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ETHEL MARIE ANDERSON, B.A. (Manitoba.)

by

Influence of Arthur Hallam.

with special reference to the

TECHNIQUE, as a PHILOSOPHICAL AND RELIGIOUS FORCE

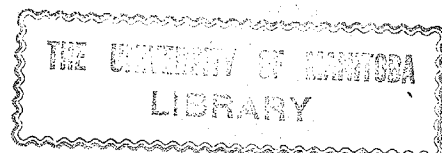
P R E F A C E.

In considering Tennyson's interest in philosophical problems, it must be remembered that systematic philosophy lies outside the proper range of a poet's art, or his mission. For a poet is not necessarily a philosopher, or a theologian: he is primarily an artist. Of technical philosophy, Tennyson himself said, "I have but a gleam of Kant, and have hardly turned a page of Hegel." <sup>x</sup>

Yet, skilled as he was in the harmonious use of the English language, and in the art of enchanting us with his beauty-steeped pictures, his inspiration and power as a Divine Singer rests on his deep, under-lying philosophy, which is not the result of any definite scheme or system, but a sacred heritage given to him by the Master of all Poets. For from David's far-off era to the time of Browning and Tennyson, God hath breathed into poems and songs the revelation of His providence and His love.

The Rev. E. Jowett once said to Tennyson: "Whole philosophies might be contained in a line of verse. Your poetry has an element of philosophy more to be considered than any regular philosophy in England." <sup>xx</sup> It is this "element of philosophy" which is peculiarly and characteristically Tennyson's own, that has been treated in the following pages.

x (Tennyson - A. C. Benson - p. 81)  
xx ( " " " - p. 75).



## TENNYSON AS A PHILOSOPHICAL POET.

Introduction: The Poet and his Music.

(1) Tennyson's Relation to the Spirit of his Age.

- (a) The Struggle between Fact and Faith.
- (b) Science and Materialism.
- (c) A Period of Readjustment.

(2) Influences in Tennyson's Development as a Philosophic Poet.

- (a) The Challenge of the Time to Tennyson's Temperament.
- (b) Cambridge and the "Apostles' Club."
- (c) Arthur Hallam, and an Undying Friendship.

(3) Tennyson's Philosophy: His Views on,

A.) GOD.

- (a) The Existence of God.
- (b) The Personality of God.
- (c) The Nature of God as Love.
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- (a) The Word made Flesh.
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- (c) Tennyson and Christianity.

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- (a) The Relation of Man to God and the Universe.
- (b) The Relation of Man to Man.
- (c) Free-will, The Fundamental Condition of Morality.
- (d) Evolution.
- (e) The Reality of Self.

D.) SALVATION.

- (a) "What Shall I do to be Saved."
- (b) The Larger Hope.

E.) IMMORTALITY.

- (a) Unorthodox Belief.
- (b) The Shocks of Doubt.
- (c) Half a Century of Speculation.
- (d) The Serenity of Faith.

Conclusion: The Poet and his Inspiration.

Introduction: The Poet and his Music.

It is given to the poet in every age to have first place in the affections of the people. The reason for this is indeed very clear. The poet is the Aeolian harp of his time, on whose mind every wandering wind of its characteristic moods may be expected to awaken some tone of music. And the bringer of music and song into this old world, always finds his way into the hearts of his listeners.

Faintly, like a far-away chime of fairy bells, comes the music of Tennyson's first songs, with their haunting and bewitching melody. It is charming, this sweet music "that softer falls than petals from blown roses on the grass," this music "that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies." On and on it ripples, gaining power to add to its sweetness.

But great music grows from depth of experience, and it is only after God's hand has touched the strings, that the symphony can roll on to perfection. With the death of his dearest friend, we hear a deep minor chord vibrating in Tennyson's music. Death at times takes up the harp of life as love did in one of the poet's earlier

poems, and draws from it inspiring music. And then for a time the main theme is lost, and only the "broken music" of doubt and perplexity remains. Let never does the music cease. The "little rift within the lute" is there, but it is not allowed to widen until the music becomes mute. Through every struggle and every trial, the poet searches blindly for that heavenly chord, until, with faith in his heart "at last he beat his music out" into the full harmony of "the lordly music flowing from the limitless years," awakes the great symphony. The mighty hopes that make us men, the future glories of humanity, the social joy and tenderness, which even on earth shed a softening radiance over settled sorrow, the encouragement which a noble heart finds in dwelling on a life honorably finished, in listening to the earnest voices of the dead, all mingle in the lofty strain. Stronger and deeper swells the great refrain of the vast wide love of God, the deathless destiny of man, and the radiant beauty and perfection of Christ as the soul's salvation. With the clear and beautiful chords of perfect love and trust, this "music harmonizing our wild cries" ends in one great sweet song of faith. When death's little rift had rent the luteless lute, and the singer of un- dying songs had put out to sea, there was no meaning at

the bar, for the hearts of all were thrilled by this triumphant close to his life-music.

Like a reed through which all things blow into music, was Tennyson, and "God made music through him." His passing was as the dying away of an exquisite song, which "makes a silent music up in heaven."

"From the misty shores of midnight, touched with splendours of the moon,

To the singing tides of heaven, and the light more clear than noon,

Passed a soul that grew to music till it was with God in tune." X

theory and fact upon facts." Nothing was established as to facts as affecting theory and fact, and by the reaction of fact, by an inevitable desire to verify the implications of time. He dealt with "an age characterized by an intense love of poetry can be discovered most of the cherished ideals of his to the changing currents of thought surrounding him, in his form tendencies of his age. Materially sensitive as he was work better, possibly, than any other single writer the multi- and the customary period of mental activity, reflects in his with a poetical career commencing early and prolonged far be- so many different elements simultaneously presented. Tennyson, finally more complex. Never, perhaps, at any one time were in the period in which Tennyson lived, life had grown in- within him; what also was in him was the power to distinguish them. fought the battle of his age. All the doubts of the time were have a true man and a vital work. As the man of his age he in which it is produced. And in Tennyson and his poetry, we in his work; and the work, it is vital, reflects the age of light and peace. The man, if he be true, stands revealed Hebrew sage or seer returned to earth to lead men into paths doubts and speculations, Tennyson seemed like some glorious to a bewildered generation struggling in a turmoil of

The Struggle between Fact and Faith:

TENNYSON'S RELATION TO THE SPIRIT OF HIS AGE.