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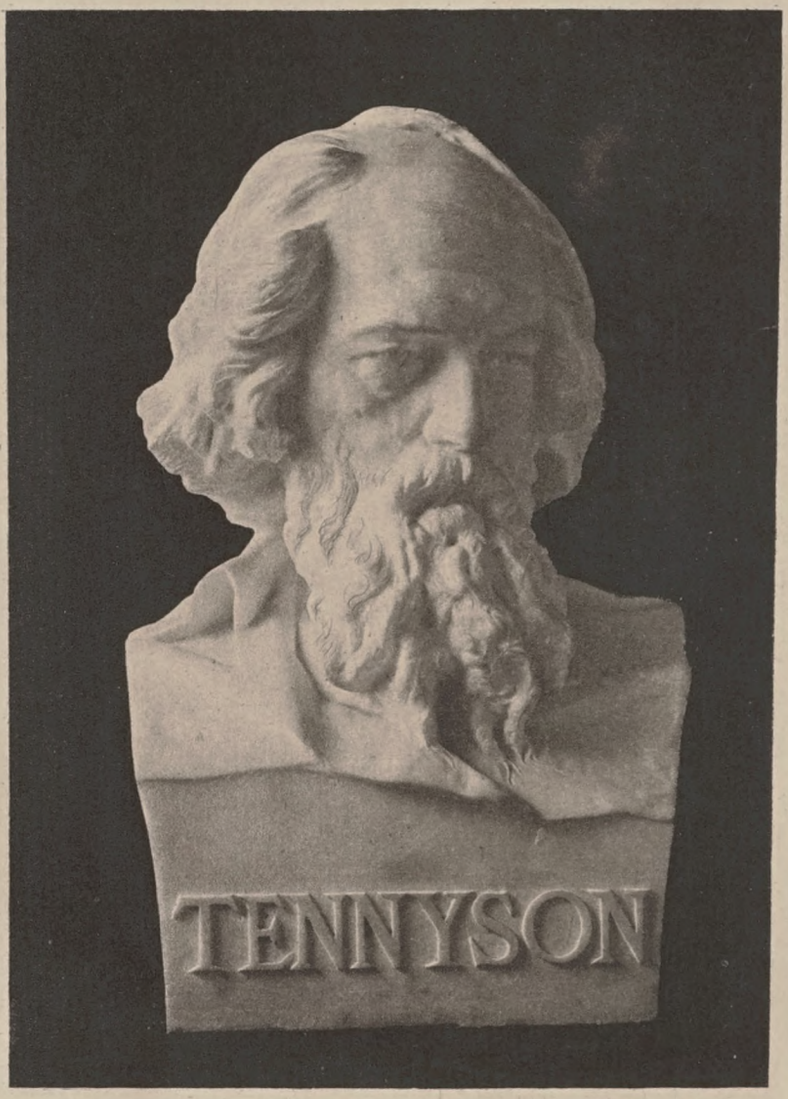

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STUDIES IN TENNYSON

BY

HENRY VAN DYKE

D. C. L. (Oxon.)

NEW YORK

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To

A YOUNG WOMAN

OF AN OLD FASHION

WHO LOVES ART

NOT ONLY FOR ITS OWN SAKE

BUT BECAUSE IT ENNOBLES LIFE

WHO READS POETRY

NOT TO KILL TIME

BUT TO FILL IT WITH BEAUTIFUL THOUGHTS

AND WHO STILL BELIEVES

IN GOD AND DUTY AND IMMORTAL LOVE

I DEDICATE

THIS BOOK

PREFACE

In this volume I have brought together the results of some fifty years' reading and study of Tennyson, with such revision and rearrangement as seemed desirable.

The way in which the book has come into its present shape is somewhat curious. The first chapter was written, practically as it now stands, as an introduction to the select *Poems of Tennyson* in the Athenæum Press Series in 1903. It is intended to give a general view of the poet's life and work and his place in English literature. Of necessity it is rather long. The other chapters are, in effect, essays on separate parts or aspects of Tennyson's work. They were written at different times, printed in various magazines, and collected, substantially, in a book called *The Poetry of Tennyson*, which was fortunate enough to find many friends, and has now, after twelve editions, gone out of print.

But behind this writing about Tennyson there lie some twenty years of simple, human,

non-literary reading of his poetry. Of this, it may be permissible to tell something here, by way of preface, or background. It is a personal story, but it has a certain bearing on the general subject of the love of poetry,—the seed of which is more common than most people suppose, but which often needs culture to grow.

It all began with the gift of a dollar, which a boy received on his fourteenth birthday from a very pleasant old lady. His whim led him into a bookshop to spend this money, which burned in his pocket; and his guardian angel, or possibly some prophetic instinct in the lame little bookseller, directed his unconscious choice to a book called *Enoch Arden.* It was a pirated edition, and therefore cheap, for this happened in the days when the American publishers still practised literary brigandage, and the American people were still willing to believe that it was more desirable to get books at a low price than to get them in a fair way. But the boy was not far enough out of the age of barbarism to feel any moral scruple on a point like this. So the book was bought for fifty cents, and it became the key which let him into the garden and palace of poetry, there to find a joy passing his delight in wild adventure-books of the Mayne Reid type.

Not that this was his first book of poems. He had lived in a library, and was already the proprietor of a small bookcase of his own. But hitherto poetry had seemed to him like something foreign and remote, much less interesting than prose, fiction or even some kinds of history. He had read plenty of poems, of course, and had tried his hand at making verses. But the formal and artificial side of poetry was still the most prominent to his mind. It was something to be translated and scanned and parsed. P. Ovidius Naso was an abomination to him, and Pope's *Rape of the Lock* a weariness to the flesh. They belonged to the tedious, profitable world of education and examination.

But *Enoch Arden* evidently belonged to life. It was a story about real people. And then, it seemed to the boy so beautifully told. There was such a glow in it, such colour, such a swing and sweep of musical words, such a fine picture of a brave man, and at the end such a sad touch to bring the tears into your eyes,—all by yourself, you understand, when no one could see you and laugh at you. The touches of florid decoration did not trouble him then, for he was young. Why, this was as good as a novel, —yes, in a way it was better, for there was a charm in the movement of the verse, the rise

and fall, the ebb and flow, that seemed to stir the feelings and make them deeper and fuller.

So the boy became a lover of poetry, and began to look around him for other poems which should give him the same kind of pleasure. Of course, he found many of them, ancient and modern. His capacity of enjoyment increased, as his taste broadened. He passed along the lines of new sympathies from one poet to another, discovered the touch of life in books which he had thought were dry and dead, and learned to appreciate beauties of which he had not suspected the existence. Even the poets of Greece and Rome began to say something to his heart. They were no longer shadows of mighty names, but real makers of real things in the enduring world of poesy.

The boy came to understand, as he grew into man's estate, that there were other, and yet loftier, masters in the realm of song; but Tennyson still held the first place in his affections. There was a singular charm in the manner and accent of this poet, so melodious, so fluent, so clear, and yet so noble and powerful. Tennyson seemed to be the one, among all the English poets, who was in closest touch with the modern world. He not only led the boy for the first time into the regions of poetry; he

also kept company, through all the experiences of life, with the young man.

When love began to speak in his heart, it found an echo in *Maud*, and "Locksley Hall," and "The Gardener's Daughter,"—rather romantic love, of course, for that was the fashion of the time. When doubt began to trouble his mind, he turned to "Two Voices" and *In Memoriam*, to learn that it was no new thing for faith to have to fight for its life. When the larger problems of human duty and destiny began to press upon him, he saw them pictured in the *Idylls of the King* and "The Palace of Art;" and he read a fine answer to them in such poems as "Will," and "Wages," and the "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington." When he began to take that broader interest in humanity which only comes with years, he found in "Ulysses" and "Lucretius" and "St. Simeon Stylites" and "The Northern Farmer" and "Rizpah," convincing portraits of living souls. And when at last, after many happy years, sorrow entered his house, he turned again to *In Memoriam*, and it brought him more comfort than any book in the world save One.

It was not unnatural, then, that this man should be a Tennysonian, not as a matter of theory, but as an affair of experience. And

the time came when he felt the wish to make some acknowledgment of the debt which he owed to this poet, to set down some more careful estimate of the influences which have flowed from his poetry into the life of the present age, and to give some reasons for thinking that Tennyson stood among the great poets, if not on a level with the greatest. So these essays were written.

The grateful sense of benefits received which entered into their first writing has not waned, but increased. Certain judgments on particular poems have been modified; certain comparisons have been made less absolute; a certain exclusiveness of admiration, natural to youthful partisanship, has passed away. I have learned that it is no reproach to recognise the limitations of your hero, and realised that Tennyson is not exempt from *les défauts de ses qualités*. But on the other hand my positive reasons for admiring him have grown clearer and stronger, and I have perceived the beauty and value of certain poems which once I accepted merely because they were his. So these essays have gained, I venture to believe, in many respects, and have a better title to be called "studies."

At all events, I send them out in their new

form for the last time to find such readers as providence has designed for them, with the hope that they may serve as guides and interpreters in a region of delight which well repays many visits.

The poet who can be read only once, is hardly worth reading at all. But he whose work yields new meaning and fresh pleasure as often as we come back to it, belongs to the company of our unfailing friends in the spirit. The poetry of Tennyson, like good music, improves with every hearing.

HENRY VAN DYKE.

AVALON, October 1, 1920.

CONTENTS

I.	The Man and His Work	1
II.	The First Flight	113
III.	The Palace of Art	127
IV.	Milton and Tennyson	151
V.	The Princess and Maud	208
VI.	In Memoriam	227
VII.	Idylls of the King	246
VIII.	The Dramatic Trilogy	303
IX.	The Bible in Tennyson	324
X.	Fruit from an Old Tree	355
	Appendix	
	A List of Biblical References	377
	Bibliography	413

I

THE MAN AND HIS WORK

I

THE MAN AND HIS WORK

I

TENNYSON'S PLACE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

"*The voice of him the master and the sire*
Of one whole age and legion of the lyre,
Who sang his morning-song when Coleridge still
Uttered dark oracles from Highgate Hill,
And with new launchèd argosies of rhyme
Gilds and makes brave this sombreing tide of time.

. . . . . .

To him nor tender nor heroic muse
Did her divine confederacy refuse:
To all its moods the lyre of life he strung,
And notes of death fell deathless from his tongue,
Himself the Merlin of his magic strain,
He bade old glories break in bloom again;
And so, exempted from oblivious gloom,
Through him these days shall fadeless break in bloom."

WILLIAM WATSON, 1892.

TENNYSON seems to us, in the early part of the Twentieth Century, the most representative poet of the English-speaking world in the Nineteenth Century. Indeed it is doubtful whether any other writer during the last

hundred years has reflected, so clearly and so broadly, in verse or prose, the features of that composite age. The history of its aspirations and conflicts, its dreams and disappointments, its æsthetic revivals and scientific discoveries, its questioning spirit in religion and its dogmatic spirit in practical affairs, its curious learning and social enthusiasms and military reactions, its ethical earnestness, and its ever deepening and broadening human sympathy, may be read in the poetry of Tennyson.

Other poets may reflect some particular feature of the century more fully, but it is because they reflect it more exclusively. Thus Byron stands for the spirit of revolt against tyranny, Shelley for the dream of universal brotherhood, Keats for the passionate love of pure beauty, Matthew Arnold for the sadness of parting with ancient faiths, Robert Browning for the spirit of scientific curiosity and the restless impulse of action, and Rudyard Kipling expresses the last phase of the century, the revival of militant imperialism, as well as it can be uttered in verse.

Wordsworth, indeed, has a more general range of meditative interest, and his work has therefore a broader philosophic meaning. But his range of imaginative sympathy, the sphere

within which he feels intensely and speaks vividly, is limited by his own individuality, deep, strong, unyielding, and by his secluded life among the mountains of Westmoreland. When he moves along his own line his work shines with a singular and unclouded lustre; at other times his genius fails to penetrate his material with the light of poesy. Much of his verse, serious and sincere, represents Wordsworth's reflections upon life, rather than the reflection of life in Wordsworth's poetry. In the metrical art, too, perfect as he is in certain forms, such as the sonnet, the simple lyric, the stately ode, his mastery is far from wide. In narrative poetry he seldom moves with swiftness or certainty; in the use of dramatic motives to intensify a lyric, a ballad, an idyl, he has little skill.

But Tennyson, at least in the maturity of his powers, has not only a singularly receptive and responsive mind, open on all sides to impressions from nature, from books, and from human life around him, and an imaginative sympathy, which makes itself at home and works dramatically in an extraordinary range of characters: he has also a wonderful mastery of the technics of the poetic art, which enables him to give back in a fitting form of beauty

the subject which his genius has taken into itself. No other English poet since the Elizabethan age has used so many kinds of verse so well. No other has shown in his work a sensitiveness to the movements of his own time at once so delicate and so broad. To no other has it been given to write with undimmed eye and undiminished strength for so long a period of time, and thus to interpret in poetry so many of the thoughts and feelings of the century in which he lived.

Whether a temperament so receptive, and an art so versatile, are characteristic of the highest order of genius, is an open question, which it is not necessary to decide nor even to discuss here. Certainly it would be absurd to maintain that Tennyson's success in dealing with all subjects and in all forms of verse is equal. His dramas, for instance, do not stand in the first rank. His two epics, *The Princess* and *Idylls of the King*, have serious defects, the one in structure, the other in substance.

