

priately that the book we need always beside us for daily guidance is the one best fitted to teach us the strength and beauty of our language. Not far away sits Shakespeare, selecting and moulding his material,—plastic to his hand and will :—words, the gauzy wings on which poetic fancies flit ; words telling a simply story simply, but so fitly that they always maintain an inimitable grace and conscious dignity ; words flashing with wit or sobbing with pathos ; words that mete the extremes of human experience, and sound the depths of human passion.

The masters have been followed by worthy disciples. The best English style of our century may safely challenge comparison with that of Greek or Roman of any period. No writer of classic times uses language more deftly for the purpose for which language exists than does a Newman or a Huxley.

Among our poets Tennyson has rare fitness for the place of teacher-friend. His fine taste in the choice and use of words guides him always in the direction of simple and lucid expression. Then, he has the gift of song. His best verse is exquisite music, but always because the poetic expression is dominated by the poetic perception.

‘The chords of the lute are entranced with the weight of the wonder of things’

because the poet’s eye see visions out of golden youth, and his soul is enamoured of all things fair. He give us something quite beyond this ;—sound and sense and scenery grieve in sympathy with the forlorn *Ænone* ; the many voices of the sea whisper unrest to the heart of the restless *Ulysses*, and the lights beginning to twinkle from the little cottages among the rocks increase his weariness with the stale life on shore. Tennyson is an author, who illustrates his own writings. He gives us pictures, some elaborately finished, as in the *Palace of Art* ; some free-hand drawings, as in the *Brook* ; others warm with color :—

“And the wild team

That love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,
And shake the darkness from their loosened manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.”

It was common with hostile critics, who preferred to apply the ‘faint praise’ method to Tennyson’s writings, to call him a consummate artist. His artistic touch is exquisite ; but the author of *In Memoriam* is more than an artist, and even in the songs that give the artistic sense the fullest satisfaction, as, *Tears*, *Idle Tears* and *Crossing the Bar*, it is not art, but the far suggestiveness of the lines that moulds the listener’s mood.

“In looking on the happy autumnfields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.”

Natural ? Perfectly, to one whose nature has the requisite fine-