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Alfred Lord Tennyson, some of his claims to greatness.

An age, people or movement is fortunate, if, besides adequate historical expression, it receives literary and artistic interpretation as well. To Aeschylus and Phidias, more than to Herodotus and Xenophon, our conception of the Greek mind and character is due. The poetry, music and sculpture of a people is the warm, sentient, animated expression of its life, while its history is at best but the critical analysis of the elements of that life. We judge that the reign of “good Queen Bess” was a golden age, because of the amazing greatness of the art of Marlowe, Jonson and Shakespeare, not because of what Froude or Gardiner may tell us of it. And if it is fortunate for an age to produce a great art, it is equally fortunate for an artist to be the interpreter of a great age, for in the expression of the thought and emotion of one’s fellow-men lies an ample field and a noble mission for the exercise of genius. Alfred Lord Tennyson’s first claim to attention lies in the fact that he is the unique, adequate and masterful interpreter of the nineteenth century.

Even a very superficial knowledge of Tennyson’s work would be sufficient to show that he was not so much of a recluse as his habits of life tended to make him. He frequently betrays an acquaintance, and often more than an acquaintance, with the scientific, social and political movements of his day. The Prologue to the “Princess” makes mention of inventions which were by no means matters of common knowledge in 1847, while the poem itself is a discussion of the much vexed question of woman’s rights and proper station in life. “Maud” ends with a stirring, though perhaps unpoetical, appeal to English patriotism, which gives evidence of intense interest in political affairs. Other parts of this same poem cry out passionately against the social sin of an age which makes money the standard by which men stand or fall and become bond or free. A

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VOLUME XVIII

October 1901

NUMBER 8

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similar protest voices itself in the two declamatory “Locksley Halls” and in the terribly realistic “Rizpah.” But for a poet to evidence acquaintance with the popular movements of his day does not prove that he is in sympathy with the spirit of his age, and is very far from making him an interpreter of his age. Nor does Tennyson’s claim to such distinction rest upon the comparatively shallow grounds already mentioned.

The nineteenth century was an age of unrest. Political convulsions, which ultimately bore fruit in the unification of Italy, the independence of Germany and the triumph of French Republicanism, were but the outward signs of a mental and spiritual revolution of unparalleled significance, its very silence arguing its solemn depth. It has often been unadvisedly stated that this revolution consisted of a passage from faith to doubt in matters religious. We beg to differ. The nineteenth century was not enslaved to a blind infidelity. With the boldness born of larger vision and higher development, men turned the search-light of reason upon their religion. They found much there of childish superstition and unabashed Pharisaicism. In consequence, they were led to question also the eternal verities of the soul and of God. The investigation of these has continued, an investigation, characterized at times, perhaps, by irreverence, but surely never by insincerity or a lack of earnest desire for truth. The resulting uncertainty, however, has cast thinking souls into an agony of doubt. This fearless, persistent study of vital truth, accompanied by a maddening uncertainty about the things of the spirit, is the most prominent characteristic of the nineteenth century. This is its “zeitgeist” and it is this that finds immortal expression in the “In Memoriam.” Witness the intense hope for the divine source of faith:

“We have but faith; we cannot know,
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness;”

the appalling havoc that doubt creates:

“But what am I?
An infant crying in the night;
An infant crying for the light.”

the glorification of the man who reasons away his doubt:

“He fought his doubts and gathered strength,
He faced the spectre of the mind
And laid them; thus he came at length
To find a stronger faith his own.”

It would be difficult to find a single phase of this question that is not treated in this poem. Does Tennyson solve the question? It seems not. He nowhere sounds that sure, oracular note which would have given proof that for himself at least he was satisfied. And herein lies a weakness. He subtly interprets the questionings of his age—and this is greatness. He fails to answer these questionings—though this were greatness greater still.

Such then is Tennyson’s first claim to greatness. The second is based on that supreme excellence of form that is, perhaps, his most unique distinction. Poetry has two elements—form and matter. In the earliest stages of a literature’s development matter is everything, and literary form is present simply because matter deigns to clothe itself therewith. The progress of civilization and refinement always brings with it an added prominence accorded to beauty and perfection of form. Art for art’s sake is developed. In this field Tennyson is “the heir of all the ages, in the foremost ranks of time.”