But, on the other hand, the broad scope of his poetic interest and the variety as well as the general felicity of his art, helped to make him the most popular poet of his time and race. Tennyson has something for everybody. He is easy to read. He has charm. Thus he has

found a wide audience, and his poetry has not only reflected, but powerfully influenced, the movements of his age. The poet whose words are quoted is a constant, secret guide of sentiment and conduct. The man who says a thing first may be more original; he who says it best is more potent. The characters which Tennyson embodied in his verse became memorable. The ideals which he expressed in music grew more clear and beautiful and familiar to the hearts of men, leading them insensibly forward. The main current of thought and feeling in the Nineteenth Century, at least among the English-speaking peoples,—the slow, steady, onward current of admiration, desire, hope, aspiration, and endeavour,—follows the line which is traced in the poetry of Tennyson.

Now it is just this broad scope, this rich variety, this complex character of Tennyson's work which make it representative. To get the full effect of this, one must read all the twenty-six volumes which he published,—lyrical poems, ballads, English idyls, elegiac poems, war-songs, love-songs, dramas, poems of art, classical imitations, dramatic monologues, patriotic poems, idylls of chivalry, fairy tales, character studies, odes, religious meditations, and rhapsodies of faith.

After such a reading it is natural to ask: How much of this large body of verse, so representative in its total effect, is permanent in its poetic value? How much of it, apart from the interest which it has for the student of literary history, has a direct and intimate charm, a charm which is likely to be lasting, for the simple lover of poetry, the reader who turns to verse not chiefly for an increase of knowledge, but for a gift of pure pleasure and vital power? How much of it is characterised by those qualities which distinguish Tennyson at his best, signed, as we may say, not merely with his name but with the mark of his individuality as an artist, and so entitled to a place in his personal contribution to English poetry?

It is on this residual gold that his fame will ultimately rest. But, though nearly thirty years have passed since his death, it is still too soon to estimate the amount of pure metal which Time will smelt from his ore. For the present we have to do with the body of his work, its relation to his life, and the factors which entered into the doing of it.

II

AN OUTLINE OF TENNYSON'S LIFE

"Brother of the greatest poets, true to nature, true to art,
Lover of Immortal Love, uplifter of the human heart!
Who shall cheer us with high music, who shall sing if thou depart?"

IN LUCEM TRANSITUS, 1892.

Alfred Tennyson was born on the 6th of August, 1809, at Somersby, a little village in Lincolnshire. He was the fourth child in a family of twelve, eight boys and four girls, all of whom but two lived to pass the limit of three score years and ten. The stock was a strong one, probably of Danish origin, but with a mingled strain of Norman blood through the old family of d'Eyncourt, both branches of which, according to Burke's Peerage, are represented by the Tennysons.

The poet's father, the Rev. Dr. George Clayton Tennyson, was rector of Somersby and Wood Enderby. His wife, Elizabeth Fytche, was the daughter of the vicar of Louth, a neighbouring town. Dr. Tennyson was the eldest son of a lawyer of considerable wealth, but was disinherited, by some caprice of his father, in favour of a younger brother. The rector of Somersby was a man of large frame, vigourous

mind, and variable temper. He had considerable learning, of a broad kind, and his scholarship, if not profound, was practical, for he taught his sons the best of what they knew before they entered the university. A lover of music and architecture, fond of writing verse, genial and brilliant in social intercourse, excitable, warm-hearted, stern in discipline, generous in sympathy, he was a personality of overflowing power; but at times he was subject to fits of profound depression and gloom, in which the memory of his father's unkindness darkened his mind, and he seemed almost to lose himself in bitter and despondent moods. Mrs. Tennyson was a gentle, loving, happy character, by no means lacking in strength, but excelling in tenderness, ardent in feeling, vivid in imagination, fervent in faith. It is said that "the wicked inhabitants of a neighbouring village used to bring their dogs to her windows and beat them, in order to be bribed to leave off by the gentle lady, or to make advantageous bargains by selling her the worthless curs." Her son Alfred drew her portrait lovingly in the poem called "Isabel," and in the closing lines of *The Princess*:—

Not learned, save in gracious household ways,
Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,

No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise,
Interpreter between the gods and men,
Who look'd all native to her place, and yet
On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere
Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce
Sway'd to her from their orbits as they moved,
And girdled her with music.

The poet's loyal love for his father is expressed in the lines "To J. S." Both parents saw in their child the promise of genius, and hoped great things from him.

The boy grew up, if not precisely in Milton's "quiet and still air of delightful studies," yet in an atmosphere that was full of stimulus for the imagination and favourable to the unfolding of lively powers of thought and feeling. It was an obscure hamlet of less than a hundred inhabitants where the Tennysons resided, but it was a full home in which they lived,—full of children, full of books, full of music, full of fanciful games and pastimes, full of human interests, full of life. The scenery about Somersby is friendly and consoling; gray hills softly sloping against the sky; wide-branching elms, trembling poplars, and drooping ash-trees; rich gardens, close-embowered, full of trailing roses, crowned lilies, and purple-spiked lavender; long ridges of pasture

land where the thick-fleeced sheep are herded; clear brooks purling over ribbed sand and golden gravel, with many a curve and turn; broad horizons, low-hung clouds, mellow sunlight; birds a plenty, flowers profuse. All these sweet forms Nature printed on the boy's mind. Every summer brought a strong contrast, when the family went to spend their holiday in a cottage close beside the sea, on the coast of Lincolnshire, among the tussocked ridges of the sand-dunes, looking out upon

The hollow ocean-ridges, roaring into cataracts.

The boy had an intense passion for the sea, and learned to know all its moods and aspects. "Somehow," he said, later in life, "water is the element I love best of all the four."

When he was seven years old he was sent to the house of his grandmother at Louth, to attend the grammar-school. But it was a hard school with a rough master, and the boy hated it. After three years he came home to continue his studies under his father.

His closest comrade in the home was his brother Charles, a year older than himself. (See *In Memoriam, lxxix*, and "Prefatory Poem to My Brother's Sonnets.") The two lads had many tastes in common, especially their love

of poetry. They read widely, and offered the sincerest tribute of admiration to their favourite bards. Alfred's first attempt at writing verse was made when he was eight years old: some lines in praise of flowers, in imitation of Thomson, the only poet whom he then knew. A little later Pope's *Iliad* fascinated him, and he produced many hundreds of lines in the same style and metre. At twelve he took Scott for his model, and turned out an epic of six thousand lines. Then Byron became his idol. He wrote lyrics full of gloom and grief, a romantic drama in blank verse, and imitations of the *Hebrew Melodies.*

Some of the fruitage of these young labours may be seen in the volume entitled *Poems by Two Brothers*, which was published anonymously by Charles and Alfred Tennyson, at Louth, in 1827. The motto on the title-page of the plump, modest little volume is: *Hæc nos novimus esse nihil.* It is because of this knowledge that the book has value as a document in the history of Tennyson's development. It shows a receptive mind, a quick, immature fancy, and considerable fluency and variety in the use of metre. It marks a distinct stage of his growth,—the period when his strongest poetic impulse was imitative.

In 1828 Tennyson, with his brother Charles, entered Trinity College, Cambridge. Almost from the beginning he was a marked man in the undergraduate world. His personal appearance was striking. Tall, large-limbed, deep-chested; with a noble head and abundance of dark, wavy hair; large, brown eyes, dreamy, yet bright; swarthy complexion ("almost like a gypsy," said Mrs. Carlyle); and a profile like a face on a Roman coin; he gave the immediate impression of rare gifts and power in reserve. "I remember him well," wrote Edward Fitzgerald, "a sort of Hyperion." His natural shyness and habits of solitude kept him from making many acquaintances, but his friends were among the best and most brilliant men in the University: the most intimate of all was Arthur Henry Hallam. This was an extraordinary circle of youths; distinguished for scholarship, wit, eloquence, freedom of thought; promising great things, which most of them achieved. Among these men Tennyson's strength of mind and character was recognised, but most of all they were proud of him as a coming poet. In their college rooms, with an applauding audience around him, he would chant in his deep, sonorous voice such early poems as "The Hesperides," "Oriana," "The Lover's Tale."

He did not neglect his studies, the classics, history, and the natural sciences; but his general reading meant more to him. He was a member of an inner circle called the "Apostles," a society devoted to "religion and radicalism." (See *In Memoriam, lxxxvii.*) The new spirit, represented in literature by Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, took possession of him. He went back to the Elizabethan age, to Milton's early poems, as the fountain-heads of English lyrical poetry. Not now as an imitator, but as a kindred artist, he gave himself to the search for beauty, freedom, delicate truth to nature, romantic charm.

His poem of "Timbuctoo," which won the Chancellor's gold medal in 1829, was only a working-over of an earlier poem on "The Battle of Armageddon," and he thought little of it. But in 1830 he published a slender volume entitled *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*, which shows the quality of his work in this period when the æsthetic impulse was dominant in him. It is marked by freshness of fancy, melody of metre, vivid descriptive touches, and above all by what Arthur Hallam, in his thoughtful review of the volume, called "a strange earnestness in his worship of beauty."

In the summer of 1830 Hallam and Tenny-

son made a journey together to the Pyrenees, to carry some funds which had been raised in England to the Spanish insurgents who were fighting for liberty. Tennyson was not in sympathy with the conservatism which then, as in Wordsworth's day, made Cambridge seem narrow and dry and heartless to men of free and ardent spirit. In 1831 the illness and death of his father made it necessary for him to leave college and go home to live with the family at Somersby, where he remained for six years. In 1832 he published his second volume of *Poems*, dated 1833.

The tone and quality of this volume are the same that we find in its predecessor, but the manner is firmer, stronger, more assured. There is also a warmer human interest in such poems as "The Miller's Daughter" and "The May Queen"; and in "The Palace of Art" there is a distinct intimation that the purely æsthetic period of his poetic development is nearly at an end.

The criticism which these two volumes received, outside of the small circle of Tennyson's friends and admirers, was severe and scornful. Tennyson felt this contemptuous treatment deeply. It seemed to him that the English people would never like his work. His

æsthetic period closed in gloom and discouragement.

But far heavier than any literary disappointment was the blow that fell in 1833 when his dearest friend, Arthur Hallam, to whom his sister Emilia was promised in marriage, died suddenly in Vienna. This great loss, coming to Tennyson at a time when the first joy of youth was already overcast by clouds of loneliness and despondency, was the wind of destiny that drove him from the pleasant harbour of dreams out upon the wide, strange, uncharted sea of spiritual strife and sorrow,—the sea which seems so bitter and so wild, but on whose farther shore those who bravely make the voyage find freedom and security and peace and the generous joy of a larger, nobler life. The problems of doubt and faith which had been worked out with abstract arguments and fine theories in the "Apostles'" society at Cambridge, now became personal problems for Tennyson. He must face them and find some answer, if his life was to have a deep and enduring harmony in it,—a harmony in which the discords of fear and self-will and despair would dissolve. The true answer, he felt sure, could never be found in selfish isolation. The very intensity of his grief purified it as by fire,

made it more humane, more sympathetic. His conflict with "the spectres of the mind" was not for himself alone, but for others who must wrestle as he did, with sorrow and doubt and death. The deep significance, the poignant verity, the visionary mystery of human existence in all its varied forms, pressed upon him. Like the Lady of Shalott in his own ballad, he turned from the lucid mirror of fantasy, the magic web of art, to the real world of living joy and grief. But it was not a curse, like that which followed her departure from her cloistered tower, that came upon the poet, drawn and driven from the tranquil, shadowy region of exquisite melodies and beautiful pictures. It was a blessing: the blessing of clearer, stronger thought, deeper, broader feeling, more power to understand the world and more energy to move it.

Tennyson's personal sorrow for the loss of Hallam is expressed in the two lyrics, "Break, break, break" and "In the Valley of Cauteretz," poems which should always be read together as the cry of grief and the answer of consolation. His long spiritual struggle with the questions of despair and hope, of duty and destiny, which were brought home to him by the loss of his friend, is recorded in *In Memoriam*. The poem

was begun at Somersby in 1833 and continued at different places and times, as the interwoven lyrics show, for nearly sixteen years. Though the greater part of it was written by 1842, it was not published until 1850. Mr. Gladstone thought it "the richest oblation ever offered by the affection of friendship at the tomb of the departed." It is that and something more: it is the great English classic on the love of immortality and the immortality of love. Tennyson said, "It was meant to be a kind of *Divina Commedia*, ending with happiness." The central thought of the poem is

> *'Tis better to have loved and lost*
> *Than never to have loved at all.*

Wherein it is better now, and why the poet trusts it will be better still in the long future,—this is the vital question which the poem answers in music.

But apart from these lyrics of personal grief, and this rich, monumental elegy, there are other poems of Tennyson, written between 1833 and 1842, which show the extraordinary deepening and strengthening of his mind during this period of inward crisis. For ten years he published no book. Living with his mother and sisters at Somersby, at High Beech in Ep-

ping Forest, at Tunbridge Wells, at Boxley near Maidstone; caring for the family, as the eldest son at home, and skilfully managing the narrow means on which they had to live; wandering through the country on long walking tours; visiting his friends in London now and then; falling in love finally and forever with Miss Emily Sellwood, to whom he became engaged in 1836, but whom he could not marry yet for want of money; he held fast to his vocation, and though he sometimes doubted whether the world would give him a hearing, he never wavered in his conviction that his mission in life was to be a poet. The years of silence were not years of indolence. Here is a memorandum of work: "*Monday*, History, German. *Tuesday*, Chemistry, German. *Wednesday*, Botany, German. *Thursday*, Electricity, German. *Friday*, Animal Physiology, German. *Saturday*, Mechanics. *Sunday*, Theology. *Next week*, Italian in the afternoon. *Third week*, Greek. *Evenings*, Poetry." Hundreds of lines were composed and never written; hundreds more were written and burned. So far from being "an artist long before he was a poet," as Mr. R. H. Hutton said in his essay on Tennyson, he toiled terribly to make himself an artist, because he knew he was a poet. The results of this toil,

in the revision of those of his early poems which he thought worthy to survive, and in the new poems which he was ready to publish, were given to the world in the two volumes of 1842.

