

No apology is necessary for a study of this kind. For in our day, life is the essential element in all who would teach us. It is not enough to give the polish of art, the weight of learning, the brilliancy of invention and the profundity of speculation. As the material wealth, for the increase of which our time is so remarkable, is considered useful only so far as it can be changed into life in man, so the accumulations of science are not themselves life but the food of life. All the machineries and materials of civilization are held to be valuable only in so far as they can be made to serve the well-being of man in his varied wants. "What is life for?" was asked of a philosopher of our time. "Life," was the answer, "is for learning and working." "No," said a wiser thinker, "learning and working are for life." So we have in our teachers what a critic of note calls "life of the spirit." Says Corson: "The highest powers of thought cannot be realized without the life of the spirit. It is this which has been the glory of the greatest thinkers since the world began; not their intellects, but the co-operating, unconscious power *immanent* in their intellects."

This view of his own mission was from the first recognized by Tennyson. In the beginning, almost, of his career he writes of the "Poet's Mind":

"Vex not thou the poet's mind;  
For thou can'st not fathom it.  
Clear and bright it should be ever,  
Flowing like a crystal river;  
Bright as light and clear as wind."

And, later, in the *Princess*, he says:

"Everywhere the broad and bounteous Earth,  
Should bear a double growth [of those rare souls—  
Poets,—whose thoughts enrich the blood of the world."

This purpose of our poet to add somewhat to the purity and vitality of the "blood of the world" should give pause to those among his critics who would award him the laurel of success while at the same time they regard him as no more than a consummate artist. Unless he is more than a writer of verse so polished as to entitle him to take rank with Gray, he has, in his own estimation failed. But we think the student whose mind has been open to the poet's for a lengthened period will be assured that Tennyson has not failed. On the contrary he has enlarged and enriched the lives of his disciples by setting before them qualities that form the highest in man and by revealing the relations in which man stands to the great source of life,

"Which being everywhere  
Lets none, who speaks with him, seem all alone."

Tennyson makes his contribution to the common fund of human thought, purpose, life, in the first place, by the *power of his own personality*.