

Tennyson's 'In Memoriam.'

(The 'Academy, London. Abridged.)

Far too much has been written about the 'teaching' of it, and the other poets—as though all poets were necessarily philosophers with a certain definitely formulated scheme for the regeneration or confusion of mankind. In the case of Tennyson there is justification for this apology, for no critical reader of his work can doubt that he held a determined faith, and that he intended deliberately to express it, to show the world how a creed formed from love of beauty and love of God could compose itself freely into the mould of poet art, and could become more impressive thereby than if it had simply been a series of unadorned statements.

It would be possible to arrive at a fair estimate of Browning without considering 'Paracelsus' or 'The Ring and the Book,' of Wordsworth without noticing 'The Excursion,' of Swinburne without 'Atalanta,' but Tennyson and 'In Memoriam' are inseparable. No one can read it without realizing that it is a heart-cry, an utterance of undying grief that has in it the soul of the writer. In his sorrow he reaches out to the Divine with 'fame hands of faith,' his doubts are 'vassals unto love; when they seemed to prevail, when faith had fallen asleep'—

'A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answered, 'I have felt.'

A man's belief in the things which may be essential to salvation is a purely personal and private matter, and should not be discussed, as is too often the case, in public books and articles; but his belief in the directive force of the universe, whether he call it God or Nature or blind fate, is of interest to every other man on the face of the earth. Tennyson's faith in a divine control was sublime. His last friend 'lives in God':—

That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.

In the opening lines we have the same thought of eternal power:—
Our little system has their day;
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

The story of the origin of 'In Memoriam' is familiar to all, but it is not so generally known, perhaps, that seventeen years elapsed between the death of Arthur Henry Hallam, the poet's friend, and the publication of this immortal commemoration of a love which 'passed the love of women.' How vivid were the memories which eluded round that comradeship is proved in many reminiscent stanzas—the large walks, the Christmas gatherings, the summer days spent together, are all woven into the texture of the poem, and so smoothly woven that the whole work forms a pattern as nearly perfect as it is humanly possible. Its purely beautiful passages it abounds; here are two, however, which stand out from the rest like camos framed in gold. One is complete in itself—stanza lxxi:—

When on my bed the moonlight falls,
I know that in thy place of rest
By that broad water of the west,
There comes a glory on the wels:

Thy marble bright in dark appears,
As slowly steals a silver flame
Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away;
From off my bed the moonlight dies;
And closing eaves of wearied eyes
I sleep till dusk is dipt in grey:

And then I know the mist is dawn
A lucid veil from coast to coast,
And in the dark church like a ghost
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

The other is part of stanza xcvi., and is a marvellous little word picture of summer at earliest morning:—

... the doubtful dusk reveal'd
The knolls once more where crouch'd at ease,

The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field:
And suck'd from out the distant gloom
A breeze began to tremble o'er
The large leaves of the sycamore
And flue u to all the still perfume,

And gathering fresh'er overhead,
Rock'd the full-flagged elms, and swung
The heavy-folded rose, and hung
The lilies to and fro, and said

'The dawn, the dawn,' and died away;
And East and West, without a breath,
Mixt their dim lights like life and death,
To broaden into boundless day.

Each reader of 'In Memoriam,' however, will find his or her own favorite passages of storm or calm, doubt or faith, and it often happens that one's chosen stanzas vary with the mood of the hour.

