

SELECTIONS FROM "IN MEMORIAM."

Tennyson's *In Memoriam* consists of a series of more or less connected lyrical poems of the same stanza-form, but of varying lengths. The occasion of the series was the death of his most intimate friend Hallam, in September, 1833. Some of the lyrics date back to this year, and during the next seventeen years (*In Memoriam* was published in 1850) additional sections were written. "The sections were written," says Tennyson himself, "at many different places and as the phases of our intercourse came to my memory and suggested them. I did not write them with any view of weaving them into a whole, or for publication, until I found that I had written so many." Again he is quoted as saying:—"It is rather the cry of the whole human race than mine. In the poem altogether private grief swells out into the thought of, and hope of the whole world." *In Memoriam* in its final form contains one hundred and thirty-one sections, besides a prologue and an epilogue, and these sections cover a great variety of topics, some of them very remote from the initial subject. Arthur Henry Hallam, whose death is the occasion of the whole poem, was born February 1st, 1811; hence he was about eighteen months younger than Tennyson. Their friendship began at Trinity College, Cambridge, about 1829. Hallam impressed his contemporaries as a man of extraordinary ability and promise. His death, which was absolutely unexpected, took place in Venice while on a trip to the continent in company with his father, the distinguished historian.

XXVII.

The earlier part of *In Memoriam* gives expression to the profundity of the poet's sorrow, and his feeling that his life had been permanently darkened by his loss. Yet, as a sort of conclusion to the whole matter, he states in this section, that it is better to pay this price for his friendship than to escape this great sorrow through never having known and loved his friend.

2. **rage.** Not in the narrow sense of 'anger,' but in the broader sense of intense feeling; cf. Gray's *Elegy*:

Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage
And froze the genial current of the soul.

12. **want-begotten rest.** Contentment that arises from the lack of something.

LXIV.

The poet has been discussing in the poem the problems of immortality, and accepts the view that upon death the soul immediately enters a