

The Messenger.

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TUESDAY, JULY 20, 1897.

TENNYSON'S RANK AS A POET.

Rev. J. E. Wray in a paper in the Nashville (Tenn.) Christian Advocate, of 5th Inst., says: "I do not share in the mad already becoming a bore of ranking Tennyson with the great English poets. His distinctive work, posterity will say, has been as a popularizer of art." There are critics and critics. If a man says, "I do not like Shakespeare, or Dante or Aeschylus," he shows candor and freedom of opinion. But he might doubt his own taste or capacity for forming a right judgment of great poetry. To call it in mid-summer 1897, "a fad," to appraise Tennyson highly—to rank him "with the great English poets," is rather amusing when we recall who are the men who have given him very high rank, some among the highest in the great English choir, and how very long he has been admired and honored among the few greatest poets in British anthology. A man might at least be something modest in his estimates of poets when he knew how many of the foremost contemporary minds have placed the unfading laurel upon the brow of Tennyson, and given him entrance among the immortals into the inner circle in the great World's Valhalla. Let us take a rapid glance. Tennyson was born in 1809. In 1830, Wordsworth wrote of him as "not a little promising" as a poet. In 1837, when the poet was twenty-eight, Landor wrote of one of his poems that "it is more Homeric than any poem of our time, and rivals some of the noblest parts of the Odyssey." Cultivated people need not to be informed as to who Wordsworth and Landor were. The former ranks first among the meditative poets of the modern world. Some of his noblest productions are among the world's richest treasures, at once noble and sublime. There are at least two of his poems that by a consensus of opinion among the greatest critics and authors rank with the best productions of the British Muse. Landor in his domain is supreme. He has produced poems of great perfection and written two works that have no rivals of their kind—"Imaginary Conversations" and "Pericles and Aspasia." What he said of Tennyson is very impressive for it is a very great man who speaks.

In 1842, Tennyson was 33 then—Carlyle, Dickens, Miss Mitford, Margaret Fuller, Emerson and Poe were all speaking or our poet "with enthusiasm," as Rev. Dr. vanDyke states in his superb essays and studies in Tennyson. In 1844, Edgar A. Poe wrote in "The Democratic Review, New York, for August—"I am not sure that Tennyson is not the greatest of poets." That was before very much of Tennyson's greatest poetry had been written. "A fad" to place Tennyson among the great English poets in 1897! It was the opinion of the purest of American poets—the greatest master of verse—that in 1844, he was possibly the greatest of all poets. In 1845, the great poet Wordsworth wrote again—"Tennyson is decidedly the first of our living poets." Thackeray, the great, held that "Tennyson was the wisest man he knew." Peter Bayne, the eloquent Scotch critic, about 1856, wrote of Tennyson elaborately and most impressively. He held that "Homer was never more graphic" than Tennyson in one of his shorter poems. He said that he would hold "the highest place among the poets of his day, but henceforth, beyond a question be "A star among the stars of mortal night."

He said "In Memoriam" is "great and marvellous," and so have written all capable critics. It is possibly the most thoughtful poem in the English language. It is one of the most carefully wrought, most perfect as to form, and is, as we believe, the foremost of all elegiac poems surpassing Milton, Shelley, Gray and other most successful English poets in this particular kind of composition. Longfellow wrote of Tennyson, after reading one of his most exquisitely written poems, that "it could not have been written by any other than a great poet." And that was said before half of the master's best had been given to the world.

Theodore Watts, in a sonnet published in 1880, on Tennyson, and in the dedication, declares that the volume published by the poet in his 71st year, "is the most richly varied one volume of English verse that has appeared in his own century." Wordsworth, Coleridge, Scott, Byron, Shelley, Keats and Robert Browning had written and published in this century. In the March number of the Atlantic Monthly for 1890, the poet, novelist and critic, "Thomas Bailey Aldrich, published a poem claiming for Tennyson "the third place in English poetry." But those who read and do not appreciate or understand Tennyson cry out "a fad," "a fad!" That scholarly divine, ad-

mirable writer, true poet, delightful essayist, capital critic, Rev. Dr. Henry van Dyke, in 1889, in his preface to his fine work on Tennyson, writes:

"In the future, when men call the roll of poets who have given splendor to the name of England, they will begin with Shakespeare and Milton, and who shall have the third place, if it be not Tennyson?"