Considering the poem for a moment tech-

nically, it is a curious point, which we do not remember to have seen remarked upon, that Tennyson's work in pieces verse by verse almost as if it were a huge machine, that Tennyson should have employed for his masterpiece the line of four feet. In the vast majority of cases the poet who sets out to compose a poem on a theme which he deliberately intends to develop exhaustively chooses the pentameter, whether rhymed or unrhymed. Its monotony may be varied by song or ballad, as in 'Atlanta in Calydon,' or as Tennyson himself varied it, by delightful lyric intelligence, in 'The Princess,' or it may progress severely onward, page after page, as do 'The Task,' 'The Excursion,' 'Aurora Leigh,' and a dozen other special achievements in this style that might be mentioned. Tennyson, however, decided to cast his memorial poem in a less formal mould, and to aid the music of rhythm by the music of rhyme. Doubtless he perceived the danger of using the ordinary four-verse stanza with alternate rhymes—the risk of becoming hymn-like, especially when treating a subject into which a lofty and sacred thought were bound to enter extensively; in adopting the plan of the internal couplet he cleverly reduced that danger to its lowest terms. If we transpose the lines of one familiar stanza, we shall appreciate the difference:—
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist;
The moon is hid; the night is still;
The time draws near the birth of Christ.
Reinstated in the true form, it gains in gravity, in strength, in resonance, and carries no suggestion of the 'common metre' of the hymn-book, in spite of the fact that the metre is absolutely unchanged.

Comforts.—As made by this Connecticut receipt comforts are a species of doughnut, but more delicate and digestible and much more easily and quickly made. Mix thoroughly two eggs well beaten; one cup of sugar, one large teaspoonful of melted butter, one cup of sweet milk, three and one half cups of flour, sifted with two teaspoonfuls of baking powder, a little salt, and some grated nutmeg. Drop the batter from a teaspoon into boiling fat. With a little practice perfectly round balls can be produced. When they are cold roll them in powdered sugar.

Next year will, it is stated, see the establishment of a new line of steamships between Montreal and Australia, operated by an Australian company, backed by English capital. Montreal and Melbourne are to be the terminal points and the boats, which will carry cargo, will also call at Halifax and New York. The service is expected to be a mortally one and this will necessitate the employment of at least four and probably six ships.

Seventy clerkships in the civil service at Ottawa are to be filled, and competitive examinations conducted by the Civil Service Commission will begin on November 8th at the usual places in Canada. There are twenty clerkships for men in subdivision B of the third division, initial salary \$500; ten positions for men as stenographers, initial salary \$500; twenty positions for women as stenographers and typewriters, initial salary \$500, and twenty clerkships for men in the second division, initial salary \$800.

Just Pennsylvania Dutch

(From The Housekeeper.)

We were walking along the shaded street
Of an eastern Pennsylvania village when a girl
Came to the door of a nearby house and
Called to a small boy playing on the walk:
'Gusty, Gusty, come and eat yourself once
More on der table now and po's half e: already!'

Verses For The Kiddies

We are back again with pencils, we
are back again with pens, we are
chalking up the ciphers on the board
But we sigh for velvet meadows and
the songs of treet p wrens, and
we long to wide the swiftly rushing
ford.

We are back again with grammars, we
are back again with maps, we are
tracing China's misty wall
But our thoughts are in the timbers,
where the gold-winged pecker taps,
and the saucy blue-winged jaybirds
loudly call.

We are back again with lessons, we
are back again with slates, we are
poring over half a dozen books;
But we wish that we were fishing with
the little fat grub baits in the
shadow of the meadow mianow
brooks.

We are back again with studies, we
are back again with rules, and the
multiplication tables we now hear;
But we'll dream of some Utopia where
there aren't any schools, and vacation
is a dozen months a year.
—Chicago News.

Both our own government and that of the United States are sending out warnings against the dangers of the contamination of food by the common house fly, or typhoid fly, as it is now called. Not only typhoid fever, but other diseases are carried by this pest, which one of the investigators call the most dangerous animal on earth.—Educational Review.

Just a year has passed since the American explorers startled the world with their stories of the discovery of the North Pole, and the controversy between them over their rival claims has lost interest. But that interest may be revived, for it is now announced that a forthcoming magazine article will vindicate Dr. Cook and prove his claim to be first discoverer of the Pole.—The Educational Review.

The discovery that the Germans are strongly fortifying Borkum, one of the Frisian islands, is renewing the fear of German invasion in England; for from this point a German fleet could reach the English coast in six hours.

Earl Grey found no ice on his trip through Hudson Bay, and an account of his journey says that summer sailing on the Mediterranean Sea of Canada was found as pleasant as it could have been on the Mediterranean of the old world.

