

uries unknown to their forefathers, to derive no benefit from the discoveries and inventions of the age? Who has a better right than he to profit by the labour-saving inventions which have driven him from one form of occupation after another, often compelling him in middle life, or perhaps even on the verge of old age, to see his lifelong occupation gone and to betake himself to some new form of industry, or suffer from want? The old order, he will declare, is changing and must give place to the new. The schoolmaster is abroad and is teaching the workingman to do his own thinking. The franchise and the ballot are also enabling him to do a part of the legislation which has in the past been done for him by those whose views and interests were very different from his. His very exigencies and the example of his employers have taught him to utilize the strength which comes from union. The editor and the professor and the judge cry out that it is wrong and anarchic for the unions to do all in their power to prevent others from stepping in to take their places when they have entered upon a struggle, at great cost and risk, to secure what they regard as but simple justice or less than justice from the capitalist. But these theorists forget that the non-union labourer who steps into the vacant place of a union striker steps into a place which has been made what it is by the struggles and sufferings of the unionists. They forget that were the unions to be broken up and each workman to do the best he can for himself on the principle of these non-unionist labourers, wages would speedily be brought down to starvation point, and the last state of the workingman be worse than the first. He goes further and declares not only that the workingman will henceforth demand a much larger percentage of the products of his toil than hitherto, but that the old law of competition must no longer determine the question. In principle, he avers, it is as unjust and un-ethical as the criterion of brute force to which the nations have so long appealed for the settlement of their quarrels. In practice it can no longer be tolerated, for the contest between the capitalist with his tens of millions and the man with only his day's wage between him and want has become too unequal. In short, society is even now in the midst of a great industrial evolution which may at any moment become a revolution, though the unions are doing what they can to effect it by peaceful methods. How much of truth and force there is in these views we need not now attempt to decide. But when discussion is rife it is better to look the whole facts fairly in the face. No one, we conceive, does that who fails to recognize that the unions maintain as an article of their creed, that the old political economy is obsolete and that a new system must be found.

PROFESSOR CLARK'S LECTURES ON TENNYSON—I.

EARLY POEMS.

THESE lectures were announced before the news of the Laureate's illness had reached this country; and the responsibility of expounding the writings of one so great has not been lessened by the thought of the irreparable loss which we have sustained. Yet there is a thought even stronger than that of our great loss, the thankfulness which all admirers of our great poet must experience on reflecting that, drawn out as his years had been, he was taken away before there was any perceptible diminution of his powers, or even of the elasticity and brilliancy of his genius.

It is curious to note the manner in which Tennyson made his way against the prejudices by which his first poetic utterances were greeted. Met by the jibes and sneers of the critics of the day, he went on with quiet, resolute faith in his own vocation until he reached almost the highest place. If Shakespeare is the first, there is hardly a name that can be placed between his and Tennyson's, save that of Milton. Speaking on such a subject it is superfluous to remark that no slightest pretence can be made to exhaustiveness or completeness of treatment, or to any final judgment as to Lord Tennyson's place in English literature. Rather is it the object of these lectures to lead to a deeper appreciation of the glorious poetry which he has left us, and to help the students of his writings to some more adequate recognition of his genius.

It would be easy to enumerate the qualities, or some of the qualities, by which Lord Tennyson's poetry is distinguished. Mention might be made of the purity of his language, of its sweetness, its melodiousness, its strength, and its richness. We might speak of his wondrous insight into man, into nature, into law, into God; of his faith in human destiny, in the triumph of right and good, in the government of a righteous and loving Ruler of the universe. We might speak of his splendid imagination, based upon the clearest vision of nature, built up, glorified by his wonderful power of idealization; or we might insist upon the marvellous compass and variety of his endowments, which

seemed capable of grappling with any subject, ranging from the most familiar aspects of nature animate and inanimate to the highest flights of speculation on life and death, time and eternity. Our business here will be rather to study the works of our great poet in succession as they appeared, to observe and note, as far as we can, the development and growth of his genius and his treatment of the manifold problems with which he deals.