While the versification of our poet is so perfect, the harmony of numbers so complete, the technique so unique and almost of unrivalled excellence, it is not possible for all of Tennyson's readers to rise to the height of proper insight and enjoyment. The man, for instance, who reads Pope with most pleasure and satisfaction would hardly relish and appreciate at their highest the dozens of most artistic, thoughtful, poetical, melodious compositions of the illustrious poet of the Victorian Era.

There have been in all probability more than an hundred essays written upon him by men of literary pretension and skill. We know many ourselves. We are quite sure that a score or more of volumes have been published concerning him. We know of many and have read several. The following list will give a good idea of what has been written both as to quality and excellence, for many of the writers are men of parts and reputation—some very distinguished as the well read reader will see at a glance. We begin with The London Athenaeum and Westminster Review that led off in Tennyson's early manhood. Then essays or reviews were written by the once famous Leigh Hunt, Arthur H. Hallam, (the hero of the great elegy above referred to,) Professor John Wilson, of Edinburgh university and editor of Blackwood, the delightfully original "Christopher North," of the immortal "Noctes Ambrosianae," J. G. Lockhart, Scott's very gifted son-in-law who wrote his biography, the second best in the language, and editor of the great London Quarterly Review, (but we have not space to characterize as we name them), W. J. Fox, John Stuart Mill, Edinburgh Review, Richard Monckton Milnes, John Sterling, Tait's Edinburgh Magazine, London University Magazine, James Russell Lowell, William Howitt; Professor James Hadley, of Yale, still another writer in the Edinburgh Review, still another in the Westminster, Charles Kingsley, Blackwood, North American Review, George Brimley, Dr. R. J. Mann, Rev. Alfred Gatty, W. C. Roscoe, Rev. F. W. Robertson, Walter Bagelhot, North British Review, Harper's Magazine, H. A. Taine, Alex. H. Japp, John K. Ingram, W. S. in Belgravia, Professor R. C. Jepp, J. H. Sterling, Temple Bar, Professor Edward Dowden, Dean Alford, R. H. Hutton, Robert Buchanan, J. Hutchinson, Walter Irving, Rev. D. Bawnsley, E. C. Stedman, Bayard Taylor, Henry Elsdale, R. H. Shepherd, J. C. Collins, British Quarterly, Walter E. Wace, Sidney Colvin, A. C. Swinburne, R. H. Stoddard, S. E. Dawson, Mrs. A. T. Ritchie, (Thackeray's gifted daughter), H. J. Jennings, John F. Genung, Hon. Roden Noel, C. B. Pallen, Augustin Filon, Arthur Galton, W. E. Gladstone, Walt Whitman, Alfred Nutt, Elizabeth R. Nutt, L. H. Grindon, Gardner's Magazine, A. V. Dorsey, R. W. Boadle, Thomas Davidson, Nineteenth Century, Scribner's Magazine, Century Magazine, Rev. George Lester, London Spectator, Edmund Gosse, F. L. Burr, Theodore Watts, and dozens of other writers, magazines, reviews and newspapers. No other poet of our century has been probably so much written about. If Tennyson is not "great" then the world's number of great poets can be counted on the fingers of two hands. We have read him over and over for nearly thirty years, and our rule is not to permit if possible more than three years to pass without reading every line he has written—all of his 900 double column pages. We are glad to see it stated that his son's biography of him is nearly ready and will be published in the fall, and will contain some poems not hitherto published. The greatest poetry the world has possession of written by a man between 70 and 82, is that produced by Tennyson. No little of great poetry was the inspiration of his later years after he had passed his three score and ten. Some of great power and beauty was written after he attained to 70 and 80. Paul H. Hayne, one of the south's three or four best poets preferred Tennyson to all other poets as he once wrote us.