The changes in the early poems were all in the direction of clearness, simplicity, a stronger human interest. The new poems included "The Vision of Sin," "Two Voices," "Ulysses," "Morte d'Arthur," the conclusion of "The May Queen," "Lady Clara Vere de Vere," "Dora," "The Gardener's Daughter," "Locksley Hall," "St. Agnes' Eve," "Sir Galahad." With the appearance of these two volumes, Tennyson began to be a popular poet. But he did not lose his hold upon the elect, the "fit audience, though few." *The Quarterly Review*, *The Westminster Review*, Dickens, Landor, Rogers, Carlyle, Edward Fitzgerald, Aubrey de Vere, and such men in England, Hawthorne, Emerson, Lowell, and Poe in America, recognised the charm and the power of his verse. In 1845 Wordsworth wrote to Henry Reed of Philadelphia, "Tennyson is decidedly the first of our living poets, and I hope will live to give the world still better things."

Such was the liberating and ennobling effect of the deeper personal and spiritual impulse

which came into his poetry with the experience of sorrow and inward conflict.

From 1842 onward we find the poet, now better known to the world, coming into wider and closer contact with the general life of men. Not that he ever lost the unconventional freedom of his dress and manner, the independence of his thought and taste, the singular frankness (almost brusquerie) of his talk, which was like thinking aloud. He never became what is called, oddly enough, a "society man." He was incapable of roaring gently at afternoon teas or literary menageries. He was unwilling to join himself to any party in politics, as Dryden and Swift and Addison, or even as Southey and Wordsworth, had done. But he had a sincere love for genuine human intercourse, in which real thoughts and feelings are uttered by real people who have something to say to one another; a vivid sense of the humourous aspects of life (shown in such poems as the two pictures of the "Northern Farmer," "The Spinster's Sweet-Arts," "The Church-Warden"); and a broad interest in the vital questions and the popular movements of his time. If I am not mistaken, this period when his poetry began to make a wider appeal to the people is marked by the presence of a new impulse in his work. We

may call it, for the sake of a name, the social impulse, meaning thereby that the poet now looks more often at his work in its relation to the general current of human affairs and turns to themes which have a place in public attention.

There was also at this time an attempt on Tennyson's part to engage in business, which turned out to be a disastrous mistake. He was induced to go into an enterprise for the carving of wood by machinery. Into this he put all his capital; and some of the small patrimony of his brothers and sisters was embarked in the same doubtful craft. In 1843 the ship went down with all its lading, and the Tennysons found themselves on the coast of actual poverty. To add to this misfortune, the poet's health gave way completely, and he was forced to spend a long time in a water-cure establishment, under treatment for hypochondria.

In 1846 the grant of a pension of £200 from the Civil List, on the recommendation of Sir Robert Peel, cordially approved by the Queen, relieved the pressure of pecuniary need under which Tennyson had been left by the failure of his venture in wood. In 1847 he published, perhaps in answer to the demand for a longer and more sustained poem, *The Princess; A*

Medley. It is an epic, complete enough in structure, but in substance half serious and half burlesque. It tells the story of a king's daughter who was fired with the ambition to emancipate, (and even to separate,) her sex from man, by founding a woman's college extraordinary. This design was crossed by the efforts of an amourous, chivalrous, faintly ridiculous prince, who wooed her under difficulties and won her through the pity that overcame her when she saw him wounded almost to death by her brother. The central theme of the poem is the question of the higher education of women, but the style moves so obliquely in its mock heroics that it is hard to tell whether the argument is for or against. The diction is marked by Tennyson's two most frequent faults, over-decoration and indirectness of utterance. It is much admired by girls at boarding-school; but the woman's college of the present day does not regard its academic programme with favour. The poem rises at the close to a very sincere and splendid eloquence in praise of true womanhood. The intercalary songs, which were added in 1850, include two or three of Tennyson's best lyrics.

In 1850 there were three important events in the poet's life: his marriage with Miss Emily Sellwood; the publication of the long-laboured

In Memoriam; and his appointment as Poet Laureate, to succeed Wordsworth, who had just died. The three events were closely connected. It was the £300 received in advance for *In Memoriam* that provided a financial basis for the marriage; and it was the profound admiration of the Prince Consort for this poem that determined the choice of Tennyson for the Laureateship.

The marriage was in every sense happy. The poet's wife was not only of a nature most tender and beautiful; she was also a wise counsellor, a steadfast comrade, as he wrote of her,—

With a faith as clear as the heights of the June-blue heaven,
And a fancy as summer-new
As the green of the bracken amid the glow of the heather.

Their first home was made at Twickenham, and here their oldest and only surviving son, Hallam, was born.

In 1852 the "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington" was published. It was received with some disappointment and unfavourable criticism as the first production of the Laureate upon an important public event. But later and wiser critics incline to the opinion of Robert Louis Stevenson, who thought that the ode had "never been surpassed in any tongue or time."

In 1853 increasing returns from his books (about £500 a year) made it possible for Tennyson to lease, and ultimately to buy, the house and small estate of Farringford, near the village of Freshwater on the Isle of Wight. It is a low, rambling, unpretentious, gray house, tree-embowered, ivy-mantled, in a

careless-ordered garden,
Close to the ridge of a noble down.

His other home, Aldworth, near the summit of Black Down in Sussex, was not built until 1868. A statelier house, though less picturesque, its attraction as a summer home lies in the beauty of its terraced rose-garden, the far-reaching view which it commands to the south, and the refreshing purity of the upland air that breathes around it.

In 1854 the famous poem on "The Charge of the Light Brigade" was published in the London *Examiner*. It was included, with the Wellington Ode, in the volume entitled *Maud, and Other Poems*, which appeared in the following year. *Maud* grew out of the dramatic lyric beginning "O that 'twere possible," in *The Tribute*, 1837. Sir John Simeon said to Tennyson that something more was needed to explain the story of this lyric. He then un-

folded the central idea in a succession of lyrics in which the imaginary hero reveals himself and the tragedy of his life. The subtitle *A Monodrama* was added in 1875. When Tennyson read the poem to me in 1892, he said: "It is dramatic,—the story of a man who has a touch of inherited insanity, morbid and selfish. The poem shows what love has done for him. The war is only an episode." This is undoubtedly true and just. Yet the vigour of the long invective against the corruptions of a selfish peace, with which the poem opens, and the enthusiasm of the patriotic welcome to the Crimean war, with which it closes, show something of the way in which the poet's mind was working. This volume together with *The Princess* may be taken as an illustration of the force of the social impulse which had now entered into Tennyson's poetry to coöperate with the æsthetic impulse and the religious impulse in the full labours of his maturity.

Tennyson was now forty-five years old. But there still lay before him nearly forty years in which he was to bring forth poetry in abundance, a rich, varied, unfailing harvest. It is true that before this wonderful period of maturity ended there were signs of age visible in some of his work,—a slackening of vigour, an

uncertainty of touch, a tendency to overload his verse with teaching, a failure to remove the traces of labour from his art, a lack of courage and sureness in self-criticism. But it was long before these marks of decline were visible, and even then, more than any other English poet at an equal age, he kept, and in the hours of happy inspiration he revealed, the quick emotion, the vivid sensibility, the splendid courage of a heart that does not grow gray with years.

In 1859 the first instalment of his most important epic, *Idylls of the King*, appeared. It was followed in 1869, in 1872, in 1885, by the other parts of the complete poem. In 1864 *Enoch Arden* was published. In 1875 *Queen Mary*, the first of the dramas, came out, followed by *Harold* in 1876, and *The Cup* and *The Falcon* and *Becket* in 1884. In 1880 *Ballads, and Other Poems* contained some of his best work, such as "Rizpah," "The Revenge," "In the Children's Hospital." In 1885 *Tiresias, and Other Poems* appeared; in 1886 *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After;* in 1889 *Demeter, and Other Poems*, including "Romney's Remorse," "Vastness," "The Progress of Spring," "Merlin and the Gleam," "The Oak," "The Throstle," and that supreme lyric which Tennyson wished to have printed last in every edition of his col-

lected works,—"Crossing the Bar." In 1892 the long list closed with *The Death of Œnone, Akbar's Dream, and Other Poems.*

The life of the man who was producing, after middle age, this great body of poetry, was full, rich, and happy,—though shadowed by the death of his son Lionel on the voyage home from India in 1886. Secluded, as ever, from the busyness of the world, but in no sense separated from its deeper interests, Tennyson studied and wrought, delighting in intercourse with his friends and in

> *converse with all forms*
> *Of the many-sided mind,*
> *And those whom passion hath not blinded,*
> *Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded.*

In 1883 he accepted from the Queen the honour of a peerage (a baronetcy had been offered before and refused), and was gazetted in the following year as Baron of Aldworth and Farringford. For himself, he frankly said, the dignity was one that he did not desire; but he felt that he could not let his reluctance stand in the way of a tribute from the Throne to Literature. When he entered the House of Lords he took his seat on the cross-benches, showing that he did not wish to bind himself to any party. His

first vote was cast for the Extension of the Franchise.

At the close of August, 1892, when I visited him at Aldworth, he was already beginning to feel the warning touches of pain which preceded his last illness. But he was still strong and mighty in spirit, a noble shape of manhood, massive, large-browed, his bronzed face like the countenance of an antique seer, his thin hair scarcely touched with gray. He was working on the final proofs of his last volume and planning new poems. At table his talk was free, friendly, full of humour and commonsense. In the library he read from his poems the things which illustrated the subjects of which he had been speaking, passages from "Idylls of the King," some of the songs, the "Northern Farmer (New Style)" and, more fully, "Maud" and the Wellington Ode. His voice was deep, rolling, resonant. It sank to a note of tenderness, touched with prophetic solemnity, as he read the last lines of the ode:—

Speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him,
God accept him, Christ receive him.

On the 6th of October, 1892, between one and two o'clock in the morning, with the splen-

dours of the full moon pouring in through the windows of the room where his family were watching by his bed, he passed into the world of light. His body was laid to rest on the 12th of October, in Westminster Abbey, next to the grave of Robert Browning, and close beside the monument of Chaucer. The multitude of mourners assembled at the funeral,—scholars, statesmen, nobles, veterans of the Light Brigade, poor boys of the Gordon Home,—told how widely and deeply Tennyson had moved the hearts of all sorts and conditions of men by his poetry, which was, in effect, his life.

III

TENNYSON'S USE OF HIS SOURCES

Ein Quidam sagt, "Ich bin von keiner Schule!
Kein Meister lebt mit dem ich buhle;
Auch bin ich weit davon entfernt,
Das ich von Todten was gelernt."
Das heisst, wenn ich ihn recht verstand;
"Ich bin ein Narr auf eigne Hand."

GOETHE.

Emerson was of the same opinion as Goethe in regard to originality. Writing of Shakespeare he says, "The greatest genius is the most indebted man," and defends the poet's right to take his material wherever he can find it. Shake-

speare certainly exercised large liberty in that respect and did not even trouble himself to look for a defence. Wordsworth wrote, "*Multa tulit fecitque* must be the motto of all those who are to last." Most of the men whom the world calls great in poetry have drawn freely from the sources which are open to all, not only in nature, but also in the literature of the past, and in the thoughts and feelings of men around them,—the inchoate literature of the present.

From all these sources Tennyson took what he could make his own, and used it to enrich his verse. The gold thus gathered was not all new-mined; some of it had passed through other hands; but it was all new-minted,—fused in his imagination and fashioned into forms bearing the mark of his own genius. My object in the present writing is to give some idea of the way in which he collected his material and the method by which he wrought it into poetry.

(1) With nature Tennyson dealt at first hand. A sensitive, patient, joyful observer, he watched the clouds, the waters, the trees, the flowers, the birds, for new disclosures of their beauty, new suggestions of their symbolic relation to the life of man. In a letter written to Mr. Dawson of Montreal, comment-

ing upon the statement that certain lines of natural description in his work were suggested by something in Wordsworth or Shelley, he demurs, with perceptible warmth, and goes on to say: "There was a period in my life when, as an artist, Turner for instance, takes rough sketches of landskip, etc., in order to work them eventually into some great picture, so I was in the habit of chronicling, in four or five words or more, whatever might strike me as picturesque in nature. I never put these down, and many and many a line has gone away on the north wind, but some remain." Then he gives some illustrations, among them,

A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight,

which was suggested by a night at Torquay, when the sky was covered with thin vapour. The line was afterwards embodied in *The Princess* (i, 244).

But in saying that he never wrote these observations down, the poet misremembers his own custom; for his note-books contain many luminous fragments of recorded vision, like the following:—

(*Babbicombe.*) Like serpent-coils upon the deep.
(*Bonchurch.*) A little salt pool fluttering round a stone upon the shore. ("Guinevere," *l.* 50.)

(*The river Shannon, on the rapids.*) Ledges of battling water.

(*Cornwall.*) Sea purple and green like a peacock's neck.

(*Voyage to Norway.*) One great wave, green-shining past with all its crests smoking high up beside the vessel.

This last passage is transformed, in "Lancelot and Elaine," into a splendid simile:—

They couch'd their spears and prick'd their steeds, and thus,
Their plumes driv'n backward by the wind they made
In moving, all together down upon him
Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North-sea,
Green-glimmering toward the summit, bears, with all
Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies,
Down on a bark, and overbears the bark,
And him that helms it, so they overbore
Sir Lancelot and his charger.