Walter Wellman, who made two successful attempts to go from Spitzbergen to the North Pole in an airship, is about attempting to fly across the Atlantic, from a point near Atlantic City, N. Y., and a French officer is arranging for a flight across the Sahara from Algiers to Timbuctoo.—The Educational Review.

'The Sign of the White Horse.'

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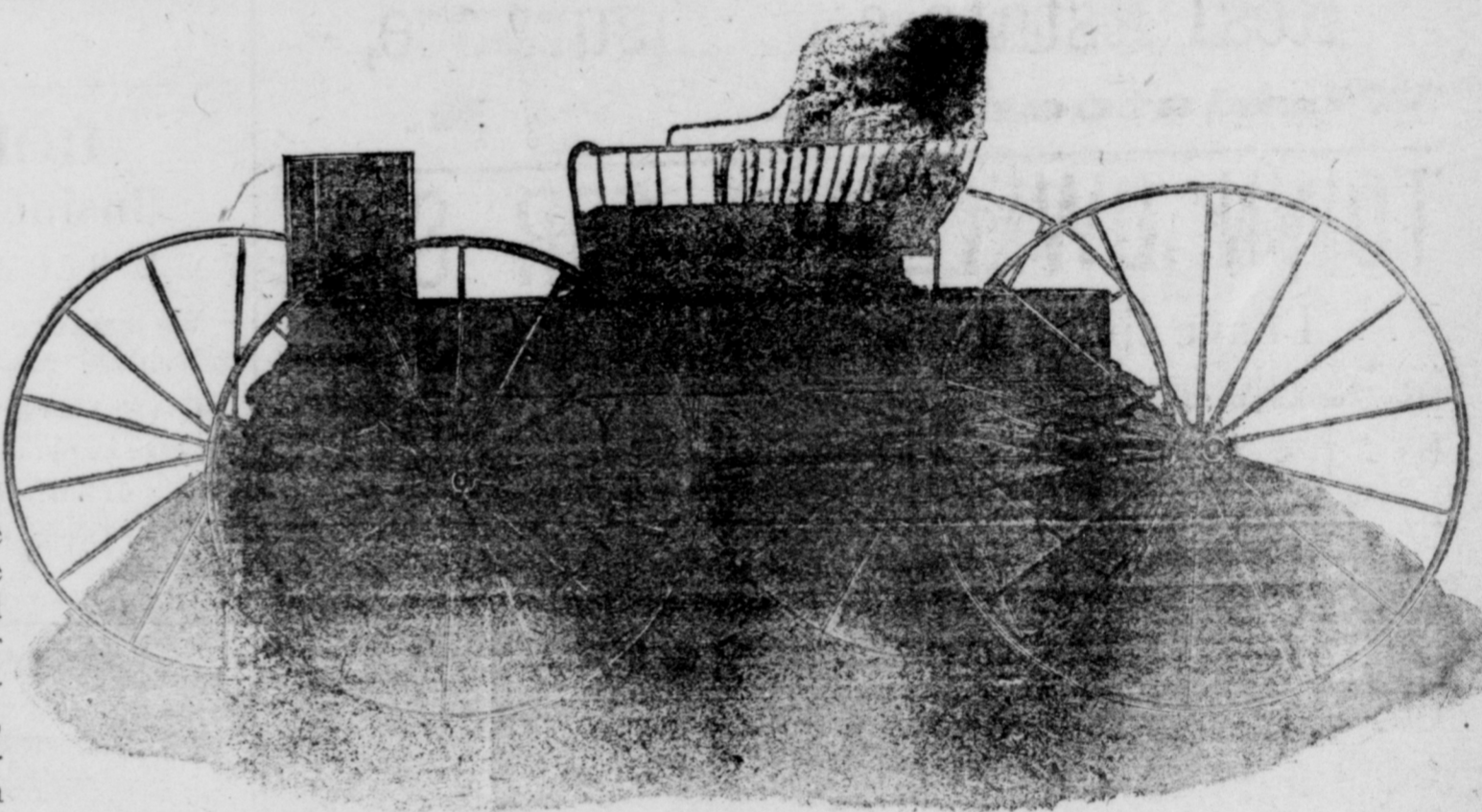
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