His outward history was uneventful. He was born at Somersby, in Lincolnshire, on the 6th of August, 1809, and educated at the Grammar School, Louth, and at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he made the acquaintance of Arthur Hallam, Richard Trench, Henry Alford and others. In 1829 he gained the Chancellor's medal by his poem, "Timbuctoo." In 1831, on the death of his father, he left Cambridge without having finished his course. His elder brothers, Frederick and Charles, both have given evidence of high poetic gifts.

Tennyson gave early evidence of poetic power. At the age of eight he was challenged by his brother to write verses, and produced a set of well-written lines which covered two sides of a slate. Between eleven and twelve he wrote an epic of over four thousand lines in the metre of the "Lady of the Lake," and when between fourteen and fifteen he wrote a drama in Iambic metre. His first publication was a volume put forth by him and his brother Charles, "Poems by Two Brothers," in 1827. It was announced that all the poems were written by the authors between fifteen and eighteen years of age. They signified the modesty of their claims by adopting as a motto the words: "*Hæc nos novimus esse nihil.*" Although these poems were slight and unimportant, they bear traces of the influences by which the genius of Tennyson was moulded, and already exemplify the astonishing variety of metrical forms which appear throughout his whole works. The principal influences in the literary life of Tennyson were Coleridge, Wordsworth and pre-eminently Keats, whom in many respects he greatly resembles. But Walter Scott must also be named, and in his youth he was powerfully impressed by the passionate genius of Byron, the influence of which may be discerned in some of his shorter poems and in "Maud."

In 1830 he put forth a volume of "Poems Chiefly Lyrical," when he was twenty-one years of age. It was a volume of 154 pages, containing 53 poems, only 25 of which are retained in the later editions of his early poems. When it is mentioned that this volume contains "Claribel," "Lilian," "Mariana," "Recollections of the Arabian Nights," "Oriana," and the "Dying Swan," it will be felt that the poet had already given proof of qualities which might have been expected to meet with wide recognition. And had all the poems been nearly up to the level of these, he would not have had to wait so long for recognition. M. Taine says of them: "Each word of them is like a tint curiously deepened or shaded by the neighbouring tint, with all the boldness and results of the happiest refinement. The least alteration would obscure all. And there an art so just, so consummate, is necessary to paint the charming prettinesses, the sudden hauteurs, the half blushes, the imperceptible and fleeting caprices of feminine beauty."

It is not true that these early poems are mere weaklings. In some of them there is evidence of power, if sometimes morbid power, and promise of greater power to come; yet the predominating quality is gracefulness, picturesqueness, with the loveliest, liquid versification. The volume was fiercely attacked in *Blackwood* by Professor John Wilson (Christopher North), one of the literary dictators of the age, who spoke of him as "Alfred"—bidding him reform his style and get rid of his cockney admirers, and then he might do better. Referring to the poem on "The Owl," he said: "Alfred himself is the greatest owl. All he wants is to be shot, stuffed, and stuck in a glass case, to be made immortal in a museum!" John Wilson was a considerable man, and the author of the "Noctes Ambrosianæ" and the "Island of Palms" should not be forgotten; but the time may come when "rusty, crusty Christopher" will be remembered only, or chiefly, as one of the earliest assailants of Alfred Tennyson.

A second volume of "Poems, by Alfred Tennyson" was put forth in December, 1832 (the date on the title page was 1833). It was published by Moxon, who was Tennyson's publisher until some time after the appearance of "Enoch Arden," 1864. This volume consisted of 163 pages, and contained thirty poems, twenty-three of which are preserved in the final edition. Among these are the "Lady of Shalott," the "Miller's Daughter," "Eoone," the "Palace of Art," "Lady Clara Vere de Vere," the first two parts of "The May Queen," the "Lotos Eaters," "A Dream of Fair Women," etc.

It is difficult to understand that poems like these should not have at once ensured an enthusiastic reception to the volume which contained them, even if they were associated with weaker productions. But the opponents of the school of Keats were implacable; and John Gibson Lockhart, not improperly named the "Scorpion"—the son-in-law of the gentle Walter Scott—made a fierce attack upon the volume, speaking of the author as "a new prodigy of genius, another and a brighter star of that galaxy or milky way of poetry, of which the lamented Keats was the harbinger." Naturally a critic of this temper said more, and quoted more of the poet's weaker points than of his stronger. Yet some of his criticisms were just, and were recognized as such by Tennyson, who made consider-

able alterations and improvements in the poems before he put them forth in a new edition, ten years afterwards.