Tennyson was always fond of travel, and from all his journeys he brought back jewels which we find embedded here and there in his verse. The echoes in "The Bugle Song" were heard on the Lakes of Killarney in 1842. The Silver Horns of the Alps and the "wreaths of dangling water-smoke," in the "small sweet idyl" from "The Princess," were seen at Lauterbrunnen in 1846. In "Œnone,"—

My tall dark pines that plumed the craggy ledge
High over the blue gorge, and all between
The snowy peak and snow-white cataract,—

were sketched in the Pyrenees in 1830. In the first edition of the poem he brought in a beautiful species of cicala, with scarlet wings, which he saw on his Spanish journey; though he was conscientious enough to add a footnote explaining that "probably nothing of the kind exists in Mount Ida."

It is true that in later editions he let the cicala and the note go; but this example will serve to illustrate the defect, or at least the danger, which attends Tennyson's method of working up his pictures. There is a temptation to introduce too many details from the remembered or recorded "rough sketches," to crowd the canvas, to use bits of description which, however beautiful in themselves, do not always add to the strength of the picture, and sometimes even give it an air of distracting splendour. Ornateness is a fault from which Tennyson is not free. In spite of his careful revision there are still some red-winged cicalas left in his verse. There are passages in "The Princess," in "Enoch Arden," and in some of the "Idylls of the King," for example, which are bewildering in their opulence.

But on the other hand it must be said that very often this richness of detail is precisely the effect which he wishes to produce, and in certain poems, like "Recollections of the Arabian Nights," "The Lotos-Eaters," and "The Palace of Art," it enhances the mystical, dream-like atmosphere in which the subject is conceived. If he sometimes puts in too many touches, he seldom, if ever, makes use of any that is not in harmony with the fundamental tone, the colour-key of his picture. Notice the accumulation of dark images of loneliness and desertion in "Mariana," the cold, gray sadness and weariness of the landscape in "The Dying Swan," and the serene rapture that clothes the earth with emerald and the sea with sapphire in the song of triumph and love in *Maud*, I. xviii.

There are passages in Tennyson's verse where his direct vision of nature is illumined by his memory of the things that other poets have written when looking at the same scene. Thus "Frater Ave atque Vale" is filled, as it should be, with touches from Catullus. But how delicate is the art with which they are blended and harmonised, how exquisite the shimmer of the argent-leaved orchards which Tennyson adds in the last line,

Sweet Catullus's all-but-island, olive-silvery *Sirmio!*

In "The Daisy" (a series of pictures from an Italian journey made with his wife in 1851, recalled to the poet's memory by finding, between the leaves of a book which he was reading in Edinburgh, a daisy plucked on the Splügen Pass), we find literary and historical reminiscences interwoven with descriptions. At Cogoletto he remembers the young Columbus who was born there. On Lake Como, which Virgil praised in the *Georgics*, he recalls

The rich Virgilian rustic measure
Of Lari Maxume, all the way.

At Varenna the story of Queen Theodolind comes back to him.

There are critics who profess to regard such allusions and reminiscences as indicating a lack of originality in a poet. But why? Tennyson saw Italy not with the eyes of a peasant, but with the enlarged and sensitive vision of a scholar. The associations of the past entered into his perception of the spirit of place. New colours glowed on

tower, or high hill-convent, seen
A light amid its olives green;
Or olive-hoary cape in ocean;
Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

because he remembered the great things that had been done and suffered in the land through

which he was passing. Is not the landscape of imagination as real as the landscape of sight? Must a man be ignorant in order to be original? Is true poetry possible only to him who looks at nature with a mind as bare as if he had never opened a book? Milton did not think so.

Tennyson's use of nature as the great source of poetic images and figures was for the most part immediate and direct; but often his vision was quickened and broadened by memories of what the great poets had seen and sung. Yet when he borrowed, here and there, a phrase, an epithet, from one of them, it was never done blindly or carelessly. He always verified his references to nature. The phrase borrowed is sure to be a true one, chosen with a delicate feeling for the best, translated with unfailing skill, and enhanced in beauty and significance by the setting which he gives to it.

(2) For subjects, plots, and illustrations Tennyson turned often to the literature of the past. His range of reading, even in boyhood, was wide and various, as the notes to *Poems by Two Brothers* show. At the University he was not only a close student of the Greek and Latin classics, but a diligent reader of the English poets and philosophers, and a fair Italian scholar. In the years after he left college we find him

studying Spanish and German. In later life he kept up his studies with undiminished ardour. In 1854 he was learning Persian, translating Homer and Virgil to his wife, and reading Dante with her. In 1867 he was working over *Job*, *The Song of Solomon*, and *Genesis*, in Hebrew. He takes the themes of "The Lotos-Eaters" and "The Sea-Fairies" from Homer; "The Death of Œnone" from Quintus Calaber; "Tiresias" from Euripides; "Tithonus" from an Homeric Hymn; "Demeter" and "Œnone" from Ovid; "Lucretius" from St. Jerome; "St. Simeon Stylites" and "St. Telemachus" from Theodoret; "The Cup" from Plutarch; "A Dream of Fair Women" from Chaucer; "Mariana" from Shakespeare; "The Lover's Tale" and "The Falcon" from Boccaccio; "Ulysses" from Dante; "The Revenge" from Sir Walter Raleigh; "The Brook" from Goethe; "The Voyage of Maeldune" from Joyce's *Old Celtic Romances;* "Akbar's Dream" from the Persian, and "Locksley Hall" from the Arabic; "Romney's Remorse" from Hayden's *Life of Romney;* "Columbus" from Washington Irving. In the *Idylls of the King* he has drawn upon Sir Thomas Malory, the *Mabinogion* of Lady Charlotte Guest, and the old French romances. His allusions and references to the

Bible are many and beautiful. But he never wrote a whole poem upon a scriptural subject, except a couple of Byronic imitations in *Poems by Two Brothers*.

To understand his method of using a subject taken from literature it may be well to study a few examples.

The germ of "Ulysses" is found in the following passage from Dante's *Inferno*, xxvi, 90–129, where, in the eighth Bolgia, Ulysses addresses the two poets:—

"When I escaped
From Circe, who beyond a circling year
Had held me near Caieta by her charms,
Ere thus Æneas yet had named the shore;
Nor fondness for my son, nor reverence
Of my old father, nor return of love,
That should have crown'd Penelope with joy,
Could overcome in me the zeal I had
To explore the world, and search the ways of life,
Man's evil and his virtue. Forth I sail'd
Into the deep illimitable main,
With but one bark, and the small faithful band
That yet cleaved to me. As Iberia far,
Far as Marocco, either shore I saw,
And the Sardinian and each isle beside
Which round that ocean bathes. Tardy with age
Were I and my companions, when we came
To the strait pass, where Hercules ordain'd
The boundaries not be overstepp'd by man.

The walls of Seville to my right I left,
On the other hand already Ceuta passed.
'Oh brothers!' I began, 'who to the west
Through perils without number now have reach'd;
To this the short remaining watch, that yet
Our senses have to wake, refuse not proof
Of the unpeopled world, following the track
Of Phœbus. Call to mind from whence ye sprang.
Ye were not form'd to live the life of brutes,
But virtue to pursue and knowledge high.'
With these few words I sharpen'd for the voyage
The mind of my associates, that I then
Could scarcely have withheld them. To the dawn
Our poop we turn'd, and for the witless flight
Made our oars wings, still gaining on the left.
Each star of the other pole night now beheld,
And ours so low, that from the ocean floor
It rose not." *

The central motive of the poem is undoubtedly contained in this passage: the ardent longing for action, for experience, for brave adventure, persisting in Ulysses to the very end of life. This Tennyson renders in his poem with absolute fidelity. But he departs from the original in several points. First, he makes the poem a dramatic monologue, or character-piece, spoken by Ulysses at Ithaca to his old companions. Second, he intensifies the dramatic contrast between the quiet narrow existence

* Cary's Translation (1806).

on the island (*ll.* 1–5; 33–43) and the free, joyous, perilous life for which Ulysses longs (*ll.* 11–32). Third, he adds glimpses of natural scenery in wonderful harmony with the spirit of the poem (*ll.* 2, 44, 45, 54–61). Fourth, he brings out with extraordinary vividness the feeling which he tells us was in his own heart when he wrote the poem, "the need of going forward and braving the struggle of life."

Naturally enough many phrases are used which recall classic writers. "The rainy Hyades" belong to Virgil; the rowers "sitting well in order," to Homer. To "rust unburnish'd" (*l.* 23) is an improved echo from the speech of Shakespeare's Ulysses in *Troilus and Cressida.* All this adds to the *vraisemblance* of the poem. It is the art by which the poet evokes in our minds the associations with which literature has surrounded the figure of Ulysses, a distinct personality, an enduring type in the world of imagination. The proof of the poet's strength lies in his ability to meet the test of comparison between his own work and that classic background of which his allusions frankly remind us, and in his power to add something new, vivid, and individual to the picture which has been painted from so many different points of view by the greatest artists. This test, it seems

to me, Tennyson endures magnificently. His Ulysses is not unworthy to rank with the wanderer of Homer, of Dante, of Shakespeare. No lines of theirs are larger than Tennyson's:—

Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.

Nor has any poet embodied "the unconquerable mind of man" more nobly than in the final lines of this poem:—

Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Mov'd earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;—
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

A poem of very different character is "A Dream of Fair Women," written when the æsthetic impulse was strongest in Tennyson. The suggestion came from Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women.* How full and deep and nobly melancholy are the chords with which Tennyson enriches the dream-music to which Chaucer's poem gives the key-note:—

In every land
I saw, wherever light illumineth,
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand
The downward slope to death.

Those far-renownèd brides of ancient song
Peopled the hollow dark, like burning stars,
And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong,
And trumpets blown for wars.

Then follows a passage full of fresh and exquisite descriptions of nature, the scenery of his dream.

Enormous elm-tree-boles did stoop and lean
Upon the dusky brushwood underneath
Their broad curved branches, fledged with clearest green,
New from its silken sheath.

. . . . . .

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I knew
The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn
On those long, rank, dark wood-walks drench'd in dew,
Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,
Pour'd back into my empty soul and frame
The times when I remember to have been
Joyful and free from blame.

This is Tennyson's own manner, recognisable, imitable, but not easily equalled. Now come the fair women who people his visionary forest. Each one speaks to him and reveals herself by the lyric disclosure of her story. Only in one case—that of Rosamond—does the speaker utter her name. In all the others, it is by some touch of description made familiar to us by

"ancient song," that the figure is recognised. Iphigenia tells how she stood before the altar in Aulis, and saw her sorrowing father, and the waiting ships, and the crowd around her, and the knife which was to shed the victim's blood. (Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura, i,* 85 *ff.*) Cleopatra recalls the nights of revelry with Mark Antony (Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra, Act i, sc. iv*), his wild love (*Act iv, sc. viii*), her queenly suicide, robed and crowned, with the bite of the aspic on her breast (*Act v, sc. ii*). Jephtha's Daughter repeats the song with which she celebrated Israel's victory over Ammon (*Judges, xi*). The dream rounds itself into royal splendour, glittering with gems from legend and poetry: then it fades, never to be repeated,—

How eagerly I sought to strike
Into that wondrous track of dreams again!
But no two dreams are like.

Yet another type of subject taken from literature is found in "Dora." Mr. J. Churton Collins says: "The whole plot . . . to the minutest details is taken from a prose story of Miss Mitford's. . . . That the poet's indebtedness to the novel has not been intimated, is due no doubt to the fact that Tennyson, like Gray, leaves his commentators to track him to

his raw material." * To understand the carelessness of Mr. Collins as a critic it is only necessary to point out the fact that the reference to Miss Mitford's story was distinctly given in a note to the first edition of the poem in 1842. But to appreciate fully the bold inaccuracy of his general statement one needs to read the pastoral of "Dora Creswell," in *Our Village*, side by side with Tennyson's "Dora." In Miss Mitford's story Dora is a little girl; in Tennyson's poem she is a young woman. Miss Mitford tells nothing of the conflict between the old farmer and his son about the proposed marriage with Dora; Tennyson makes it prominent in the working out of the plot. Miss Mitford makes the son marry the delicate daughter of a school-mistress; but in Tennyson's poem his choice falls on Mary Morrison, a labourer's daughter, and, as the poem implies, a vigourous, healthy, independent girl. In Miss Mitford's story there is no trace of Dora's expulsion from the old farmer's house after she has succeeded, by a stratagem, in making him receive his little grandson, Mary's child; but Tennyson makes this the turning point of the most pathetic part of his poem,—Dora's winning of Mary's love,

* J. Churton Collins, *Illustrations of Tennyson*. Chatto and Windus, 1891.

and their resolve that they will live together and bring up the child free from the influence of the old farmer's hardness. When the old man at last gives way, and takes Mary and Dora and the child home, Tennyson adds the final touch of insight to the little drama:—

So those four abode
Within one house together; and as years
Went forward Mary took another mate;
But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

The entire poem is written in the simplest language. It does not contain a single simile, nor a word used in an unfamiliar sense. Wordsworth said, "Mr. Tennyson, I have been endeavouring all my life to write a pastoral like your 'Dora,' and have not succeeded." The contrast between the prose story with its abundance of pretty details, and the poem in beauty unadorned, illustrates the difference between neat work and fine work.

The vivifying power of Tennyson's imagination is nowhere shown more clearly than in the great use which he makes of comparatively small hints and phrases from other writers. In his hands they seem to expand. They are lifted up, animated, ennobled.