RELIGIOUS EDITORIALS FOR SUNDAY.

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God: * * He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.—I John, 4, 7, 8." "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar." I John, 4:20.

Some thoughtful, observant writer, who no doubt exercised faithful introspection, looked within, has written this. We do not know whence it came, but clipped it from the Nashville Christian Advocate of a late date:

"Loyalty to Christ is apparent in lowliness of mind. One may perform a good deed or generous act from a spirit of vainglory. The words of praise are pleasant, and it is a satisfaction to know that one is winning a reputation for goodness and benevolence; but unless the motive is prompted by the same mind which was in Christ Jesus, unless the service is done in love, it comes far short of being perfect and acceptable. Christ himself is an example of a meek and lowly Christian, as Spurgeon most beautifully says, 'Jesus is the great teacher of lowliness of heart.'"

Humility is a most lustrous, but chastened jewel of the soul. It shines in the light and favor of Christ.

Some one (O. H.) in the Charlotte Ob-

server recently published the following entitled "A Prayer." It is a quatrain of merit:

"See how the splendor of the sunset sky doth glow
In the small windows of the village church below!
Grant, Lord, that in the windows of our souls may shine
Such reflex beauty from Thy life of love divine!"
July, 1897.

An old German hymn translated by Augustus Toplady, the well known English divine in the past closed with this:

"Holy Fountain! wash us clean
Both from error and from sin!
Make us fly what thou refusest,
And delight in what thou choosest!"

Another hymn writer wrote this:
"Know his love in full completeness,
Tell the measure of thy weakness,
If he wound the spirit sore,
Trust him more."

If God shall help to do that—"trust him more"—we shall all be happy and comforted. Try it.

The Lord Jesus Christ was hated bitterly, and without any cause. The best of all men he yet was hated as few bad men have been hated. As old Thomas Dekker in the seventeenth century wrote in his best known play of him:

"The best of men
That e'er wore earth about him was a sufferer;
A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit,
The first true gentleman that ever breathed."

He was so hated that He told His disciples that He was hated and that they would be hated. "I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. * * If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also." (John 15, 20.) He distinctly states that "they hated me (Him) without a cause." The works of Christ were His witness, and they gave full proof of His ministry, of His divinity, of His mission into this sin-ridden, sin-cursed, lost world. His beholders were not ignorant, but knew whence He was and why He came. They knew therefore just whom they hated, and that it was without cause. The reason of their hatred and malice was of no avail for it was because His enemies loved sin. That was the real, the only cause of their hatred and opposition—sin in their souls. Sinful men are apt to hate those "whose words or actions are a reproof unto themselves." So no disciple of Christ—no sincere, consecrated, Christ-seeking disciple—one with the "root of the matter" in him—one who has been born genuinely again, born into Christ's Kingdom of righteousness, born of the Holy Spirit, need to expect immunity or escape from the persecutions of the world—the men who move on a very low plane of Christian living if they move at all—men who are still in sin, without a proper knowledge of Christ, without holiness unto the Lord. If like minded with Christ you will be made to suffer with Him. The consolations of the true disciple must come from God—come from His blessed promises, His sustaining grace, His ineffable love. So there is no need of despondency or worry, if you are hated and reviled. God says, "My grace shall be sufficient for you," with emphasis on "shall be." Christ was hated, so shall you be hated if you are indeed His. If you are not worldly minded you can draw comfort from the reflection that this persecution you bear because you are Christ's disciple. Christ endured and so must His faithful ones, for "the servant is not greater than his Lord." Men persecute, wound, revile, hate in ignorance of God, of His fellowship, of His grace and guidance. Sin lies at the root of all hatred and persecution. Cure the sin and the fruits disappear. No man would ever bless his enemy and persecutor if he were out of Christ, away from God, untainted by the spirit of grace. Ignorance of God is wilful, and is not therefore, excuse or cloak for sin of any kind. No man trying to serve God sincerely, to love Him with the whole heart, to be a benefit in some way to lost and suffering humanity, should either lose peace or hope—should be either surprised ever or dejected when the fulfillment comes that is written in the eternal Scriptures of inspiration. "Because I have chosen you * * therefore the world hateth you." Thus spoke the Master. It was prophesied of the Lord Jesus Himself—"They that are mine enemies, and would destroy me guiltless are mighty."

