on some points we may arrive at conclusions which are not likely to be disputed.

Few literary men have been more variously gifted than the late Poet Laureate, and few have used those gifts more conscientiously. In addition, there is hardly another example in English literature of a poet whose genius developed in a more perfectly normal manner, deepening, gathering strength and richness from first to last, so that even in extreme old age there was hardly a trace of decadence. The last volume of poems, "Demeter," etc., etc., closes with an ode which may be described as simply perfect, nothing of its kind having ever equalled it. It is "Crossing the Bar." His last published volume, "The Foresters," is an absolute prodigy, if written, as we are told, during the last year or two. It is hardly possible to believe that some parts of it, at least, do not belong to an early period of his literary life.

In his early poems we have that wonderful charm of language, that purity of mellifluousness which never forsook him. As he goes on he gains in picturesqueness, in incisiveness, in those wonderful utterances of the deepest thoughts and emotions of the heart which are as moving as they are true. Then he begins, as in the "Princess," to deal with some of the burning questions of the day, and shows his power of psychological analysis, of social diagnosis, his faculty of seeing not one side only of a problem, but all its sides, its truth and its falsehood, its claims and its limitations, its sublimity and its absurdity, its rights and its dangers. Then in the great poem, "In Memoriam," he sounds the depths of human life and divine government, revealing at once his sense of all the sadness and sorrow of man's earthly destiny sustained by a sublime optimism which refuses to think that God's government can fail.

There is no failure in "Maud," the next poem of any length. Here, too, he shows his sympathy with his age, and his scorn of its meanness and paltriness. There is nothing in this great poem which is unworthy of its writer. Its hero is a true representative of a class which had sprung up of moody dreamers whose malady needed to be healed by the power of action, even as the "smooth-faced, snub-nosed rogue" needed to be roused from his sordid swindling by a rising patriotism responsive to dangers from without. Some one has spoken of Tennyson being destitute of passion. Such an one could hardly have read the songs in "Maud."

But we are hurrying on, and perhaps it is better that we should pause before we go further, and survey some parts of the literary history of Lord Tennyson somewhat more minutely. Everyone knows the few events which constitute his outward history, his birth at Somersby, in Lincolnshire, in 1809, the year of the birth of Mr. Gladstone and Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes and also of Darwin and Mrs. Browning. The third son of the Rev. Dr. G. Clayton Tennyson, after some time at the Grammar School at Louth he went to Cambridge, where he and his eldest brother Charles entered Trinity College. Here he made the acquaintance of Trench, afterwards Dean of Westminster, and subsequently of Alford, who died Dean of Canterbury; both of whom were of considerable poetic gifts, and both ardent admirers of their great contemporary. But the friendship of greatest influence which he found at Cambridge was that of Arthur Hallam, who became betrothed to Tennyson's favourite sister, and died in 1833, when he was about twenty-four years of age. The events of Tennyson's life, the peculiar qualities of his father and his mother, have been so amply set forth in the newspapers that we