That he was to be a master of the details of his art was one of the things indubitably demonstrated by his first volume of poems. He could write in delicate, fading harmonies of

“Airy, fairy Lillian,
Flitting, fairy Lillian,”

and in mighty organ-tones of the swan which carols

“As when a mighty people rejoice
With shawms and with cymbals, and harps of gold,
And the tumult of their acclaim is rolled
Thro the open gates of the city afar,
To the shepherd who watcheth the evening star.”

Those who know find in these early poems almost absolute perfection of form, and certain it is that his verse “makes music all the day.”

When he appears in later poems as a deep student of the human soul, he still continues to pay absorbing attention to the beauty of his verse. It was a happy thought to write “In Memoriam” to the rhyme-scheme, a, b, b, c. Ordinary couplet verse would have been absolute torture after the first few stanzes. Surely no greater tribute could be paid to the Laureate’s art than that this long, sustained, philosophical poem is suffused throughout with a strong, calm beauty that constantly makes the soul feel the sublimity of the theme.
Beauty of another sort is found in that song from "Maud," beginning "Come into the garden, Maud." The very words are fragrant with the dewy odors of a summer night.

"And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
And the musk of the rose is blown."

The charm is so potent, sensuous, voluptuous, that it makes one revel as a Bacchanal in the hall of the Muses. Aptness of phrasing, exquisite choice of words, metrical variety, laborious attention to detail, these are some of the elements of Tennyson's mastery of form. The mastery itself can only be accounted for by genius.

One sees at once that, in this exciting pursuit of beauty, the artist is apt to lose sight of truth. And beauty without truth is as "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal." In some of Tennyson's work, his inspiration fails him and the beauty of his verse becomes forced and artificial. One becomes vexed, in time, at reading "jewels five words long" in every line, and when a poet is so coldly critical and blindly artistic that even his passion never overleaps the bounds of decency set by the canons of versification, one begins to doubt the genuineness of his inspiration.

Tennyson's unchallenged supremacy in the realm of beauty leads us to believe that on this his most abiding claim to immortality will rest. This, however, does not argue his inferiority in the realm of truth or inspiration. After all, there is somewhat behind the witching charm of his numbers, and this is his genius. Such a statement seems weak. It sounds like begging the question to say that a poet's claim to immortality is his genius. Yet what more can the keenest critic do with a poet than describe his genius? And in Tennyson's case it means much to say that he had genius, for some critics have dared to claim that his prestige rests on mechanical excellence and laborious talent. Perhaps a man, enshrouded by the darkness of a great sorrow and strangely puzzled with the problems of the inner life, could sit down and, in eleven years, with much effort and with great pains, write out a rhymed philosophy on the immortality of the soul, call it "In Memoriam," and make all the world wonder—perhaps a man could do this and yet not be inspired. Perhaps the "Princess" is artificial and ornate. Perhaps "Enoch Arden" and Locksley Hall" and "Maud" are declamatory and superficial. Perhaps "Break, break, break", and its kindred melodies are but brief "swallow-flights of song" and argue no power of sustained inspiration. But what all these can not do, this, "Guinevere," greatest of the "Idylls of the King" is abundantly able to do. This is Tennyson's master-pie, and it alone suffices to make his name immortal.

The unity of Guinevere is severely classical, unlike anything modern. One never loses sight of the great Queen, swayed by a tempest of passionate repentance. The music flows on in solemn, stately procession, until it rolls

"To where beyond these voices there is peace."

Nowhere else is Tennyson so bold in teaching man's duty to live up to the divine greatness of his possibilities:

"It was my duty to have loved the highest;
It surely was my profit had I known;
It would have been my pleasure had I seen,
We needs must love the highest when we see it,
Not Lancelot, nor another."

The whole Idyll isome heroic outburst of warm, exuberant and sustained inspiration. And it is well that the "Guinevere" is so great, for Tennyson has nothing else to approach it. His muse is too gentle, his art too obstructive, he is too self-conscious, too self-restrained, to conventional, to be a Shakespeare or a Dante.

