phenomena which science was rapidly making common property. We recall, for instance, how Keats protested that "all charms fly at the mere touch of cold philosophy," and his indignant assertion that—

"Philosophy will clip an angel's wings,
Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,
Empty the haunted air and gnomed
mine"—

though it is only just to add that elsewhere he tells us that

"To bear all naked truths,
And to envisage circumstance, all calm,
That is the top of sovereignty."

In the previous and less poetic century, some writers, it is true, were less afraid, and even endeavoured to trick out science in the trappings of verse. But such compositions as Darwin's "Botanic Garden" are neither poetry nor science. The triumph of enlisting the discoveries and problems of science in the service of true poetry remained for Tennyson. Turn where we will to his poems we find not only

direct references to these problems and discoveries, but—also and these are much stronger proofs of poetic assimilation—phrases and metaphors springing simply and naturally from them; as when, for instance, in "Lucretius," the broth is said to have "confused the chemic labour of the blood"; or when, to choose one from a hundred such in "In Memoriam," we are exhorted to co-operate with natural progress, and to

"Move upward, working out the beast;
And let the ape and tiger die";

or, again, when, speaking of nature, the mourner dwells on the fact that—

"So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life."

But there is no need to multiply instances. Poetry being to Tennyson what Wordsworth declared it to be—the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge, the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science—the growth of knowledge from more to more, though it took away a few old and pretty fancies, did but reveal to him greater and more inspiring wonders; it stimulated and did not chill his imagination.

We have no space here to dwell upon the beauty of diction, the perfect fitness of phrase, the exquisite music of words, which are the distinguishing marks of Tennyson's poetry. Nor can we do more than recall, in passing, that deep and strong, though rarely passionate, love for England and English scenes and English ways, which will never allow English men and woman to grow indifferent to him, and which is our far-off colonies has drawn many a heart closer to the mother-country—the country which all colonists call "home." We turn rather to ponder over once again the lesson of life which he sought to teach us, or, as it is sometimes called, "his message to his time."

"It is plain that in Tennyson's