

With patient eyes eastward, be watching
And soon the gray streaks will appear,
Sure heralds of morn's happy coming
O'erwearied one, be of good cheer.

Lo! Already the soft lines of morning,
In tremulous, delicate beams,
Break through the dark clouds—O the glory
Flashing upward in swift-spreading gleams!

O the wonderful beauty around thee!
The bloom of thy flower-strewn way,
All hid in that hour that was darkest
Before the sweet dawning of day!

CURRENTE CALAMO.

THE RELIGIOUS VEIN OF TENNYSON'S "IN MEMORIAM."

No sublimer monument of a human sorrow was ever reared by poet-artist than that, more enduring than brass, which Alfred Tennyson raised to the memory of Arthur Henry Hallam, the historian's son, a quarter of a century ago.

When to England over the channel came to Tennyson the sad news that Hallam, his bosom-friend and the affianced of his sister, had passed away from earth, a gloom dark and lasting shrouded the poet's soul. A hundred sombre elegies record the deep-seated woe of nine long years. Shakespear wrote:—

"To persevere
In obstinate condolence, is a course
Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief:
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven;
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient;
An understanding simple and unschool'd:
For what we know must be, and is as common
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
Why should we in our peevish opposition,
Take it to heart? Fie! 'tis a fault to heaven,
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
To reason most absurd."

This finger of rebuke pointing at him through the centuries could not deter Tennyson from "those swallow-flights of song, that dip their wings in tears and skim away." "I sometimes hold it half a sin to put in words the grief I feel," "I count it crime to mourn for any overmuch," are his frank admissions; but the great loss had riven the poet's heart, and the "sad mechanic exercise"

of writing verse 'like dull narcotics numbed the pain.'

To point out all the admirable passages of "In Memoriam" would necessitate the citing of every stanza of the wonderful group of elegies; for not a useless word or barren line mars the sublime whole. Let us regard for a few minutes the religious aspect of the poem.

From the beginning to the end there is the same devout veneration for all that is good and holy. The first quatrain of the poem and the last show us that the poet is a Christian:—

"Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen Thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace.
Believing where we cannot prove."

And the last:—

"That God which ever lives and loves,
One God, one Law, one Element,
And one far-off-divine Event
To which the whole creation moves."

The poet reveres the Bible:—

"The creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thoughts;
Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
And those wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral reef."

The poet looks forward to the time when he will meet his Arthur, when all his 'widow'd race of life is run.' He expects to reach at last the blessed goal, where 'he that died in Holy Land will reach him out a shining hand'; where

"The Great Intelligences fair,
That range above our mortal state,
In circle round the blessed gate,
Will greet and give him welcome there;
And lead him thro' the blissful climes,
And show him in the fountain fresh
All knowledge that the sons of flesh
Shall gather in the cyclic times."

It is a grand belief of the poets that the spirits of the saintly dead are ever about us, and sympathize with us:—

"They do not die,
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
Nor change to us altho' they change:

Rapt from the fickle and the frail,
With gather'd power, yet the same
Pierces the keen seraphic flame
From orb to orb, from veil to veil."