

manifest make us regret that the world was not permitted to see the maturity of his powers. But we cannot say that the life which gave the inspiration for a poem like "In Memoriam," has been lived in vain.

In settling on a plan for his poem Tennyson seems to us to have been very happy. Two English poets had before him attempted the task of writing an Elegiac in memory of a friend, viz., Milton, in his "Lycidas" and Shelley, in "Adonais" and either of these models he might have followed. These, however, seem for the most part to consist of invocations to the forces of nature to sympathize with the poet's grief. Our poet chose to follow neither, but conceived the idea of a succession of short poems having but the unity of a single subject, whose "thread of connection runs loosely, now and then drops, and unexpectedly comes to light again," and the "sequence of whose fancies knows no logic but comes in the strain as they come to the heart."

The poem, as I have before said, may be regarded as the history of the poet's mental state during the years succeeding his friend's death, and through it, as one writer well says, "we can follow him into all those solemn regions of thought and fancy which open at the touch of death; we feel that over our own minds the same thoughts have flashed, now and then, while we were wading in the bitter waters of affliction, and making up our minds a hundred times a moment to the will of God." It is, however, not my purpose to trace up the workings of the poet's mind from the first tumultuous outbursts of doubt and questioning which death opens up, to the time when all his doubts and fears vanish, as he learns to rest in faith upon the

"Strong Son of God, Immortal Love."

Each one can best do this for himself. I will content myself with pointing out a few of what I deem the beauties of the work under each of the heads into which for this purpose the poem seems best to fall.

The divisions are somewhat of this sort:

1. Parts dealing with the poet's friend.
2. Descriptions of nature which seems to sympathize with him in his grief.
3. The poet's mental state through all his doubts.
4. Those that are full of submission to and calm rest upon the will of God.

I. How beautifully he describes the affection he felt for his friend in which he says he was to him

"Dear as a mother to the son
More than my brothers are to me."

We can imagine the intercourse between two such gifted minds during their rambles.

When each by turns was guide to each,
And fancy light from fancy caught,
And thought leapt out to wed with thought
Ere thought could wed itself with speech.

How well he exhibits that reverence, almost adoration, which a noble mind feels towards one in whom he recognizes that which he so prizes.

He past; a soul of nobler tone,
My spirit loved and loves him yet,
Like some poor girl whose heart is set
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

So many worlds, so much to do,
So little done, such things to be,
How know I what had need of thee,
For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

II. It is hard to make a selection from these passages, all are so fine. Take for example those verses in which he describes how after the first bitter outburst of sorrow nature seems to sympathize with him in his grief.

Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground.

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold.

Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,
And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main.

Calm and deep peace in this wide air.
These leaves that reddened to the fall;
And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair.

But nature is after all a poor comforter, at one time she seems to be all sympathy, while at another she seems to jar on all our nerves.

"The stars," she whispers, "blindly run;
A web is wove across the sky;
From out waste places comes a cry,
And murmurs from the dying sun.

And all the phantom, nature stands,—
With all the music in her tone,
A hollow echo of my own,—
A hollow form with empty hands."

III. A flood of doubts and questionings comes over him, he is torn by sorrow and grief.

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,
Some dolorous message knit below
The wild pulsation of her wings.

Like her I go; I cannot stay,
I leave this mortal ark behind,
A wright of nerves without a mind,
And cave the cliffs, and haste away.

Then see those verses full of comfort to all doubting hearts.

You tell me, doubt is devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew
In many a subtle question versed,
Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,
But ever strove to make it true.

Perplex in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out,
There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.