

Edward is the only character in the whole play which Tennyson has drawn from the abundant supernatural elements which lay hidden in the social life of that period.

Here we may be pardoned if we digress a little to consider the improbabilities of the possession of high dramatic powers by Tennyson. True genius is in some sort irrepressible. Has Mr. Tennyson lived so long in ignorance of the germ of a great existence which if he possessed, must have been the subject of continuous growth or continuous decay? And if, for half a century of continuous growth, nourished on philosophy and the study of human life, kindled and fed by the fires of Shakespere and Eschylus, it dwelt in partial or total obscurity, when it was allowed to struggle forth into the light of day, what a new and original creation had we not a right to expect! Especially when that mind in a more confined and uncongenial sphere had attested its birthright to immortality by the greatest of memorial harmonies, and Idylls that were roseate with the unsickly hues of chivalry and lusty with the vigor of a young spirit. Has Mr. Tennyson shown in previous works any decided dramatic characteristics? They are not to be found in the stately dirges or the infinite yearnings of "In Memoriam."

The artistic rhetoric of the misanthropic lover of Maud; the sameness of the Idyllic heroes, furnish us with no foreshadowing of the coming drama. Genius possesses men, and Mr. Tennyson has shown this by a life consecrated to song. But nowhere do we find the heralding light (twinkling like some star in the distant nebulæ) of a great tragedian amidst his perfectly executed poems. The truth is that such a combination of mental powers as is necessary in the formation of a dramatic genius of the highest order, is so intricate and wonderful, that nature seems either unable or unwilling to lavish them on individual minds except as rare and marvellous exceptions. Greece and England alone within the compass of human history have been blessed with such minds, and the number four includes them all. Corneille, Calderon, Goethe and Schiller, all excellent in their way are yet far below these four in all the distinctive elements of dramatic genius. When we consider that the last eighteen hundred years, with all its mighty upheavals of hidden

strength; with all its unparalleled quickening of mental growth; with all the exigencies that have called forth new and wondrous forms of spiritual life, has produced but a single Shakspeare, we are led to conclude that no other is needed, and that the age of dramatic excellence is gone. Genius of a pure and intellectual character is not appreciated now on the stage, where travesty and grovelling comedy have stepped into the majestic shoon of the tragic muse. It will not be denied that the tendency of this age is somewhat realistic and unheroic. The most remarkable feature of Shakspeare's genius was its universality. He belongs not to any age or nation, but to the world. Perennial freshness is stamped on all he wrote; Macbeth, Juliet and Desdemona will be as real and as new when the world is hoary with another thousand years as when the ink dried on the manuscript. Even Sophocles and Eschylus were not world representatives, but were the oracles of a peculiar race, and the interpreters of a peculiar religion. One overmastering mood is discerned throughout all their works; they spoke of man in his relations to eternity, and all his woes sprung from the religious passions and agonizings of free will against fate.

Sources of Knowledge.

THE human mind is progressive. It is ever impelled by the force of a scarcely definable inner motive to the acquisition of knowledge. Mind is essentially God-like and in man is ever straining its fetters, reaching forward, advancing from one stage of perfection to another as is shown by the onward and upward impetus, which impels the grand progressive march of ages. The unity of purpose visible in all created matter constitutes the great bond of sympathy everywhere existing. It is by this bond that man is encouraged to inquire into the economy of the universe for cause and effect, not satisfied to accept conclusions without a regular course of reasoning. This search into things hidden or obscure is not mere aimless curiosity, but characteristic of every normal