For the expression of my personal appreciation of Alfred Tennyson, no tribute could be glowing enough. It has been necessary to criticize, because this makes for truth and fairness in our appreciation of art. Yet criticism is unpleasant and cold and it sometimes makes the brooding spirit 'sad to think that the days of sympathy and appreciation are past and that the cruel reign of criticism has set in. We, too, love our poets, but only after we have criticized; after the ambitious music of their words has been transformed into the unassuming speech of ordinary life; after the intense, consuming heat of their verse has been shown to be kindled by a false enthusiasm after all—then we condescend to admire what we have not destroyed, to worship what we have not desecrated, to love what our coldness does not bid us hate. He would be foolhardy, however, who would claim that what we do admire and worship and love is not the beaten gold of the furnace, the silver refined in the crucible. Such beaten gold are the lyrics; the "Idylls of the King," the "In Memoriam" of Alfred Lord Tennyson.

X. Y. Z.
At Sunset

Over the trees and the meadows,
Bathed in a shimmering light,
Lingerling beams of the sunshine
Hasten their winged flight.

Followed in fleecy softness
Sink the great Orb of Day;
Silvery cloudlets above him
Silently float on their way.

Songsters in trees and in bushes
Warble their evening lays;
Gently the soft sweet zephyr
Blossom and foliage sway.

Twilight's deepening shadows
Earth and her beauties enclose;
Nothing disturbs the deep quiet
The sweetness of Nature's repose.

Opening Day

"Opening Day" of 1904 was an extremely happy event—happy, of course, to the older students, because so many comrades returned to give them the firm and enthusiastic hand-shake that is the effective expression of college friendship, but happy most of all, to faculty and students alike, because there were so many new arrivals—men who will become the boon companions of our revelries, the shining lights of our class rooms and the champions of Hope in athletics, oratory and debate, and women, who will grace our social functions and make pleasant, no doubt, the daily routine of our work. There were in all seventy-three arrivals, making the total number of students nearly two hundred and fifty.

The opening exercises were held on September 21st. When the enthusiastic cheering of the students had subsided, the meeting was opened with the singing of "Come Thou Almighty King." Dr. Kollen read from the third chapter of Samuel, of the readiness of the youthful Samuel to wait upon the Lord, and our college pastor, Dr. Bergen, led in prayer, bringing the wants of students and teachers, in an affecting and earnest way, before the throne of God's grace. After Pres. Kollen had extended a hearty welcome to every one in the audience, Dr. Dubbink of the Seminary made the opening address. His words were few, indeed, but wholesome, helpful and direct. Supporting his advice with examples and evidence from his
own experience, he enjoined upon the students the necessity of acquiring the habits of Punctuality, Moderation, Conscientiousness, and Faith. He closing sentences were an earnest appeal for a stronger and more practical faith. They warned the man against giving way to encouraging a tendency to scepticism which exists in so many young people. After all it is well to abide by the simple faith of the fathers.

As Alumni of more recent date can imagine, the rest of the morning was spent by Dr. Kellen and the Faculty in making announcements. Only one or two of these are of general interest, however. Prof. Vecchite has been compelled by ill health to resign the Professorship of Modern Languages which he has held since 1897. For the present, Rev. Paul Schmeck has charge of German. An instructor in French will be engaged as soon as possible. Prof. Mast after a year's work at Harvard University, has returned to take charge of Biology and kindred sciences.

Never before has there been such an auspicious opening at Hope College. To see the campus walks so crowded makes us feel more enthusiastic than ever about our Alma Mater. It doesn’t take much to see that Hope is becoming a stronger institution every year. It is for us to push the good work by faithfulness and enthusiasm in athletics, in study, in society and religious work. There goes for the greatest year in the history of Hope College—the beginning of a new era of prosperity and good-will.

Debating.

One of last year’s biggest events was the Cosmopolitan-Frater debate. At the close of that debate Fraternal and Cosmopolitan alike felt that they wanted more of it and no doubt the same opinion still prevails. Debate has a very peculiar fascination for some characters. They are given to prefer the practical side of life and like debates because they usually treat of this aspect of life. Moreover it gives them an opportunity to vent their combative ness. They excel in clearness and readiness of speech; they are resourceful and energetic upon the platform. It is their delight to wrestle with problems. Now for such students—and it is well known that there are such at Hope—some form of public debate would be superb exercise. Somehow they do not take to oratory. A z. college oratory, but in this work they would be enthusiastic.

