

then, can we grant that the Nineteenth Century can kindle a flame in the dramatic heaven whose light is strong enough to illumine coming time alongside of the central sun. Vain is a Venus or a Mercury; for though they hold a place they dwell in obscurity, darkened by excessive brightness of the superior orb. Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger and Ford and Dryden, are rarely read—yet their genius was unquestionably great. But who can imagine the works of Shakespere ever being confined to a narrow circle of literary antiquarians?

Alfred Tennyson, poet laureate of England, standing first among contemporary poets has written two dramas, the last of which is called "Harold," from the great Saxon King who is the hero of the play. That the author of "In Memoriam" has not surely written a play devoid of the fire of his former genius need not be affirmed here; nay more, that there is a rugged and imposing structure in outline, which perhaps no other hand could erect, is admitted.

But the traces of his genius in the drama are like the fossil remains of a remote age reminding us of greatness now decayed. Everybody reads Harold and Mary, because Mr. Tennyson wrote them, but comparatively few read them the second time unless it be to assure themselves whether it was their own stupidity or the author's inanity that rendered them so unsatisfactory. Harold is both better and worse than Mary. The theme and age is infinitely better for the portrayal of all deep heroic passion and virtue. The subject is intensely interesting in itself. So far Harold is superior to Mary. In its treatment little more power is displayed. The difference is that in the one the author did little with a poor subject, and in the other he has done the same with a good one.

We have only one standard by which our judgment of dramatic excellence can be guided—a standard higher than the loftiest ideal of the pre-Elizabethan era, and which compels a world's wonder that it could ever have been made tangible and real. Shakespeare has embodied all our abstractions of excellence in the tragedy, and Harold must be compared with his great historic plays. True enough it is that the comparison is unfair to the inferior; a house may look very well in a back settlement, which would be remarkably insignificant beside the Tuileries. Hence it is that the author must be very eminently adapted to the new labor he has undertaken or he must fail—he must partially fail in any case.

The most pleasant feature in the execution of "Harold" is the purity of its style of composition. Its Saxon is unadulterated with any foreign admixture, innocent of any Latinity. Whether this is an unmixed good is a question with us.

As before remarked the characters and time chosen in the drama of Harold are remarkably fine. The historic incidents follow each other with vehemence and startling rapidity. It is an age of heroism; the passions and emotions of a strong people are free and fetterless in their exercise. Harold and William the Norman are the two greatest men of their time and occupy the summit of power. The latter filled with all the fierce, strong passions which beset the human soul, with glory and monarchy before him shining through the dim, murky atmosphere of ward and intrigues, scourged by ambition and rendered successful by the most massive powers in the most haughty and unscrupulous of souls. The King of the English—of the stern poetical, religious Saxon, himself their mental and physical type is brave, patriotic, virtuous, strong-souled, tender and abiding in love, every inch a monarch and the darling of chivalry. He is pursued by inexorable Fate; warred against by the very powers of heaven who spoke in omens mysteriously revealed to the superstitious soul; his dark career shows only in more intense gloom smit through by the lightning and bloody fire of Stamford Bridge. These are the historical characters, and seldom if ever has Genius entered a spiritual Kingdom richer in unsought trophies and more gorgeous in ungathered wealth.

#### What's in our Exchanges.

COLLEGE editors are sometimes inclined to look upon the exchange column as county editors regard the sea-serpent, as a kind of stand-by for hard times, when articles are tight, and locals, the current coin of College literature, are at a premium. Of course we do not include ourselves in this mournful category, oh! no! We set a much higher value on our Exchange column. It is a green spot, and so on, you know, and we are naturally attracted to it.

The *Dalhousie Gazette*, which by the way we accidentally omitted to notice before, has been pursuing the even tenor of its way, all winter. While the *Argosy* and ourselves were indulging in a few pleasantries over the "New University" the *Gazette* stood off at a safe distance and enjoyed itself. Thus its path, like that of virtue, became one of peace. We have read with interest the different numbers as they appeared regularly on our table. The last issue contains among other things an article on the superstitions