

The



Owl.

VOL. I.

COLLEGE OF OTTAWA, MAY, 1888.

No. 5.

ALFRED TENNYSON.

HIS PRINCIPLES, PHILOSOPHICAL AND RELIGIOUS.

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfills himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world."
Tenn., Morte D'Arthur.

PREVIOUS to the advent of Alfred Tennyson the field of English poetry presented to the reader a panorama, alike remarkable for its diversity and its extent. Some of the poets had ransacked the East, Greece and Rome, the mythology of which, together with the legends and fancies of the Middle Ages, they piled mountains high as stupendous works of poetic art. Others, less imaginative, but more reflective and philanthropic, plunged deeply into the subtleties of metaphysics, or pondered on the condition of human beings, with a view to painting vivid pictures of either the joys and comforts or ills and woes of humanity. And others again, have, in their portrayal of characters and narration of events, presented beings heroic and passionate, forming a medley of heroism and crime associated with the grand and sublime.

The predecessors of Tennyson, for successive periods, had reaped rich harvests from the fruitful fields of poetry, harvests which had almost offered a surfeit to the imagination. A change in poetic litera-

ture was needed, for, men would soon tire of the extremes to which the art had been carried. When, then, Tennyson appeared as the founder of a new school, in which all that was good and pleasing of previous ones was renewed, but refined and modified, his reception was warm and enthusiastic, and he was soon accorded the proud distinction of being considered the greatest poet of his time. His labors were furthermore favorably acknowledged by his being raised to the distinguished position of Poet Laureate of England. Although such distinction has been conferred on Tennyson, yet there are found among literary critics many who consider Browning as his equal and his superior, on the merits, however, of this author's later productions, rather than his earlier ones. Two great poets they are, and widely different. Tennyson delights in the picturesque, and the mild and graceful legend abounding with graceful characters, while Browning evinces a taste for complicated problems of life, and surpasses the former in depicting human passions and emotions. He is especially remarkable for "his commanding genius, his powerful imagination, and penetrating pathos."

During the last century, on account of