Debating becomes dry and tedious and hence falls into ill repute at times in our societies. It is an easy thing, however, to make a debate interesting, and the training received from this work is invaluable. It is no mean attainment to be able to write an oration which forcibly depicts some character or problem, and appeals with earnest and poetic enthusiasm for the establishment or glorification of a great truth. Here clearness and forcibleness of thought, strength and beauty of style, and purity and warmth of feeling receive due prominence. But on the other hand, the qualities of a good debater are those which are of immense value to men in the stern race of life—practicality, aggressiveness, enthusiasm, readiness, resourcefulness.

Of course, therefore, we ought to practice debating in our societies and in fairness to the Fraternals, if for no other reason, there ought to be another Cosmopolitan-Frater debate. But would it not be possible, as some have already suggested, to have an inter-collegiate debate this year? We have earned a name in oratory. Why neglect debate altogether? We have reasons for believing that a debate with Olivet College could be easily arranged; the expenses would be light, and it would deepen the friendship already existing between Olivet and ourselves. For the present, three men could be chosen at the Cosmopolitan-Frater debate to form our team.

We suggest that the winners of last year’s debate take this matter into consideration and, if possible, act upon it.

Fraternities

President—A. J. Muste.
Vice President—J. Pelgrim.
Secretary and Treasurer—R. Visscher.
Marshal—H. Dutton.

Cosmopolitan

President—D. Muysken.
Vice President—D. Taylor.
Secretary and Treasurer—A. Mulder.
Marshal—G. J. Pennings.
Minerva Society

Pres.—Hannah Hoeckje.
Vice president—Lottie M. Hoyt.
Secretary—Mae L. Brusse.
Treasurer—Maud Turnbull.

Melophone Society

President—A. Vos
Vice president—A. T. Laman
Secretary—W. Wichers
Treasurer—J. VanWestenbrugge
Sergeant at arms—P. Pleume
Marshal—R. Seelye

Alsilas Society

President—G. Bosch
Vice president—G. Hankamp
Secretary and Treasurer—R. DeZeeuw
Marshal—J. Roetman

Dickena Republican Club

President—J. Pelgrim.
Vice President—B. J. Bush.
Secretary—A. J. Muste.
Treasurer—Don Taylor

Alumni Notes

In the fortunes of the newest alumni, the students, and a doubt also the constituency, of Hope College are deeply interested. Six members of the Class of 1904 are now theological students. M. J. Duven, W. G. Hoeckje, J. Van Zomeren and A. A. Wubbena have entered the Western Theological Seminary. J. G. Bruwer has entered Princeton Seminary, and E. R. Kruizenga is pursuing a course at the Seminary in New Brunswick. Four of the other '04 graduates have secured positions as teachers: Miss Minnie Riksen as Principal of a school near Beaverdam, Mich., J. J. Stoffens as Principal of the Hudsonville school. A. Walvoord as Superintendent of Schools in Sioux Center, Ia., and J. W. Kelder as Instructor in the Sciences in the High School at Caro, Mich. James De Free has for one interested in his father’s business, a hardware store in Zeeland, and Miss Mae Veneklasen is now “at home” in Zeeland to her host of friends. Success to all the members of the Class of 1904!

'02. The Senior Class of the W. T. S. has been enriched by the admittance of John Van Peursem, who has been attending Princeton Seminary for two years past.

'00 and '01. A genuine American wedding was solemnized in the South Japan Mission field on July 12, 1904. Rev. Garret Hondelink and Grace W. Hoeckje, both missionaries of the Reformed Church, were made one by the Rev. A. Pieters at the Pieter’s home in Kumanoto. Rev. and Mrs. Hondelink are now at home at 45 Satsujii, Kagoshima, Japan.

'83 and '82. Rev. and Mrs. J. A. Otte hope to return to their mission work in Amei, China, some time during the fall. May their hope be realized!

72. Hon. and Mrs. A. Visscher are enjoying the European scenery and visiting places of historical interest on the continent for a few months this fall.

'00. Dr. A. T. Godfrey has been added to the Faculty of Hope College as Instructor in Chemistry and Physics.

'02. H. Pelgrim will enter the U. of M. this fall, and W. H. Cooper has taken a position as Prof. of English and Oratory in Park College, Mo.