A good illustration of this kind of work may be seen in the way in which he handles the ma-

terial taken from Sir Thomas Malory in the *Morte d'Arthur*. In Malory the King's rebuke to the unfaithful knight runs thus: "Ah, traitor untrue, now hast thou betrayed me twice. Who would have weened that, thou that hast been to me so lief and dear? And thou art named a noble knight, and would betray me for the richness of the sword!" In Tennyson a new dramatic splendour enters into the reproach:—

> *'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,*
> *Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!*
> *Authority forgets a dying king,*
> *Laid widow'd of the power in his eye*
> *That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,*
> *For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,*
> *In whom should meet the offices of all,*
> *Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;*
> *Either from lust of gold, or like a girl*
> *Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.*
> *Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,*
> *And the third time may prosper, get thee hence:*
> *But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,*
> *I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'*

In Malory the King's parting address, spoken from the barge, is: "Comfort thyself, and do as well as thou may'st, for in me is no trust for to trust in; for I will into the vale of Avilion to heal me of my grievous wound: and if thou

hear never more of me pray for my soul." In Tennyson these few words become the germ of the great passage beginning

> *'The old order changeth, yielding place to new,*
> *And God fulfils himself in many ways,*
> *Lest one good custom should corrupt the world,'—*

and closing with one of the noblest utterances in regard to prayer that can be found in the world's literature.

Malory says, "And as soon as Sir Bedivere had lost the sight of the barge, he wept and wailed, and so took the forest." Tennyson makes us see the dark vessel moving away:—

> *The barge with oar and sail*
> *Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan*
> *That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,*
> *Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood*
> *With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere*
> *Revolving many memories, till the hull*
> *Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,*
> *And on the mere the wailing died away.*

The difference here is between the seed of poetry and the flower fully unfolded.

Instances of the same enlarging and transforming power of Tennyson's genius may be noted in "The Revenge." Again and again he takes a bare fact given by Sir Walter Raleigh

or Froude, and makes it flash a sudden lightning or roar a majestic thunder through the smoke of the wild sea-fight. The whole poem is scrupulously exact in its fidelity to the historical records, but it lifts the story on strong wings into the realm of vivid imagination. We do not merely hear about it: we see it, we feel it.

Another illustration is found in "The Lotos-Eaters," lines 156–167. This is expanded from Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura, iii,* 15. "The divinity of the gods is revealed, and their tranquil abodes which neither winds do shake, nor clouds drench with rains, nor snow congealed by sharp frosts, harms with hoary fall: an ever cloudless ether over-canopies them, and they laugh with light shed largely round. Nature too supplies all their wants, and nothing ever impairs their peace of mind." But the vivid contrast between this luxurious state of *dolce far niente* and the troubles, toils, and conflicts of human life, is added by Tennyson, and gives a new significance to the passage.

We come now to Tennyson's use of the raw material lying close at hand, as yet untouched by the shaping spirit of literature,—newspaper stories, speeches, tales of the country-side, legends and phrases passing from lip to lip,

suggestions from conversations and letters. He was quick to see the value of things that came to him in this way, and at the same time, as a rule, most clear in his discrimination between that which was merely interesting or striking, and that which was available for the purposes of poetry, and more particularly of such poetry as he could write. He did not often make Wordsworth's mistake of choosing themes in themselves trivial like "Alice Fell," or "Goody Blake," or themes involving an incongruous and ridiculous element, like "Peter Bell" or "The Idiot Boy." If the subject was one that had a humourous aspect, he gave play to his sense of humour in treating it. If it was serious, he handled it in a tragic or in a pathetic way, according to the depth of feeling which it naturally involved. Illustrations of these different methods may easily be found among his poems.

The "Northern Farmer (Old Style)" was suggested by a story which his great-uncle told him about a Lincolnshire farm-bailiff who said, when he was dying, "God A'mighty little knows what He's aboot, a-takin' me, an' 'Squire 'll be so mad an' all!" From this saying, Tennyson declares, he conjectured the whole man, depicted as he is with healthy vigour and kindly humour. It was the remark of a rich neigh-

bour, "When I canters my 'erse along the ramper I 'ears *proputty, proputty, proputty,*" that suggested the contrasting character-piece, the "Northern Farmer (New Style)." The poem called "The Church-Warden and the Curate" was made out of a story told to the poet by the Rev. H. D. Rawnsley.* "The Grandmother" was suggested in a letter from Benjamin Jowett giving the saying of an old lady, "The spirits of my children always seem to hover about me." "The Northern Cobbler" was founded on a true story which Tennyson heard in his youth. "Owd Roä" was the poet's version of a report that he had read in a newspaper about a black retriever which saved a child from a burning house. To the end of his life he kept his familiarity with the Lincolnshire variety of English, and delighted to read aloud his verses written in that racy and resonant dialect, which is now, unfortunately, rapidly disappearing in the dull march of improvement.

Turning from these *genre*-pieces, we find two of his most powerful ballads, one intensely tragic, the other irresistibly pathetic, based upon incidents related in contemporary periodicals. In a penny magazine, called *Old Brighton,*

* *Memories of the Tennysons,* by H. D. Rawnsley. MacLehose, Glasgow, 1900, pp. 113 *ff.*

he read a story of a young man named Rooke who was hanged in chains for robbing the mail, near the close of the eighteenth century. "When the elements had caused the clothes and flesh to decay, his aged mother, night after night, in all weathers, and the more tempestuous the weather the more frequent the visits, made a sacred pilgrimage to the lonely spot on the Downs, and it was noticed that on her return she always brought something away with her in her apron. Upon being watched, it was discovered that the bones of the hanging man were the objects of her search, and as the wind and rain scattered them on the ground she conveyed them to her home. There she kept them, and, when the gibbet was stripped of its horrid burden, in the dead silence of the night, she interred them in the hallowed enclosure of Old Shoreham Churchyard." This is the tale. Imagine what Byron would have made of it; or Shelley, if we may judge by the gruesome details of the second part of "The Sensitive Plant." But Tennyson goes straight to the heart of the passion of motherhood, surviving shame and sorrow, conquering fear and weakness in that withered mother's breast. She tells her story in a dramatic lyric, a naked song of tragedy, a solitary, trembling war-cry of

indomitable love. Against this second Rizpah, greater in her heroism than even the Hebrew mother whose deeds are told in the Book of Samuel, all the forces of law and church and society are arrayed. But she will not be balked of her human rights. She will hope that somewhere there is mercy for her boy. She will gather his bones from shame and lay them to rest in consecrated ground.

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone of my bone was left—
I stole them all from the lawyers—and you, will you call it a theft?
My baby, the bones that had suck'd me, the bones that had laugh'd and had cried,—
Theirs? O no! They are mine—not theirs—they had moved in my side.

"In the Children's Hospital" is a poem as tender as "Rizpah" is passionate. The story was told to Tennyson by Miss Mary Gladstone. An outline of it was printed in a parochial magazine under the title "Alice's Christmas Day." The theme is the faith and courage of a child in the presence of pain and death. That the poet at seventy years of age should be able to enter so simply, so sincerely, so profoundly into the sweet secret of a suffering child's heart, is a marvellous thing. After all, there must be something moral and spiritual in true poetic

genius. It is not mere intellectual power. It is temperament, it is sympathy, it is that power to put oneself in another's place, which lies so close to the root of the Golden Rule.

IV

TENNYSON'S REVISION OF HIS TEXT

Vos, o
Pompilius sanguis, carmen reprehendite, quod non
Multa dies et multa litura coërcuit, atque
Perfectum decies non castigavit ad unguem.

HORACE: *De Arte Poetica*, 291–294.

The changes which a poet makes, from time to time, in the text of his poems may be taken in part as a measure of his power of self-criticism, and in part as a record of the growth of his mind. It is true, of course, that a man may prefer to put his new ideas altogether into new poems and leave the old ones untouched; true also that the creative impulse may be so much stronger than the critical as to make him impatient of the *limæ labor et mora*. This was the case with Robert Browning. There was a time when he made a point of turning out a poem every day. When reproached for his indifference to form, he said that 'the world must take him as it found him.'

But Tennyson was a constant, careful corrector of his own verse. He held that "an artist should get his workmanship as good as he can, and make his work as perfect as possible. A small vessel, built on fine lines, is likely to float further down the stream of time than a big raft." He was keenly sensitive to the subtle effects of rhythm, the associations of words, the beauty of form. The deepening of thought and feeling which came to him with the experience of life did not make him indifferent to the technics of his craft as a poet. Indeed it seemed to intensify his desire for perfection. The more he had to say the more carefully he wished to say it.

The first and most important revision of his work began in the period of his greatest spiritual and intellectual growth, immediately after the death of his friend Hallam. The results of it were seen in the early poems, republished in the two volumes of 1842. From this time forward there were many changes in the successive editions of his poems. *The Princess*, published in 1847, was slightly altered in 1848, thoroughly revised in 1850 (when the intercalary songs were added), and considerably enlarged in 1851. The "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington," printed as a pam-

phlet in 1852, was immediately revised in 1853, and again much altered when it appeared in the same volume with *Maud* in 1855. As late as August 1892, I heard Tennyson questioning whether the line describing the cross of St. Paul's—

That shines over *city and river*—

should be changed to read,

That shines upon *city and river.*

There were general revisions in 1872 (The Library Edition), in 1874 (The Cabinet Edition), in 1884 (The Globe Edition), in 1886 (A New Library Edition, in ten volumes), in 1889, and in 1891. The complete single-volume edition, "with last alterations," was published in 1894.

In Memoriam received less revision after its first publication than any other of Tennyson's larger poems;* probably because it had been so frequently worked over in manuscript. Sixteen years passed between its inception and its appearance in print.

I propose to examine some of Tennyson's changes in his text in order that we may do what none of the critics have yet done,—get a

* Joseph Jacobs, *Tennyson, and In Memoriam,* notes sixty-two verbal changes. Two sections (xxxix, lix) have been added to the poem.

clear idea of their general character and the particular reasons why he made them. These changes may be classified under five heads, descriptive of the different reasons for revision.

1. *For simplicity and naturalness.*—There was a tincture of archaism in the early diction of Tennyson, an occasional use of far-fetched words, an unfamiliar way of spelling, a general flavour of conscious exquisiteness, which seemed to his maturer judgment to savour of affectation. These blemishes, due to the predominance of the æsthetic impulse, he was careful to remove.

At first, he tells us, he had "an absurd antipathy" to the use of the hyphen; and in 1830 and 1832 he wrote, in "Mariana," *flowerplots, casementcurtain, marishmosses, silvergreen;* and in "The Palace of Art," *pleasurehouse, sunnywarm, torrentbow, clearwalled.* In 1842 the despised hyphen was restored to its place, and the compound words were spelled according to common usage. He discarded also his early fashion of accenting the *ed* in the past participle,—*wreathèd, blenchèd, gleanèd,* etc.

Archaic elisions, like "throne o' the massive ore" in "Recollections of the Arabian Nights" (*l.* 146), and "up an' away" in "Mariana" (*l.* 50), and "whither away wi' the singing sail" in "The Sea-Fairies," disappeared.

A purified and chastened taste made him prefer, in the "Ode to Memory,"

With plaited alleys of the trailing rose— [1842]

to

With pleachèd alleys of the trailing rose. [1830]

In "The Lady of Shalott" he left out

A pearlgarland winds her head:
She leaneth on a velvet bed,
Full royally apparellèd.

In "Mariana" he substituted

The day
Was sloping toward his western bower, [1842]

for

The day
Downsloped was westering in his bower. [1830]

The general result of such alterations as these was to make the poems more simple and straightforward. In the same way we feel that there is great gain in the omission of the stanzas about a balloon which were originally prefixed to "A Dream of Fair Women," and of the elaborate architectural and decorative details which overloaded the first version of "The Palace of Art," and in the compression of the last strophe of "The Lotos-Eaters," with its curious pictures of "the tuskèd seahorse wallowing in a stripe

of grassgreen calm," and "the monstrous narwhale swallowing his own foamfountains in the sea." We can well spare these marine prodigies for the sake of such a line as

Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge was seething free. [1842]

2. *For melody and smoothness.*—It was a constant wish of Tennyson to make his verse easy to read, as musical as possible, except when the sense required a rough or broken rhythm. He had a strong aversion to the hissing sound of the letter *s* when it comes at the end of a word and at the beginning of the next word. He was always trying to get rid of this,—"kicking the geese out of the boat," as he called it,—and he thought that he had succeeded. (*Memoir*, II, p. 14.) But this, of course, was a "flattering unction." It is not difficult to find instances of the double sibilant remaining in his verse: for example, in "A Dream of Fair Women" (*l.* 241):—

She lock'd her lips: she left me where I stood,

and "Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere" (*l.* 23):—

She seem'd a part of joyous Spring.

But for the most part he was careful to remove it, as in the following cases.

"The Lady of Shalott" (*l.* 156):—

A pale, pale corpse she floated by. [1833]

A gleaming shape she floated by. [1842]

"Mariana in the South" (*ll.* 9–10):—

Down in the dry salt-marshes stood
That house darklatticed. [Omitted, 1842]

"Locksley Hall" (*l.* 182):—

Let the peoples spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change. [1842]

Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change. [1845]

Alterations were made in order to get rid of unpleasant assonance in blank verse, as in "Œnone" (*l.* 19):—

She, leaning on a vine-entwinèd stone. [1833]

She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine. [1842]

Disagreeable alliterations were removed, as in "Mariana" (*l.* 43):—

For leagues no other tree did dark. [1830]

For leagues no other tree did mark. [1842]

"Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington" (*l.* 5):—

When laurel-garlanded leaders fall. [1852]

Mourning when their leaders fall. [1855]

Imperfect rhymes were corrected, as in "Mariana in the South" (*l.* 85):—

One dry cicala's summer song
At night filled all the gallery,
Backward the latticeblind she flung
And leaned upon the balcony. [1833]

At eve a dry cicala sung,
There came a sound as of the sea,
Backward the lattice-blind she flung,
And lean'd upon the balcony. [1842]

Incongruous and harsh expressions were removed, as in "The Poet" (*l.* 45):—

And in the bordure of her robe was writ
WISDOM, *a name to shake*
Hoar anarchies, as with a thunderfit. [1830]

And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame
WISDOM, *a name to shake*
All evil dreams of power—a sacred name. [1842]

Two very delicate and perfect examples of the same kind of improvement are found in the revision of "Claribel" (*l.* 11):—

At noon the bee low-hummeth. [1830]

At noon the wild bee hummeth. [1842]

And (*l.* 17):—

The fledgling throstle lispeth. [1830]

The callow throstle lispeth. [1842]

Some of the alterations in the Wellington Ode are very happy. Line 79 originally read,

And ever-ringing avenues of song.