The thing for the humble, sincere, faithful disciple to do is to avoid sin, to give no occasion for sin, if possible not to awaken the hatred of sinners. Do not provoke the persecutor to persecute. Try to avoid contention, "seek peace and pursue it." "Live peaceably with all men." It is wrong to provoke any one to sin. It is sinful to provoke, to invite sin. Follow the Lord and Master here. Study Paul's letters and John's first Epistle, and learn what it is to be a Christian indeed. If we are wronged and sinned against let us try to avoid the spirit of retaliation. We should strive to be submissive and content to suffer if God so pleases without trying to "be angry and sin not." We ought to cultivate, to seek the blessed and glorious fruits of the Spirit as taught in the Holy Scriptures. We ought to have the spirit of meekness, of gentleness and love. The command is "love your enemies." Our light ought to shine in darkness as at noonday—in the storm and stress, as the Germans say, as well as in calm and composure when life is sweet and the skies are bright. God lead us "to glorify our Father which is in Heaven."

CURSED GOD AND IS PUNISHED

A Negro Said to be Slowly Consumed by Sulphurous Flames for Blasphemy

A special from Adrian, Ga., to the Atlanta Journal of the 15th, says: This community is thoroughly aroused over the weird rumor of a divine visitation which comes from Troop's Ferry, just beyond the Oconee river and about twenty-five miles from here. The story while it surpasses belief, is repeated in every quarter and the people of the surrounding country are wrought up to the highest pitch of religious excitement over it. The strange story follows:

One night last week several negro turpentine workers were playing cards near the ferry. One negro had \$5.00 at the beginning of the game, but lost steadily until at last he had left only \$1.00. Holding this high above his head he swore that if he lost it, he would curse God. In the next deal he lost it, and in consequence he cursed God.

No sooner had he done so than he was heard to scream, and his companions on looking at him, saw that sulphurous flames poured from his mouth, ears, eyes and nose. Terribly frightened, they at first ran away, but soon returned and endeavored to relieve his sufferings. Water poured upon him was without avail, and finally he was brought forward and they attempted to wrap him with it, in order to extinguish the flames, but the would-be rescuers were kept away by some mysterious power. About four feet was as near as an approach could be made to the unfortunate victim.

Ten, thinking that the log on which he sat was some way responsible for his predicament they began to saw it off near the point on which he sat. The first incision of the saw caused blood to drip from the log, and the sawdust fell to the ground. An ax was next sent for, but its use revealed the fact that in every part the log was filled with veins of blood.

Then they threw a noose of a rope over the negro's body and tried to pull him away from his position. According to reports they might as well have attempted to drag a stump from the sky. The rope in consequence of its contact with the body of the victim, rendered as naught the great strength of those who would save him.

There he sits, rumor says, consuming, yet with no probability of ever being utterly consumed—dying always, yet not being able to die, and breathing the flames of hell, crying for water, which poured upon him causes him to scream as mortal was never heard to shriek before.

It is said the people flock to see him, but are appalled by the sight, and flee some with a terror that is piteous to witness. The children of Adrian are terrorized by the rumor of the specter in which they dwell. Night is no more welcomed, and sleep with them has only the meaning of a Phantasmic dream.

(Signed) T. M. CHETHAM.

Relic of a Great Race

While men were excavating with a steam shovel near Mora, Minn., they found an old copper spear with a point measuring ten inches in length, tapering to a very fine and tempered firm point. The weapon showed the maker to have been an adept in working copper metal. Archaeologists believe that at some prehistoric time the country surrounding Mora was densely inhabited by a race of people who were much further advanced in civilization than the Indians. The many mounds around Fish Lake show that a mighty race of people lies slumbering there, whose history is yet unwritten, only a one can read by the mounds of earth which are used as sepulchres for their dead, and which demonstrate beyond a doubt that they were a numerous as well as powerful people.

