

tion of Tennyson's matured thought, according to his niece, Miss Weld, who heard him express in conversation the same views attributed to the venerable seer of the poem. A single passage is sufficient to show that he still fought the materialistic trend of the time, and held fast to his faith in the reality of the supersensual world and the existence of God tho an invisible Spirit:

"Thou canst not prove the Nameless, O my son,
Nor canst thou prove the world thou movest in,
Thou canst not prove that thou art body alone,
Nor canst thou prove that thou art spirit alone,
Nor canst thou prove that thou art both in one:
Thou canst not prove thou art immortal, no
Nor yet that thou art mortal—nay, my son,
Thou canst not prove that I, who speak with thee,
Am not thyself in converse with thyself,
For nothing worthy proving can be proven,
Nor yet disproven: wherefore thou be wise,
Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,
And cling to Faith beyond the forms of Faith!
She reels not in the storm of warring words,
She brightens at the clash of 'Yes' and 'No,'
She sees the Best that glimmers thro' the Worst,
She feels the Sun is hid but for a night,
She spies the summer thro' the winter bud,
She tastes the fruit before the blossom falls,
She hears the lark within the songless egg,
She finds the fountain where they wail'd 'Mirage!'"

When Tennyson put into the mouth of Merlin those "riddling triplets," he gave what may be called a terse poetical version of the history of thought:

"Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow on the lea!
And truth is this to me, and that to thee;
And truth or clothed or naked let it be.

Rain, sun, and rain! and the free blossom blows:
Sun, rain, and sun! and where is he who knows?
From the great deep to the great deep he goes."

In these few lines are sketched the varying fortunes of truth, now clouded, now revealed, now eluding the searcher like a mocking rainbow, now simply expressed in plain language, and now gorgeously appareled in allegorical dress. There is also a suggestion of man's fallibility, intended no doubt as a check to the assumption of authority on the part of arrogant dogmatic sectarians, who are incapable of seeing both sides of an idea, whose point of view never changes, for whom truth is forever at a standstill, that is, clothed in one set form of words not to be altered or improved.

While administering a rebuke to the dogmatists who are "too blind to have desire to see," Tennyson realized the limitations to progress imposed by physicists and positivists who ignore certain fields of re-

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