How much more musical is the present version:—

And ever-echoing avenues of song!

In line 133, "world's earthquake" was changed to "world-earthquake." Line 267,—

Hush, the Dead March sounds *in the people's ears,*— [1853]

was wonderfully deepened in 1855, when it was altered to

Hush, the Dead March wails *in the people's ears.*

3. *For clearness of thought.*—The most familiar instance of this kind of revision is in "A Dream of Fair Women." In 1833 the stanza describing the sacrifice of Iphigenia ended with the lines

One drew a sharp knife thro' my tender throat
Slowly,—and nothing more.

A critic very properly inquired "what more she would have." The lines were changed to

The bright death quiver'd at the victim's throat;
Touch'd; and I knew no more.

A few more illustrations will suffice to show how careful he was to make his meaning clear.

"Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington" (*l.* 157):—

Of most unbounded reverence and regret. [1852]

But it is hard to see how anything can be more or less unbounded; so the line was changed:—

Of boundless reverence and regret. [1853]

Of boundless love and reverence and regret. [1855]

"The Marriage of Geraint" (*l.* 70):—

They sleeping each by other. [1859]

They sleeping each by either. [1874]

"Lancelot and Elaine" (*l.* 45):—

And one of these, the king, *had on a crown.* [1859]

And he that once was king *had on a crown.* [1874]

Line 168:—

Thither he made, and wound *the gateway horn.* [1859]

Thither he made, and blew *the gateway horn.* [1874]

Line 1147:—

Steer'd *by the dumb, went upward with the flood.* [1859]

Oar'd *by the dumb, went upward with the flood.* [1874]

"Guinevere" (*l.* 470):—

To honour his own word as if his God's:

this line was not in the 1859 version. It enhances the solemnity of the oath of initiation into the Round Table.

"The Passing of Arthur" (*ll.* 462–469):—

Thereat once more he moved about, and clomb
Ev'n to the highest he could climb, and saw,
Straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand,
Or thought he saw, the speck that bare the King,
Down that long water opening on the deep
Somewhere far off, pass on and on, and go
From less to less and vanish into light.
And the new sun rose bringing the new year.

These lines, with others, were added to "Morte d'Arthur," the original form of this idyl, in order to bring out the distant gleam of hope which is thrown upon the close of the epic by the vision of Arthur's immortality and the prophecy of his return.

4. *For truth in the description of nature.*—The alterations made for this reason are very many. I give a few examples.

"The Lotos-Eaters" (*l.* 7):—

Above the valley burned the golden *moon.* [1833]

But in the afternoon (*l.* 3) the moon is of palest silver; so the line was revised thus:—

Full-faced above the valley stood the moon. [1842]

Line 16 originally read,

Three thundercloven thrones of oldest snow. [1833]

But, in the first place, it is the lightning, not the thunder, that cleaves the mountains; and,

in the second place, a snow-peak, if struck by lightning, would not remain "cloven" very long, but would soon be covered with snow again. For these reasons, quite as much as for the sake of preserving the quiet and dreamy tone of Lotos-land, Tennyson changed the line to

Three silent pinnacles of aged snow. [1842]

In "Locksley Hall" (*l.* 3), the first reading was

'T is the place, and round the gables, *as of old, the curlews call.* [1842]

But the curlews do not fly close to the roofs of houses, as the swallows do; so the line was changed to

'T is the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call. [1845]

"Mariana" (*ll.* 3–4):—

The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the peach *to the* gardenwall. [1830]

This was not quite characteristic of a Lincolnshire garden; so it was altered, in 1863 and 1872, to the present form:—

That held the pear *to the* gable-wall.

"The Poet's Song" (*l.* 9):—

The swallow stopped as he hunted the bee. [1842]

But swallows do not hunt bees; so the line was changed to

The swallow stopt as he hunted the fly. [1884]

"Lancelot and Elaine" (*ll.* 652–653):—

No surer than our falcon yesterday,
Who lost the hern we slipt him *at.* [1859]

But the female falcon, being larger and fiercer, is the one usually employed in the chase; so *him* was changed to *her*.

There is a very interesting addition to *In Memoriam*, which bears witness to Tennyson's scrupulous desire to be truthful in natural description. Section ii is addressed to an old Yew-tree in the graveyard, and contains this stanza:—

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,
Who changest not in any gale,
Nor branding summer suns avail
To touch thy thousand years of gloom.

But, as a matter of fact, the yew has its season of bloom; and so in Section xxxix, added in 1871, we find these lines:—

To thee too comes the golden hour
When flower is feeling after flower;
But Sorrow,—fixt upon the dead,
And darkening the dark graves of men,—
What whisper'd from her lying *lips?*
Thy gloom is *kindled at the tips,*
And passes into gloom again.

5. *For deeper meaning and human interest.*— In this respect the revision of "The Palace of Art" is most important. The stanzas added in the later editions of this poem have the effect of intensifying its significance, making the sin of self-centred isolation stand out sharply (*ll.* 197–204), displaying the scornful contempt of the proud soul for common humanity (*ll.* 145–160), and throwing over the picture the Pharisee's robe of moral self-complacency (*ll.* 205–208). The introduction in 1833 began as follows:—

> *I send you, friend, a sort of allegory,*
> *(You are an artist and will understand*
> *Its many lesser meanings.)*

But in 1842 the lines read

> *I send you here a sort of allegory,*
> *(For you will understand it.)*

The poet no longer addresses his work to an artist: he speaks more broadly to man as man. For the same reason he omits a great many of the purely decorative stanzas, and concentrates the attention on the spiritual drama.

The addition of the Conclusion to "The May Queen" (1842) is another instance of Tennyson's enrichment of his work with warmer human interest. In the first two parts there is

nothing quite so intimate in knowledge of the heart as the lines

O look! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in a glow;
He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I know.

There is nothing quite so true to the simplicity of childlike faith as the closing verses:—

To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your breast—
And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

The sixth strophe of the Choric Song in "The Lotos-Eaters," beginning

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears,—

was added in 1842.

In the "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington," lines 266–270 were added after the first edition:—

On God and Godlike men we build our trust.
Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's ears:
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears:
The black earth yawns: the mortal disappears;
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

This passage brings a deep note of natural emotion into the poem. The physical effect of the

actual interment, the sight of the yawning grave, the rattle of the handful of earth thrown upon the coffin, are vividly expressed.

A noteworthy change for the sake of expressing a deeper human feeling occurs in "The Lady of Shalott." The original form of the last stanza was merely picturesque: it described the wonder and perplexity of "the wellfed wits at Camelot" when they looked upon the dead maiden in her funeral barge and read the parchment on her breast:—

> *"The web was woven curiously,*
> *The charm is broken utterly,*
> *Draw near and fear not—this is I,*
> *The Lady of Shalott."* [1833]

But the revised version makes them "cross themselves for fear," and brings the knight for secret love of whom the maiden died to look upon her face:—

> *But Lancelot mused a little space:*
> *He said, 'She has a lovely face;*
> *God in his mercy lend her grace,*
> *The Lady of Shalott.'*

The addition of the songs to *The Princess* (1850) must be regarded as evidence of a desire to deepen the meaning of the story. Tennyson said distinctly that he wished to make people

see that the child was the heroine of the poem. The songs are a great help in this direction. In the *Idylls of the King* Tennyson took pains, as he went on with the series, to eliminate all traces of the old tradition which made Modred the son of King Arthur and his half-sister Bellicent, thus sweeping away the taint of incest from the story, and revealing the catastrophe as the result of the unlawful love of Lancelot and Guinevere. He introduced many allegorical details into the later Idylls. And he endeavoured to enhance the epic dignity and significance of the series by inserting the closing passages of "The Coming of Arthur" and "The Passing of Arthur," which present clearly the idea of a great kingdom rising under Arthur's leadership and falling into ruin with his defeat.

A general study of the changes which Tennyson made in the text of his poems will show, beyond a doubt, not only that he was sensitive to the imperfections in his work and ready to profit, at least to a certain extent, by the suggestions of critics; but also that his skill as an artist was refined by use, and that his thoughts of life and his sympathies with mankind deepened and broadened with advancing years. Thus there was a compensation for the

loss of something of the delicate, inimitable freshness, the novel and enchanting charm, which breathed from the lyrics of his youth.

V

THE QUALITIES OF TENNYSON'S POETRY

"His music was the south-wind's sigh,
His lamp, the maiden's downcast eye,
And ever the spell of beauty came
And turned the drowsy world to flame.
By lake and stream and gleaming hall
And modest copse and the forest tall,
Where'er he went, the magic guide
Kept its place by the poet's side.
Saïd melted the days like cups of pearl,
Served high and low, the lord and the churl,
Loved harebells nodding on a rock,
A cabin hung with curling smoke,
Ring of axe or hum of wheel
Or gleam which use can paint on steel,
And huts and tents; nor loved he less
Stately lords in palaces,
Princely women hard to please,
Fenced by form and ceremony,
Decked by rites and courtly dress
And etiquette of gentilesse.

. . . . .

He came to the green ocean's brim
And saw the wheeling sea-birds skim,
Summer and winter, o'er the wave
Like creatures of a skiey mould

Impassible to heat or cold.
He stood before the tumbling main
With joy too tense for sober brain;
. . . . . .
And he, the bard, a crystal soul
Sphered and concentric with the whole."

EMERSON: *The Poetic Gift.*

If an unpublished poem by Tennyson—say an idyl of chivalry, a classical character-piece, a modern dramatic lyric, or even a little song —were discovered, and given out without his name, it would be easy, provided it belonged to his best work, to recognise it as his. But it is by no means easy to define just what it is that makes his poetry recognisable. It is not the predominance of a single trait or characteristic. If that were the case, it would be a simple matter to put one's finger upon the hall-mark. It is not a fixed and exaggerated mannerism. That is the sign of the Tennysonians, rather than of their master. His style varies from the luxuriance of "A Dream of Fair Women" to the simplicity of "The Oak," from the lightness of "The Brook" to the stateliness of "Guinevere." There is as much difference of manner between "The Gardener's Daughter" and "Ulysses," as there is between Wordsworth's "Solitary Reaper" and his "Dion."

The most remarkable thing about Tennyson's poetry as a whole is that it expresses so fully and so variously the qualities of a many-sided and well-balanced nature. But when we look at the poems separately we see that, in almost every case, the quality which is most closely related to the subject of the poem plays the leading part in giving it colour and form. There is a singular fitness, a harmonious charm in his work, not unlike that which distinguishes the painting of Titian. It is not, indeed, altogether spontaneous and unstudied. It has the effect of choice, of fine selection. But it is inevitable enough in its way. The choice being made, it would be hard to better it. The words are the right words, and each stands in its right place.

The one thing that cannot justly be said of it, it seems to me, is precisely what Tennyson says in a certain place:—

I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing.

That often seems true of Burns and Shelley, and sometimes of Keats. But it is not true of Spenser, or Milton, or Gray, or Tennyson. They do not pour forth their song

"*In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.*"

I shall endeavour in the remaining pages of this chapter to describe and illustrate some of the qualities which are found in Tennyson's poetry.

1. His diction is lucid, suggestive, melodious. He avoids, for the most part, harsh and strident words, intricate constructions, strange rhymes, startling contrasts. He chooses expressions which have a natural rhythm, an easy flow, a clear meaning. He has a rare mastery of metrical resources. Many of his lyrics seem to be composed to a musical cadence which his inward ear has caught in some happy phrase.

He prefers to use those metrical forms which are free and fluent, and in which there is room for subtle modulations and changes. In the stricter modes of verse he is less happy. The sonnet, the Spenserian stanza, the heroic couplet, the swift couplet (octosyllabic),—these he seldom uses, and little of his best work is done in these forms. Even in four-stress iambic triplets, the metre in which "Two Voices" is written, he seems constrained and awkward. He is at his best in the long swinging lines of "Locksley Hall" (eight-stress trochaic couplets); or in a free blank verse (five-stress iambic), which admits all the Miltonic liberty of shifted and hovering accents, grace-notes, omitted

stresses, and the like; or in mixed measures like "The Revenge" and the Wellington Ode, where the rhythm is now iambic and now trochaic; or in metres which he invented, like "The Daisy," or revived, like "In Memoriam"; or in little songs like "Break, break, break" and "The Bugle-Song," where the melody is as unmistakable and as indefinable as the feeling.

He said, "Englishmen *will* spoil English verses by scanning them when they are reading, and they confound accent with quantity." "In a blank verse you can have from three up to eight beats; but, if you vary the beats unusually, your ordinary newspaper critic sets up a howl." (*Memoir*, II, 12, 14.) He liked the "run-on" from line to line, the overflow from stanza to stanza. Much of his verse is impossible to analyse if you insist on looking for regular feet according to the classic models; but if you read it according to the principle which Coleridge explained in the preface to "Christabel," by "counting the accents, not the syllables," you will find that it falls into a natural rhythm. It seems as if his own way of reading it aloud in a sort of chant were almost inevitable.

