

The Conservator

"Moral conscientiousness, crystalline, without flaw, not godlike only, entirely human, awes and enchants forever."—WHITMAN.

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There is no chance, and no anarchy, in the universe. All is system and gradation. Every god is there sitting in his sphere. The young mortal enters the hall of the firmament; there is he alone with them alone, they pouring on him benedictions and gifts, and beckoning him up to their thrones. On the instant, and incessantly, fall snow-storms of illusions. He fancies himself in a vast crowd which sways this way and that, and whose movement and doings he must obey; he fancies himself poor, orphaned, insignificant. The mad crowd drives him hither and thither, now furiously commanding this thing to be done, now that. What is he that he should resist their will, and think or act for himself? Every moment new changes, and new showers of deceptions, to baffle and distract him. And when, by and by, for an instant, the air clears, and the cloud lifts a little, there are the gods still sitting around him on their thrones—they alone with him alone.

EMERSON.

Praise is sweet to all men; and yet, alas, if the light of one's own heart goes out, bedimmed with poor vapors and sickly false glitterings and flashings, what profit is it?

CARLYLE.

I must judge of what is right and necessary, not by what men say and do, not by progress, but by what I feel to be true in my heart.

TOLSTOI.

I have just been conversing with one man, to whom no weight of adverse experience will make it for a moment appear impossible, that thousands of human beings might exercise towards each other the grandest and simplest sentiments, as well as a knot of friends or a pair of lovers.

EMERSON.

He who is not free is not a man. He who is not free has no sight, no knowledge, no discernment. Freedom is the apple of the eye, the visual organ of progress, and to attempt, because freedom has inconveniences and even perils, to produce civilization without it, would be like attempting to cultivate the ground without the sun.

HUCO.

THE CONSERVATOR

THE CONSERVATOR is an exponent of the world-movement in Ethics. It is not published in the interest of any sect or party, but of Ethical principle and practice, as reflected in all societies and churches and outside of all.

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Collect

H. L. T.

The American Protective Association continues to be the subject of serious and voluminous discussion. Liberty is provincial to most of those who are loudest in its acclaim to-day. The Associationists profess to have organized in the defense of liberty. The Catholics protest in the name of liberty. But any picture or dream of equal liberty seems impossible to both classes. The Catholic is jealous of his liberty—rightly so. But he is not jealous of an abstract liberty that would as generously panoply his enemy as himself. The issue now raised may have serious consequences. If it arouse men to a new sense of personal autonomy it will serve a high end. Catholicism and Associationism are merely fugitive and local. Liberty would not be safe with any ism. It gives to each for its uses, but knows too much to get indoors a sect—to invite imprisonment.

The Congress of Liberals at Chicago had a good deal to say about liberty. It was a good Congress, bearing in many ways ripe fruit. What does the Congress mean by liberty? I suspect that many from whose lips liberty fell in fluent syllables really have no recognition of the sweep that the honest claim for liberty may take. The

himself one with all others, not merely as a figure of rhetoric but as living feeling and fact—his individualism sustained to its utmost height, yet hungry for equals, forever seeking to bring others flush with himself.

This, in rough, hasty outline, is the ideal which I offer to you, which I have learned from my master, Walt Whitman, and which I invite you to join with me in trying, however distantly and feebly, to realize and proclaim. So we shall become the pioneers of the true, the human society, towards which our Socialism itself is but a stage.

J. W. Wallace.

Succession

Proud in your ascent, O life,
My youth not pale of the gush of the sun,
Nor the years that passed me to the open sea,
I suspected—I saw: I was exultant at the launch of the
ship:

But you, O my dead—you alone established my right,
Filling my blood with the eras and worlds of the future.
O my dead comrade—my great dead!

I sat by your bedside—it was the close of day—
I heard the drip of the rain on the roof of the house:

The sun shadowed—departing, departing—

You also departing, departing—

You and the sun, companions in life, now, too, com-
panions in death,

Retiring to the shadow, carrying elsewhere the benedic-
tion of your sunbeams.

I sat by your bedside, I held your hand:

Once you opened your eyes: O look of recognition!
O look of bestowal!

From you to me then passed the commission of the
future,

From you to me that minute, from your veins to mine,
Out of the flood of passage, ere you slipped away with
the sun,

From your hand that touched mine, from your soul that
touched mine, near, O so near—

Filling the heavens with stars—

Entered, shone upon me and out of me, the power of
the spring, the seed of the rose and the wheat,

As of father to son, as of brother to brother, as of god
to god!

O my great dead!

You had not gone, you had stayed—in my heart, in my
veins,

Reaching through me, through others through me,
through all at last, our brothers,

A hand to the future.

Horace L. Traubel.

Tennyson

The moment that we bring Tennyson's poetry to the test of comparative criticism we become aware that we are dealing with a creative power of the first order and that we are in the select company of those who have received the divine accolade.

To attempt to pronounce judgment upon him at this time would be the sheerest folly. A figure of such proportions demands the perspective of at least fifty years. Our children's children may be able to see him at a proper focus; for ourselves, we must be content to say: "We know that he is one of the great singers of all time; more than this it is not given us to understand."

But while admitting the futility of contemporary criticism, we may with propriety glance at Tennyson as he stands related to other poets, in order to note, not relative positions, but points of contact and divergence.

Tennyson has been much thought of in connection with Milton and Keats. Dr. Henry Van Dyke—a high authority—says that Tennyson stands much closer to Milton than to any other poet, and after assuming that the concensus of opinion at this day would award the first place to Shakspeare and the second to Milton, he asks who is so worthy as Tennyson to complete the glorious triumvirate.

I am unable to go to the length of this statement, but I think we may see the resemblance between Tennyson and Milton in the lofty spiritual exaltation which exhales from their work, and in that prevailing faith without which no great poetry ever has been written. By this I do not mean to indicate adherence to any creed or school of religious thought, much less the verbal expression of a dogmatic theology, but I mean the underlying sense of spiritual existence which renders the poet susceptible to immaterial influences—the only inspiration out of which true poetic utterance ever has sprung. As in Milton we find the magnificent solemnities of the "Paradise Lost" growing from the soil of the poet's stalwart Puritanism, so in Tennyson we hear through all the organ tones of the "In Memoriam" the unerring music of another world. It is the prevailing faith in things unseen, the recognition of the truth that the spiritual is the only real, which renders "In Memoriam" so monumental a work; it is this which has made it a beacon to the eyes of men forever; this which enables so conservative a critic as Mr. Stedman to pronounce it "the great threnody of our language," and to set it, as he does, above "Lycidas," "Adonais" or "Thyrsis."

But Tennyson departs from Milton at the point where a didactic motive yields to the sense of Beauty—to the Greek feeling for what is wholly admirable, harmonious and satisfying. Here he stands as the legitimate heir of Keats, as the poet who has brought to maturity—perhaps as the only one capable of bringing to maturity—the lovely flower of that inimitable imagination. The exact extent of Tennyson's debt to Keats may never be known; that he developed upon similar lines is certain. Just as we see the riot and over-luxuriousness of "Endymion" giving place to the order and artistic restraint of "Hyperion," so we see the work of Tennyson passing through specific series of development from the youthful effusiveness of his contributions to the "Poems by Two Brothers" to the better craftsmanship of the "Poems Chiefly Lyrical," and finally to the self-contained nobility of "In Memoriam" and "Guinevere."