Never does the true greatness of this mighty genius appear to greater advantage than when humbly accepting such criticism and condescending to be taught by an enemy and an inferior. In this respect, as has often been pointed out, Tennyson is immeasurably superior to Wordsworth. As an example of the changes which he introduced, we give one stanza from the "Miller's Daughter," as it stood in the original edition. The parts altered are in italics:—

Remember you that pleasant day
When after roving in the woods,
(*Twas April then), I came and lay
Beneath the gummy chestnut buds
That glistened in the April blue
Upon the slope so smooth and cool
I lay and never thought of you,
But angled in the deep mill pool.

We may confidently declare that these are charming lines, showing that the writer has a true and clear eye for nature, a pretty fancy, remarkable powers of vivid representation, and a splendid command of musical English; but the "gummy" chestnut buds, true as they might be to nature, did not please Mr. Lockhart, and the lines have been altered as follows:—

But, Alice, what an hour was that,
When after roving in the woods
(*Twas April then) I came and sat
Below the chestnuts, when their buds
Were glistening to the breezy blue;
And on the slope, an absent fool
I cast me down, nor thought of you,
But angled in the higher pool.

A careful examination of the two forms of this stanza will convince us how admirable are the improvements introduced. It must have gone to the poet's heart to have remorselessly torn up the outpourings of his fervid imaginings; but the artist had his way. "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." It is one of the secrets of Tennyson's transcendent achievements. A still more remarkable example of ruthless excision and insertion is found two stanzas further down. The "Palace of Art" has many traces of the same process. Dr. Van Dyke's excellent book examines this poem carefully. For whatever reason Tennyson published nothing more for nearly ten years, when, in 1842, he put forth "Poems" in two volumes, the first of which contained the survivals of the two earlier publications, with some slight additions; for instance, the third part of "The May Queen," whilst the second contained new poems. The two volumes appeared in one (the third edition) in 1850. In 1851 there was prefixed the dedication to the Queen.

His position was now secure. If he still had his detractors, many of them had simply read extracts from his weaker poems and knew nothing of his greater efforts and achievements. One of the characteristics of Tennyson, notable in his early work and in his later, is his remarkable self-control. To the ordinary reader the feeling and passion in his poems are almost imperceptible because of their being restrained and compressed. To those who were accustomed to the *abandon*, the fiery passion of Byron, this repression was naturally an offence. Yet we who know Tennyson and have searched to the depths of his utterances know that there is no lack of power or even of deep, full, concentrated passion in his writing.

From the new volume we may select some specimens. First came the "Morte d'Arthur," a poem so perfect that it appears in the "Idylls of the King" in precisely the same form as in the edition of 1851. It will be considered hereafter under the "Idylls." We might note also "The Gardener's Daughter," "Dora," a poem of exquisite beauty, simplicity and pathos, with admirable depicting of characters. "St. Simeon Stylites," an example of deep devotion, false asceticism, and perverted thoughts of God, expressed with marvellous force. "Ulysses," a magnificent poem, presenting a striking contrast to the figures, painted also with marvellous power, in the earlier poem "The Lotos Eaters."

One of the most striking poems, in this volume is "Locksley Hall," whether we consider its splendid and appropriate metre, the power and beauty of its language, the wonderful psychological study which it affords, or the reflections on the age and the destiny of mankind. Take one line as an example of expression:—

That a sorrow's crown of sorrows is remembering happier things.

The line is doubtless suggested by Dante's

Nessun maggior dolor
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella Miseria.

But how much finer it is!

Anticipations of the "Idylls" are found not only in the perfect "Morte d'Arthur," but in other poems, apparently experiments on the Arthurian legend in different metres. At the very end of the volume comes one of the sweetest poems in the volume, the germ of "In Memoriam": "Break, Break, Break."

The next subject will be "The Princess."

Books recommended for study: Stedman's "Victorian Poets," Miss Sharp's "Victorian Poets," Van Dyke's "Poetry of Tennyson"; Dawson's "Makers of Modern English," Collins' "Illustrations of Tennyson."

EDUCATION keeps the keys of life; and a liberal education ensures the first conditions of freedom,—namely, adequate knowledge and accustomed thought.—*Julia Ward Howe.*