

A very prominent point in Tennyson's later works is his accurate knowledge of Nature; he is entirely free from technical error and his poetic interpretation, while certainly not of the school of Wordsworth, is most assuredly not of the catalogue style of Thomson.

He has dropped the florid style of his earlier days. He has a short poem on Spring, full of beauty, delicate and tender. Unlike most of the works of his age it is not at all a reflection of the feelings of an old man, we see rather the feeling of youth, as the season, full of awakening life

"Before them fleets the shower,
And burst the buds,
And shine the level lands,
And flash the floods
And stars are from their hands,
Flung through the woods."

John Burroughs, whose prose of Nature is true poetry, says that Tennyson is superior to Wordsworth both as regards true poetic feeling and technical knowledge.

Politically, these differ much from his earlier poems; he has completely changed his views, and no longer cries

"Not in vain the distance beacons, forward, forward let
us range.
Let the great world spin forever down the ringing
grooves of change."

Appalled as he well may be at the growth of Anarchist doctrines, by the insane cries for mob rule, and the shouting of impossible changes from the hustings, he breaks out into stormy invective against the "rivals of realm-ruining party" and the demagogues who blindfold the people.

"Chaos, Cosmos; Cosmos, Chaos! once again the
sickening game;
Freedom free to slay herself, and dying while they
shout her name.
Step by step we gained a freedom, known to Europe,
known to all;
Step by step we rose to greatness,—through the tongue-
sters we may fall."
You that woo the Voices, tell them—old experience is
a fool.
Teach your flattered kings that only those who cannot
read can rule."

And on and on, and then suddenly he feels that perhaps these are only the gray thoughts of gray old age, and checks himself.

By some the political parts of these poems are said to be the work of one who, belonging to what, by silly distinction, are called the classes, was prejudiced against the masses, and though he speaks not against the latter, but rather warns them, he thinks that we should advance more slowly or that some check should be imposed; still the leaning is distinctly seen.

"There is still one hostel left us, where they swing
the Locksley shield,
Till the peasant cow shall butt the lion passant from
his field,
Poor old heraldry, poor old history, poor old poetry,
passing hence,
In the common deluge drowning old political common
sense."

There is another chord which Tennyson touches with a firm hand, but of late it has been little heeded; it is that of patriotism.

The main strain of the song springs from a patriotic motive, but it is drowned by the wailing of his fears and the storm of his tirades, that only here and there we hear it welling up, but loud enough to tell us that the reason of all this anxiety for the future, this dark look, to him, of the political and social horizon, is care for Britain and her stability.

Listen to this from that unjustly maligned "ode for the opening of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition,"

"Shall we not through good and ill,
Cleave to one another still!
Britain's myriad voices call
Sons be welded each and all
Into one imperial whole,
One with Britain, heart and soul,
One life, one flag, one fleet, one throne,
Britons hold your own."

Is not this an answer to the party composed of

"Men loud against all forms of power,
Unfurnished brows, tempestuous tongues;
Expecting all things in an hour,
Brass mouths and iron lungs."

And now we come to that much, and somewhat unjustly, abused work, the "Jubilee Ode."

It had been looked forward to with expectations of something transcending all former efforts, coming from him in his official capacity, and its appearance in *Mac-Millan's* was greeted with an outburst of shouts of derision from newspaper paragraphs, whose sole idea of criticism is that it must be adverse.

But it is a significant fact that the harshest criticisms came from quarters whence literary work was least expected, where loyalty at once condemned the poem, and where the author and his subject were more the objects of abuse than his work.

Truly, it is not by any means what might have been expected from Tennyson, but when one considers his years, and the fact that it is by comparison with his other works that it suffers, it cannot but be felt that it has received more than a just meed of censure.

It opens well, and the reverent feeling for our noble queen, is, or rather ought to be, echoed by every heart, but as it goes on, and indeed all through, it sounds very much like Walt Whitman's chopped up prose. But the last stanza almost makes amends for the faults of the middle part of the poem.

"Are there thunders moaning in the distance?
Are there specters moving in the darkness?
Trust the Lord of Light to guide her people,
Till the thunders pass, the spectres vanish,
And the light is victor, and the darkness
Dawns in the Jubilee of the ages."

There is a great difference between these poems and a majority of his earlier ones; the first were more the outcome of circumstances, beautiful indeed and full of expression of the quiet home life and easy circumstances with which he was surrounded.

But occasionally he allowed his individual spirit to get the better of his surroundings, notably in Locksley Hall, and then his poetry became proportionately grander.

In these there is more of the man, and less of his environment, so that despite their blemishes, they may after all have in them more poetry than a good many earlier ones.