This close relation of his verse to music may

be felt in *Maud*, and in his perfect little lyrics like the autumnal "Song," "The Throstle," "Tears, idle tears," "Sweet and low," and "Far—far—away." Here also we see the power of suggestiveness, the atmospheric effect, in his diction. Every word is in harmony with the central emotion of the song, vague, delicate, intimate, mingled of sweetness and sadness.

The most beautiful illustration of this is "Crossing the Bar." Notice how the metre, in each stanza, rises to the long third line, and sinks away again in the shorter fourth line. The poem is in two parts; the third stanza corresponding, in every line, to the first; the fourth stanza, to the second. In each division of the song there is first, a clear, solemn, tranquil note,—a reminder that the day is over and it is time to depart. The accent hovers over the words "sunset" and "twilight," and falls distinctly on "star" and "bell." Then come two thoughts of sadness, the "moaning of the bar," the "sadness of farewell," from which the voyager prays to be delivered. The answer follows in the two pictures of peace and joy,—the full, calm tide bearing him homeward,—the vision of the unseen Pilot who has guided and will guide him to the end of his voyage. Every image in the poem is large

and serene. Every word is simple, clear, harmonious.

The movement of a very different kind of music—martial, sonorous, thrilling—may be heard in "The Charge of the Heavy Brigade."

Up the hill, up the hill, up the hill,
Follow'd the Heavy Brigade,—

reproduces with extraordinary force the breathless, toilsome, thundering assault.

His verse often seems to adapt itself to his meaning with an almost magical effect. Thus, in the Wellington Ode, when the spirit of Nelson welcomes the great warrior to his tomb in St. Paul's,—

Who is he that cometh, like an honour'd guest,
With banner and with music, with soldier and with priest,
With a nation weeping, and breaking on my rest?—

we can almost hear the funeral march and see the vast, sorrowful procession. In "Locksley Hall,"—

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in music out of sight,—

what value there is in the word "trembling" and in the slight secondary pause that follows it; how the primary pause in the preceding

bar, dividing it, emphasises the word "Self." In *The Princess* there is a line describing one of the curious Chinese ornaments in which a series of openwork balls are carved one inside of another:—

Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere.

One can almost see the balls turning and glistening. In the poem "To Virgil" there is a verse praising the great Mantuan's lordship over language:—

All the charm of all the Muses often flowering in a lonely word.

This illustrates the very quality that it describes. "Flowering" is the magical word.

But it is not so often the "lonely word" that is wonderful in Tennyson, as it is the company of words which blossom together in colour-harmony, the air of lucid beauty that envelops the many features of a landscape and blends them in a perfect picture. This is his peculiar charm; and it is illustrated in many passages, but nowhere better than in *In Memoriam*, lxxxvi,—

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
Of evening over brake and bloom
And meadow,—

and in the perfect description of autumn's sad tranquillity, Section xi,—

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

2. Tennyson's closeness of observation, fidelity of description, and felicity of expression in nature-poetry have often been praised. In spite of his near-sightedness he saw things with great clearness and accuracy. All his senses seem to have been alert and true. In this respect he was better fitted to be an observer than Wordsworth, in whom the colour-sense was not especially vivid, and whose poetry shows little or no evidence of the sense of fragrance, although his ears caught sounds with wonderful fineness and his eyes were quick to note forms and movements. Bayard Taylor once took a walk with Tennyson in the Isle of Wight, and afterwards wrote: "During the conversation with which we beguiled the way I was struck with the variety of his knowledge. Not a little flower on the downs, which the sheep had spared, escaped his notice, and the geology of the coast, both terrestrial and submarine, was perfectly familiar to him. I remembered the remark I once heard from the

lips of a distinguished English author [Thackeray], that 'Tennyson was the wisest man he knew,' and could well believe that he was sincere in making it."

But Tennyson's relation to nature differed from Wordsworth's in another respect than that which has been mentioned, and one in which the advantage lies with the earlier poet. Wordsworth had a personal intimacy with nature, a confiding and rejoicing faith in her unity, her life, and her deep beneficence, which made him able to say:—

"This prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her: 't is her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings."

There is no utterance like this in Tennyson's poetry. He had not a profound and permanent sense of that "something far more deeply inter-

fused" in nature which gives her a consoling, liberating, nourishing power,—a maternal power. In "Enoch Arden" the solitude of nature, even in her richest beauty, is terrible. In "Locksley Hall" the disappointed lover calls not on Mother-Nature, but on his "Mother-Age," the age of progress, of advancing knowledge, to comfort and help him. In "Maud" the unhappy hero says, not that he will turn to nature, but that he will 'bury himself in his books.' Whether it was because Tennyson saw the harsher, sterner aspects of nature more clearly than Wordsworth did, or because he had more scientific knowledge, or because he was less simple and serene, it remains true that he did not have that steady and glad confidence in her vital relation to the spirit of man, that overpowering joy in surrender to her purifying and moulding influence, which Wordsworth expressed in the "Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey," in 1798, and in "Devotional Incitements" in 1832, and in many other poems written between these dates. Yet it must be observed that Wordsworth himself, in later life, felt some abatement of his unquestioning and all-sufficing faith in nature, or at least admitted the need of something beside her ministry to satisfy all the wants of the hu-

man spirit. For in "An Evening Voluntary" (1834), he writes:—

"By grace divine,
Not otherwise, O Nature! are we thine."

Mr. Stopford Brooke has observed that the poetry of both Scott and Byron contains many utterances of delight in the wild and solitary aspects of nature, and that we find little or nothing of this kind in Tennyson. From this Mr. Brooke infers that he had less real love of nature for her own sake than the two poets named. The inference is not well grounded.

Both Scott and Byron were very dependent upon social pleasure for their enjoyment of life,—much more so than Tennyson. Any one who will read Byron's letters may judge how far his professed passion for the solitudes of the ocean and the Alps was sincere, and how far it was a pose. Indeed, in one place, if I mistake not, he maintains the theory that it is the presence of man's work—the ship on the ocean, the city among the hills—that lends the chief charm to nature.

Tennyson was one of the few great poets who have proved their love of nature by living happily in the country. From boyhood up he was well content to spend long, lonely days by the seashore, in the woods, on the downs. It

is true that as a rule his temperament found more joy in rich landscapes and gardens, than in the wild, the savage, the desolate. But no man who was not a true lover of nature for her own sake could have written the "Ode to Memory," or this stanza from "Early Spring":—

The woods with living airs
How softly fann'd,
Light airs from where the deep,
All down the sand,
Is breathing in his sleep,
Heard by the land.

Nor is there any lack of feeling for the sublime in such a poem as "The Voice and the Peak":—

The voice and the Peak
Far over summit and lawn,
The lone glow and long roar
Green-rushing from the rosy thrones of dawn!

It would be easy to fill many pages with illustrations of Tennyson's extraordinary vividness of perception and truthfulness of description in regard to nature. He excels, first of all, in delicate pre-Raphaelite work,—the painting of the flowers in the meadow, the buds on the trees, the movements of waves and streams, the birds at rest and on the wing. Looking at the water, he sees the

Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.

[*The Lady of Shalott.*]

With a single touch he gives the aspect of the mill stream:—

The sleepy pool above the dam,
The pool beneath it never still.

[*The Miller's Daughter.*]

He shows us

a shoal
Of darting fish, that on a summer morn
Adown the crystal dykes at Camelot
Come slipping o'er their shadows on the sand,
But if a man who stands upon the brink
But lift a shining hand against the sun,
There is not left the twinkle of a fin
Betwixt the cressy islets white in flower.

[*Geraint and Enid.*]

He makes us see

the waterfall
Which ever sounds and shines,
A pillar of white light upon the wall
Of purple cliffs, aloof descried. [*Ode to Memory.*]

He makes us hear, through the nearer voice of the stream,

The drumming thunder of the huger fall
At distance, [*Geraint and Enid.*]

or

The scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by the wave.

[*Maud.*]

Does he speak of trees? He knows the difference between the poplars'

noise of falling showers, [*Elaine.*]

and

The dry-tongued laurels' pattering talk, [*Maud.*]

and the voice of the cedar,

sighing for Lebanon,
In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious East.
[*Maud.*]

He sees how

A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime,
[*Maud.*]

and how the chestnut-buds begin

To spread into the perfect fan
Above the teeming ground.
[*Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere.*]

He has watched the hunting-dog in its restless sleep,—

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams,—
[*Locksley Hall.*]

and noted how the lonely heron, at sundown,

forgets his melancholy,
Lets down his other leg, and stretching dreams
Of goodly supper in the distant pool.
[*Gareth and Lynette.*]

There is a line in "In Memoriam,"—

Flits by the sea-blue bird of March,—

which Tennyson meant to describe the kingfisher. A friend criticised it and said that some other bird must have been intended, because "the kingfisher shoots by, flashes by, but never flits." But, in fact, to *flit*, which means "to move lightly and swiftly," is precisely the word for the motion of this bird, as it darts along the stream with even wing-strokes, shifting its place from one post to another. Tennyson gives both the colour and the flight of the kingfisher with absolute precision.

But it is not only in this pre-Raphaelite work that his extraordinary skill is shown. He has also the power of rendering vague, wide landscapes, under the menacing shadow of a coming storm, in the calm of an autumnal morning, or in the golden light of sunset. Almost always such landscapes are coloured by the prevailing emotion or sentiment of the poem. Tennyson holds with Coleridge that much of what we see in nature is the reflection of our own life, our inmost feelings:—

"*Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud.*"

In "The Gardener's Daughter," Tennyson describes the wedding-garment:—

All the land in flowery squares,
Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,
Smelt of the coming summer, as one large cloud

Drew downward; but all else of heaven was pure
Up to the sun, and May from verge to verge,
And May with me from head to heel.

But in "Guinevere," it is the shroud:—

For all abroad,
Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,
The white mist, like a face-cloth to the face,
Clung to the dead earth, and the land was still.

3. The wide range of human sympathy in Tennyson's work is most remarkable. The symbolic poem, "Merlin and the Gleam," describes his poetic life. Following the Gleam,—"the higher poetic imagination,"—he passes from fairy-land into the real world and interprets the characters and conflicts, the labours and longings, of all sorts and conditions of men. He speaks for childhood in "The May Queen" and "In the Children's Hospital"; for motherhood in "Rizpah" and "Demeter"; for seamen in "The Revenge" and "Columbus" and "The Voyage of Maeldune" and "Enoch Arden"; for soldiers in "The Charge of the Light Brigade" and "The Charge of the Heavy Brigade" and "The Defence of Lucknow"; for philosophers in "Lucretius" and "The Ancient Sage"; for the half-crazed ascetic in "St. Simeon Stylites," and for the fearless reformer in "Sir John Oldcastle"; for the painter in "Romney's

Remorse"; for the rustic in the "Northern Farmer"; for religious enthusiasm, active, in "Sir Galahad," and passive, in "St. Agnes' Eve"; for peasant life in "Dora," and for princely life in "The Day Dream"; for lovers of different types in "Maud," and "Locksley Hall," and "Aylmer's Field," and "Love and Duty," and "Happy," and "Œnone," and "The Lover's Tale," and "Lady Clare."

He is not as deep, as inward, as searching as Wordsworth is in some of his peasant portraits. There is a revealing touch in "Michael," in "Margaret," in "Resolution and Independence," to which Tennyson rarely, if ever, attains. Nor is there as much individuality and intensity in his pictures as we find in the best of Browning's *dramatis personæ*, like "Saul" and "Rabbi Ben Ezra," and "Andrea del Sarto," and "The Flight of the Duchess." Tennyson brings out in his characters that which is most natural and normal. He does not delight, as Browning does, in discovering the strange, the eccentric. Nor has he Browning's extraordinary acquaintance with the technical details of different arts and trades, and with the singular features of certain epochs of history, like the Renaissance.

But, on the other hand, if Tennyson has less

intellectual curiosity in his work, he has more emotional sympathy. His characters are conceived on broader lines; they are more human and typical. Even when he finds his subject in some classic myth, it is the human element that he brings out. This is the thing that moves him. He studies the scene, the period, carefully and closely in order to get the atmosphere of time and place. But these are subordinate. The main interest, for him, lies in the living person into whose place he puts himself and with whose voice he speaks. Thus in "Tithonus" he dwells on the loneliness of one who must "vary from the kindly race of men" since the gift of "cruel immortality" has been conferred upon him. In "Demeter and Persephone" the most beautiful passage is that in which the goddess-mother tells of her yearning for her lost child.

4. Tennyson's work is marked by frequent reference to the scientific discoveries and social movements of his age. Wordsworth's prophetic vision of the time "when the discoveries of the chemist, the botanist, or mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the poet's art as any upon which it can be employed," because these things and the relations under which they are contemplated will be so familiarised that we

shall see that they are "parts of our life as enjoying and suffering beings,"—this prediction of the advent of science, transfigured by poetry, as "a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man," was fulfilled, at least in part, in the poetry of Tennyson.

In "The Two Voices" Tennyson alludes to modern osteology:—

Before the little ducts began
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran
Their course, till thou wert also man.

In the twenty-first section of *In Memoriam* he probably alludes to the discovery of the satellite of Neptune:—

'When Science reaches forth her arms
To feel from world to world, and charms
Her secret from the latest moon.'

In the twenty-fourth section he speaks of sun-spots:—

The very source and fount of Day
Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.

In the thirty-fifth section he alludes to the process of denudation:—

The sound of streams that swift or slow
Draw down Æonian hills, and sow
The dust of continents to be.