Two investigators excavating a mound found a skeleton apparently embalmed in a kind of cement, which seemed to be prepared for embalming the dead. The skeleton appeared to be in a perfect state of preservation, and showed by measurement a height of nine feet for the individual, built in good proportions. So soon as the air struck it, the bones crumbled and disappeared. To the country east from Fish Lake, where there is a group of ninety-seven mounds, one finds a regular system of dams extending clear to Lake Superior, 100 miles, in which one can see that the prehistoric men had a regular means of travel by water from their great city around Fish Lake to Lake Superior, and going south by Snake river to the Gulf of Mexico.—Correspondence Chicago Times-Herald.

The Story of a Bell

A very pretty story is told of the way in which a church bell was paid for. The bell hangs in the church tower of the little town of Grosslarmann, in the north of Germany. On it is engraved its history, a bas-relief representing six-eared stalk of wheat, and the date, October 15, 1728. The bell was wanted in the village, because the one already there was so low tone that it could not be heard at the end of the town. But the people were poor, and when was the money to come from? Everyone offered to give what he could, but the united offerings did not amount to nearly enough. One Sunday, when the schoolmaster, Gottfried Hahn, was going to church, he noticed a growing out of the churchyard wall a flourishing green stalk of wheat, the seed of which must have been dropped by some passing bird. The idea struck him that perhaps this one stalk of wheat could be made the means of producing the second bell they wanted so much. He waited till the wheat was ripe and then plucked the six ears on it and sowed them in his own garden. The next year he gathered the little crop thus produced, and sowed it again and again, till at last he had not enough room to do so longer. Then he divided the seed among a certain number of farmers, who went on sowing it until, in the eighth year, the crop was so large that when it was put together and sold they found that they had money enough to buy a beautiful bell. And there it hangs, with its story and its legend engraved upon it, and above the legend a cast of the wheat stalk to which the bell owes its existence.

"Go thou and do likewise."—Christian and Missionary Alliance.

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"The most wonderful thing about Mr. Edmund Moor's Texas rice plantation," says "The Atlanta Journal," "is that twenty feet above the level of the nearest body of water. Rice culture on land so situated has probably never been attempted before. The agricultural editor of the Journal is probably off on his summer vacation. His understudy will doubtless be interested to learn that very fine rice can be raised up on the sides of the Blue Ridge mountains. We have seen it growing there.—Chapleston News and Courier.

Jewett's Idea of a University

In his first sermon in Balliol Chapel, he spoke of the college, "first as a place of education; secondly, as a place of society; thirdly, as a place of religion." He was accustomed to use very similar language about the university: "There are two things which distinguish a university from a mere scientific institution: first of all, it is a seat of liberal education; and secondly, it is a place of society." Both education and society he conceived of nobly. He sought to impress upon each generation of undergraduates "the unspeakable importance of the four critical years of life between about eighteen and twenty-two, when the task before each young man is 'to improve his mind, to eradicate bad mental habits, to acquire the power of order and arrangement, to learn the art of fixing his attention.'"

"The object of reading for the schools," the final honor examinations—"is not chiefly to attain a first class, but to elevate and strengthen the character for life." As against those who declare examinations injurious, he maintained that "examinations give a fixed aim, towards which to direct one's efforts; they stimulate one by the loss of honorable distinction; they afford an opportunity of becoming known to those who might not otherwise emerge; they supply the leading-strings which are needed. Neither freedom nor power can be attained without order and regularity and method. The restless habit of mind which passes at war from one ideal of the work and office of the university," was that it should form "a bridge which might unite the different classes of society, and the same time bring about a friendly feeling in the different sects of religion, and that might also connect the different branches of knowledge which were apt to become estranged one from another." He was anxious "to bring men of different classes into contact" for the benefit, especially of those who had had no social advantages. Jewett observed that men of very great ability often failed in life, because they were unable to play their part with effect. They were shy, awkward, self-conscious, deficient in manners, faults which were as ruinous as vices. "And the supreme end which Jewett kept in mind for all this time was to secure 'usefulness in after-life.'—Prof. W. J. Ashley in the July Atlantic.