The following are the changes effected in the pastorates of some of our Alumni:

Rev. P. Lepeltak, '58, has left Portage, Mich., for Goodland, Ind. Rev. A. Rozendal now works at Oostburg, Wis., instead of at Hamilton, Mich. Rev. E. Kelder, formerly of Constantine expects to become a student at U. of M.

Jottings

“If you can sing and will not sing, you should be sent to Sing Sing.”

Next year we are to have a new joke.
Miss L-r’s schedule.
Monday evening B. B.
Tuesday evening C. S.
Wednesday evening J. D.
Thursday evening B. B.—etc.
“Doc” — the star of the Biology class(?)

In the French class — “Glory, I don’t know” — T. T.

Don’t try to make your drawings in Biology “from memory.”

Reen — “The most handsome young man in college.”

Learn to reason by conclusion.

Hansen B. — “Hello Aunt Jean.”

Advice to Johnnie:

1. Don’t study too hard.
2. Take good care of your health.
3. Don’t worry.
4. Take plenty of sleep and exercise.

Principle in Ethics—“Hooking grapes is justifiable.”

Biological laboratory work increases the powers of imagination but distorts noses—especially large ones.

All join the new French class!

“Doc” — “Oh, for Dort!”

Dick — “Oh, for June!”

Wynia to Bosch (in speaking about the drought in Dakota and the super-abundance of rain in Iowa): “Never you mind, every day I would rather dry up and blow away than to seek down and rot.”

Freshman to Van Dyke: “What does coeducation mean?”

V. D. “Why that means education for the coeds.”

Dwight “I am sorry I was too late to hear Dr. Dubbink’s address on punctuality.”

Raunder was presented with a pair of glasses on his birthday. He says he is quite hard of hearing.

Prof. — “What is psychology?”

Steengra — “Why it is a conscious and volitions training of the perception to justify the hypothesis of an incorruptible entity.”

Why is Brook like the cow’s tail?

To the new students:

A few numbers on the after-chapel-lecture course.

Sept. 25 Blue Monday and its cures.
Sept. 26 Smoking.
Sept. 27 Football.
Sept. 28 Choral Union.
Sept. 29 Football.
Oct. 2 Chapel attendance.
Oct. 3 Respect for lock and key.
Oct. 4 No lecture.
Oct. 5 Regular exercise.
Oct. 6 Football.
Oct. 9 Chapel attendance.

Finally VanKokeren has been outdone. One of the “Ds” turned the trick on him.

The Hope College reception committee as they were stationed September 20, 4 a.m.

Vegetate anticipated the deluge and escaped in due season. Still R. Visscher thinks there aren’t girls enough.

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Prof. Nykerk at the Pere Marquette depot.
Prof. Beardslee at Douglas.
Prof. Boers at the Grand Haven bridge.
Prof. Satphen in a boat on Black lake off Dickem's point.
Prof. Kleinheksel in his willow swamp.
Prof. Raap on the Waverly road, and the rest of the Faculty men busy answering telephone calls. It was the best committee ever appointed and there are so many new students that all have not yet had an opportunity to matriculate.

The long-prayed-for calamity has come. The college educational capacity is being tested to the utmost. In fact, Prof. Satphen had to flunk 44 aspirers "Do" so as to make room for the class.

The Scheltens and Bosch have arrived, so everything is in full swing.

Prof. Yntema's patent, reversible, insulated, disinfectant, frictionless, antisepctic telescope has at last made its debut and will soon crown VanDyke hill.

Dykema expects to return as soon as the Fruitport pavilion closes.

The French Prof. - it is maar een boere hummel.

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Har's foot ball squad is unusually weak since Dahlenburg has joined Stagg's squad at Marshall Field.

Ruisseau was recently seen admiring a $18 diamond. - What can it mean?

Three cheers for Prof. Mast.

Who is Prof. in French? Ans. VanLuumel. He taught in Filmore and edited a paper.

R. Vischer's pupil has at last grown into a small sized dog but still the College is well supplied with fruit.

A patent declinator is in process of construction where of also J. Pelgrim can make use in his study of astronomy.

Students who wish to devote what spare time they have to a profitable and pleasant business will do well to see the business manager of the Anchor.
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