

peals to all because he sees and loves what interests each. The intensity of his perception (if one may so speak) shows to him a beauty in the simplest objects, and in the whole of this fair earth, which prevents anything from being commonplace to him as it is to those who see less. What an unobservant man would pass by as a mass of green foliage, would be seen by him in its immense variety as truly as by a scientific botanist, but with a light upon it shed by genius, and not the mere interest given by science. And so, too, in the world beyond the senses—the world of human affections, passions, convictions, aspirations. Under his delicate microscope, the homely grandmother or the village wife are not rough types, but are seen each as having her share in the “abysmal depths of personality.” And so he cares to paint, with exquisite delicacy, spheres of life and persons and things familiar to the many, though with an art and power of vision which can be fully appreciated by very few. His faithful reproduction of nature endears him to the numbers to whom he presents their own thoughts and ideas; but the art by which this perfect naturalness is attained, and by which the setting of each scene—the life and world in which his actors move—is conveyed, is as remarkable for its unobtrusiveness as for its success. And the very same habits of microscopic observation, exercised with equal but not greater care, are visible in his dealings with the world of spirit. In the spiritual musings of “In Memoriam,” of “De Profundis,” of “Despair,” of parts of the second “Locksley Hall,” of the two great reflective poems of his later life of which we have already spoken, “Vastness,” and “The Ancient Sage,” he surveys with exact and vivid insight the high questionings, conjectures, hopes, fears, the vast range of possibilities into contact

with which science brings the educated and thoughtful mind, as he had surveyed the small and homely world—the world of few ideas and little knowledge—in his simpler poems. In each case, facts penetrate him. The range and complexity of his thought, the number and import of the facts it embraces, the wide sweep of his imagination, are revealed notably in “Vastness.” And yet the mind which can thus survey the universe, and grapple with the problems it presents, is the same to which the death of the little child in the hospital had all the reality and deep pathos which surrounds one single human life. Indeed, the very poem of which we have spoken—“Vastness”—reveals quite as much his sense of the infinite pathos and importance of the single life, as his sense of the mystery and immensity of the universe. And it is, perhaps, this essentially Christian view of life which has given him the will, as his peculiar genius has given him the power, to touch so many hearts. Every man finds his own simple joys and hopes echoed in these volumes; and the philosophy they breathe is here in absolute contrast to that of the great thinker of antiquity, who had “no beatitudes for the poor.” We know the happiness given to a poor man by a kind word or a brief visit from Royalty; and the sense that his lot is thought worthy of the interest of those who are so far above it, forms great part of that happiness. A pleasure very similar in kind is given by a man of commanding genius and great gifts, who shows, as Tennyson has done, keen interest in the little world of home, and the possibilities of every sphere of life. Aristotle’s “magnanimous” man used irony with the common herd; Tennyson is interested in each individual. He never sees them as a herd, and was probably never ironical in his life. —*The Spectator*.