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THE KEYNOTE OF TENNYSON'S POETRY*.

IT is not my intention to employ the short space of time at my disposal this evening in discussing the poetry of Tennyson from a purely literary point of view, interesting as such a discussion would be in competent hands. Believing, however, as I do, in Matthew Arnold's doctrine that "poetry is at bottom a criticism of life," or, to quote a fuller definition given by him, "that the noble and profound application of ideas to life is the most essential part of poetic greatness," I shall try to point out some of the leading ideas which found expression in the poems of Tennyson, some of the main elements in the message of the great departed singer to the men of his day and generation.

The phrase I have just used reminds us how long and glorious a day was given to our poet. He was born in 1809, the year in which the Great Duke, whose "long self-sacrifice of life" was destined to receive such worthy commemoration at his hands, was beginning that magnificent series of campaigns which resulted in the overthrow of Napoleon's usurped power in the Spanish peninsula. That seems to us a dim and distant time, from which we are separated by our "marvellous nineteenth century," as we are in the habit of calling it—an age which has produced railways and telegraphs, breech-loaders and ironclads, and countless other trophies of our industrial and scientific prowess whose name

This article has been prepared from some rather fragmentary notes of an address which was given a few weeks ago before the Mutual Improvement Association of the Deer Park Presbyterian Church, and which the writer has attempted to reproduce as to its general scope and form.