A Bird's Friendship for a Boy

It is a rare occurrence for animals in a wild state to select a man for a companion and friend, yet well authenticated instances when this has occurred are a matter of record. The following instance is vouched for by my correspondent, a young woman who is a close and accurate observer: Last week my brother (a lad of 12) killed a snake which was just in the act of robbing a song sparrow's nest. Ever since then the male sparrow has shown his gratitude to George in a truly wonderful manner. When he goes into the garden the sparrow will fly to him, sometimes alighting on his head, at other times on his shoulders, all the while pouring out a tumultuous song of praise and gratitude. It will accompany him about the garden, never leaving him until he reaches the garden gate. George, as you know, is a quiet boy, who loves animals, and this may account in a degree for the sparrow's extraordinary actions."

I am perfectly convinced that the nesting birds on my place know me, and that they remember me from one nesting time to another. I have repeatedly approached my face to within a foot of setting birds without alarming them. On one occasion I even placed my hand on a setting cardinal, which merely fluttered from beneath it without evincing further alarm; yet no wild bird has ever evinced to me itself any special degree of friendship. When I was a lad I remember that a certain decrepit old drake would follow me like a dog, and which appeared to enjoy himself in my society. I could not appreciate his friendship until rather cruel to the old fellow.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Death of an Eccentric French Poet

There has recently died at Chateauroux, in the department of the Indre, an eccentric poet named Olinde Petel, the son-in-law of the elder Dumas. He has left behind him a large fortune, which is likely to give rise to much litigation, as several wills of a contradictory character have been found. The poet, it is believed, bequeathed a good deal of his money to the Berry people, among whom he lived. His poems are not widely read, they are of a purely local character, and refer to the woods and streams, the dales and dells, around the different estates or farms owned by M. Petel. The poet, who lived in darkened rooms, only going out at night, as soon as the shades of evening had fallen he started on pedestrian excursions around the hills and valleys, and recited aloud extracts from Homer, Virgil, and Victor Hugo, to the amazement and amusement of strangers, who thought he was stage-struck or an eminent tragedian rehearsing effects. The peasants, however, knew him well, and when they heard the accents of an incomprehensible tongue or the strophes of the author of "Hernani," who were equally unintelligible to them, borne to their ears on the midnight breeze, they merely said: "There goes M. Petel, reciting his poetry," and returned to their beds. In order to be up and out early in the morning, the Berry Hamlet, or Manfred, went a few days since to one of his country houses, feeling that what he had there assembled his tenants and servants around him and preached them a sermon in his dark room, enjoying them to live in brotherliness together, and to look towards animals and trees. Soon afterwards he breathed his last on the banks of the Bon Janne, a little stream which inspired him with ecstasies, writes the Paris Correspondence London Telegraph.

John Ruskin as a Philanthropist

(B. O. Flower, in the July Arena.) Another striking illustration of Ruskin's unselfishness is seen in the manner in which he has disposed of his fortune, which at the time of his death amounted to a million dollars. With this money he set about doing good. Poor young men and women who were struggling to obtain an education were helped, homes for working men and women were established, and model apartment houses were erected. He also promoted a work for reclaiming waste land outside of London. This land was used for the aid of unfortunate men who wished to rise again from the state into which he had fallen through cruel social conditions and their own weakness. It is said that this work suggested to General Booth his colonization farms. Ruskin has also ever been liberal in aiding poor artists, and has done much to encourage the artistic taste among the young. On one occasion he purchased ten fine water color paintings by Holman Hunt for \$2,750; to be hung in public schools of London.

By 1877 he had disposed of three-fourths of his inheritance, besides all the income from his books. But the calls of the poor and the plans which he wished to put into operation looking toward educating and enabling the toilers and giving to their poor lives something more of sunshine and joy, were such that he determined to dispose of all the remainder of his wealth except a sum sufficient to yield him \$1,500 a year on which to live.

That increased duty on crude sulphur and brimstone is going to make our opinions of the weather come higher.—Washington Post.

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