The nebular hypothesis of Laplace and the theory of evolution are conceived and expressed with wonderful imaginative power in the one hundred and eighteenth section. In the fourth section a subtle fact of physical science is translated into an image of poetic beauty:—

> *Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,*
> *That grief hath* shaken *into frost!*

"Locksley Hall" is full of echoes of the scientific inventions and the social hopes of the mid-century. In "Locksley Hall, Sixty Years After" the old man speaks, with disenchanted spirit, of the failure of many of these hopes and the small value of many of these inventions, but he still holds to the vision of human progress guided by a divine, unseen Power:—

When the schemes and all the systems, Kingdoms and Republics fall,
Something kindlier, higher, holier,—all for each and each for all?

All the full-brain, half-brain races, led by Justice, Love, and Truth;
All the millions one at length with all the visions of my youth?

. . . . . .

Earth at last a warless world, a single race, a single tongue—
I have seen her far away—for is not Earth as yet so young?

Every tiger madness muzzled, every serpent passion kill'd,
Every grim ravine a garden, every blazing desert till'd,

Robed in universal harvest up to either pole she smiles,
Universal ocean softly washing all her warless Isles.

5. As in its form, so in its spirit, the poetry of Tennyson is marked by a constant and controlling sense of law and order. He conceives the universe under the sway of great laws, physical and moral, which are in themselves harmonious and beautiful, as well as universal. Disorder, discord, disaster, come from the violation of these laws. Beauty lies not in contrast but in concord. The noblest character is not that in which a single faculty or passion is raised to the highest pitch, but that in which the balance of the powers is kept, and the life unfolds itself in a well-rounded fulness:—

That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,
But vaster.

Such is the character which is drawn from memory in the description of Arthur Hallam in *In Memoriam;* and from imagination in the picture of King Arthur in the *Idylls.*

Tennyson belongs in the opposite camp from the poets of revolt. To him such a vision of the swift emancipation of society as Shelley

gives in "Prometheus Unbound," or "The Revolt of Islam," was not merely impossible; it was wildly absurd, a dangerous dream. His faith in the advance of mankind rested on two bases; first, his intuitive belief in the benevolence of the general order of the universe:—

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill:—

and second, his practical confidence in the success—or at least in the immediate usefulness—of the efforts of men to make the world around them better little by little. Evolution, not revolution, was his watchword.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,

is his cry in the first "Locksley Hall"; and in the second he says,

Follow Light, and do the Right—for man can half-control his doom—
Till you see the deathless Angel seated in the vacant tomb.

In the patriotic poems we find that Tennyson's love of country is sane, sober, steadfast, thoughtful. He dislikes the "blind hysterics of the Celt," and fears the red "fool-fury of the Seine." He praises England as

A land of settled government,
A land of old and just renown,

Where freedom slowly broadens down
From precedent to precedent.

His favourite national heroes are of the Anglo-Saxon type, sturdy, resolute, self-contained, following the path of duty. He rejoices not only in the service which England has rendered to the cause of law-encircled liberty, but in the way in which she has rendered it:—

Whatever harmonies of law
The growing world assume,
Thy work is thine—The single note
From that deep chord which Hampden smote
Will vibrate to the doom.

[*England and America in* 1782.]

He praises the peaceful reformer as the chief benefactor of his country:—

Not he that breaks the dams, but he
That thro' the channels of the State
Convoys the people's wish, is great;
His name is pure, his fame is free.

[*Contributed to the Shakespearean Show-Book,* 1884.]

He is a republican at heart, holding that the Queen's throne must rest

Broad-based upon her people's will,

[*To the Queen.*]

and he does not hesitate to express his confidence in

our slowly-grown
And crown'd Republic's *crowning common-sense.*

[*Epilogue to Idylls of the King.*]

But he has no faith in the unguided and ungoverned mob. He calls Freedom

Thou loather of the lawless crown
As of the lawless crowd.

[*Freedom*, 1884.]

It has been said that his poetry shows no trace of sympathy with the struggles of the people to resist tyranny and defend their liberties with the sword. This is not true. In one of his earliest sonnets he speaks with enthusiasm of Poland's fight for freedom, and in one of his latest he hails the same spirit and the same effort in Montenegro. In "The Third of February, 1852," he expresses his indignation at the *coup d'état* by which Louis Napoleon destroyed the French Republic, and praises the revolutions which overthrew Charles I and James II. He dedicates a sonnet to Victor Hugo, the "stormy voice of France." With the utmost deliberation and distinctness he justifies the cause of the colonies in the American Revolution: once in "England and America in 1782," and again in the ode for the "Opening of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition," 1886.

It has been said that he has no sympathy with the modern idea of the patriotism of humanity,—that his love of his own country hides

from him the vision of universal liberty and brotherhood. This is not true. He speaks of it in many places,—in "Locksley Hall," in "Victor Hugo," in "The Making of Man,"—and in the "Ode sung at the Opening of the International Exhibition," 1861, he urges free commerce and peaceful coöperation among the nations:—

Till each man find his own in all men's good,
And all men work in noble brotherhood,
Breaking their mailed fleets and armed towers,
And ruling by obeying Nature's powers,
And gathering all the fruits of earth and crown'd
with all her flowers.

It may be, as the Rev. Stopford Brooke says in his book on Tennyson, that this view of things is less "poetic" than that which is presented by the poets of revolt, that it "lowers the note of beauty, of fire, of aspiration, of passion." But after all, it was Tennyson's real view and he could not well deny or conceal it. The important question is whether it is true and just. And that is the first question which a great poet asks. He does not lend himself to the proclamation of follies and falsehoods, however fiery, merely for the sake of being more "poetic."

In Tennyson's love poems, while there is

often an intensity of passion, there is also a singular purity of feeling, a sense of reverence for the mystery of love, and a profound loyalty to the laws which it is bound to obey in a harmonious and well-ordered world. True, he takes the romantic, rather than the classical, attitude towards love. It comes secretly, suddenly, by inexplicable ways. It is irresistible, absorbing, the strongest as well as the most precious thing in the world. But he does not therefore hold that it is a thing apart from the rest of life, exempt, uncontrollable, lawless. On the contrary, it should be, in its perfection, at once the inspiration and the consummation of all that is best in life. In love, truth and honour and fidelity and courage and unselfishness should come to flower.

There is none of the iridescence of decadent erotomania in Tennyson's love poetry. The fatal shame of that morbid and consuming fever of the flesh is touched in the description of the madness of Lucretius, in "Balin and Balan," and in "Merlin and Vivien"; but it is done in a way that reveals the essential hatefulness of lubricity.

There is no lack of warmth and bright colour in the poems which speak of true love; but it is the glow of health instead of the hectic flush

of disease; not the sickly hues that mask the surface of decay, but the livelier iris that the springtime brings to the neck of the burnished dove.

He does not fail to see the tragedies of love. There is the desperate ballad of "Oriana," the sombre story of "Aylmer's Field," the picture of the forsaken Mariana in her moated grange, the pathetic idyll of Elaine who died for love of Lancelot. But the tragic element in these poems comes from the thwarting of love by circumstance, not from anything shameful or lawless in the passion itself.

In "The Gardener's Daughter" the story of a pure and simple love is told with a clean rapture that seems to make earth and sky glow with new beauty, and with a reticence that speaks not of shallow feeling, but of reverent emotion, refusing to fling open

the doors that bar
The secret bridal chambers of the heart.

In *The Princess*, at the end, triumphant love rises to the height of prophecy, foretelling the harmony of manhood and womanhood in the world's great bridals:—

'Dear, but let us type them now
In our own lives, and this proud watchword rest
Of equal; seeing either sex alone

Is half itself, and in true marriage lies
Nor equal, nor unequal: each fulfils
Defect in each, and always thought in thought,
Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,
The single pure and perfect animal,
The two-cell'd heart beating, with one full stroke,
Life.'

There are two of Tennyson's poems in which the subject of love is treated in very different ways, but with an equally close and evident relation to the sense of harmony and law which pervades his poetry. In one of them, it seems to me, the treatment is wonderfully successful; the poet makes good his design. In the other, I think, he comes a little short of it and leaves us unsatisfied and questioning.

Maud is among the most purely impassioned presentations of a love-story since Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet.* It not only tells in music the growth of a deep, strong, absorbing love, victorious over obstacles, but it shows the redeeming, ennobling power of such a passion, which leads the selfish hero out of his bitterness and narrowness and makes him able at the last to consecrate himself to his country's service. The tragedy of the poem is wrought not by love, but by another passion, lawless, discordant, uncontrolled,—the passion of proud hatred

which brings about the quarrel with Maud's brother, the fatal duel, her death, the exile and madness of her lover. But the poem does not end in darkness, after all, for he awakes again to "the better mind," and the love whose earthly consummation his own folly has marred abides with him as the inspiration of a nobler life. The hero may be wrong in thinking that the Crimean War is to be a blessing to England and to the world. But he is surely right in saying,

It is better to fight for the good than to rail at the ill.

In the *Idylls of the King* there are two main threads of love running through the many-figured tapestry: Arthur's love for Guinevere, loyal, royal, but somewhat cold and ineffectual: Guinevere's love for Lancelot, disloyal and untrue, but warm and potent. It is the secret influence of this lawless passion, infecting the court, that breaks up the Round Table, and brings the kingdom to ruin and the King to his defeat. In "Guinevere" Tennyson departs from the story as it is told by Malory and introduces a scene entirely of his own invention: the last interview between Arthur, on his way to "that great battle in the west," and the fallen Queen, hiding in the convent at Almesbury. It

is a very noble scene; noble in its setting in the moon-swathed pallor of the dead winter night; noble in its austere splendour of high diction and slow-moving verse, intense with solemn passion, bare to the heart; noble in its conception of the King's god-like forgiveness and of Guinevere's remorse and agony of shame, too late to countervail the harm that she had done on earth, though not too late to win the heavenly pardon. All that Arthur says of the evil wrought by unlawful and reckless love is true:—

> *The children born of thee are sword and fire,*
> *Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws.*

All that he says of the crime that it would be to condone the Queen's sin, for the sake of prudence and peace, reseating her in her place of light,

> *The mockery of my people and their bane,*

is also true, though it seems at the moment a little too much like preaching. But there is one thing lacking,—one thing that is necessary to make the scene altogether convincing: some trace of human sympathy in Arthur's "vast pity," some consciousness of fault or failure on his part in not giving Guinevere all that her

nature needed to guard her from the temptations of a more vivid though a lower passion. Splendid as his words of pardon are, and piercingly pathetic as is that last farewell of love, still loyal though defrauded; yet he does not quite win us. He is more god-like than it becomes a man to be. He is too sure that he has never erred, too conscious that he is above weakness or reproach. We remember the lonely Lancelot in his desolate castle; we think of his courtesy, his devotion, his splendid courage, his winning tenderness, his ardour, the unwavering passion by force of which

> *His honour rooted in dishonour stood,*
> *And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.*

Was it wonder that Guinevere, seeing the King absorbed in affairs of state, remote, abstracted, inaccessible, yielded to this nearer and more intimate joy? Sin it was: shame it was: that Tennyson makes us see clearly. But how could it have been otherwise? Was not the breaking of the law the revenge that nature herself took for a need unsatisfied, a harmony uncompleted and overlooked? This is the question that remains unanswered at the close of the *Idylls of the King*. And therefore I think the poem unsatisfactory in its treatment of love.

But though Tennyson avoids this question, and lets Lancelot slip out of the poem at last without a word, disappearing like a shadow, he never falters in his allegiance to his main principle,—the supremacy of law and order. This indeed is the central theme of the epic: the right of soul to rule over sense and the ruin that comes when the relation is reversed. The poem ends tragically. But above the wreck of a great human design the poet sees the vision of a God who "fulfils Himself in many ways"; and after earth's confusions and defeats he sees the true-hearted King enthroned in the spiritual city and the repentant Queen passing

To where beyond these voices there is peace.

6. A religious spirit pervades and marks the poetry of Tennyson. His view of the world and of human life—his view even of the smallest flower that blooms in the world—is illumined through and through by his faith in the Divine presence and goodness and power. This faith was not always serene and untroubled. It was won after a hard conflict with doubt and despondency, the traces of which may be seen in such poems as "The Two Voices" and "The Vision of Sin." But the issue was never really in danger. He was not a doubter seeking to win a faith. He was a believer defending him-

self against misgivings, fighting to hold fast that which he felt to be essential to his life. The success of his struggle is recorded in *In Memoriam*, which rises through suffering and perplexity to a lofty and unshaken trust in

> *The truths that never can be proved,*
> *Until we close with all we loved*
> *And all we flow from, soul in soul.*

It is not difficult to trace in his religious poems of this period the influence of the theology of the Rev. F. D. Maurice, who was one of his closest friends. The truths which Maurice presented most frequently, such as the immanence of God in nature, man's filial relation to Him, the reality of human brotherhood, the final victory of Love; the difficulties which he recognised in connection with these truths, such as the disorders and conflicts in nature, the apparent reckless waste of life, the sins and miseries of mankind; and the way in which he met and overcame these difficulties, not by abstract reasoning, nor by a reference to authority, but by an appeal to the moral and spiritual necessities and intuitions of the human heart,—all these are presented in Tennyson's poetry.

In later life there seems to have been a recurrence of questionings, shown in such poems

as "Despair," "De Profundis," "The Ancient Sage," "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After," "Vastness," "By an Evolutionist." But this was not so much a conflict arising from within, as a protest against the tendencies of what he called "a terrible age of unfaith," an effort to maintain the rights of the spirit against scientific materialism. Later still the serene, triumphant mood of the proem to *In Memoriam* was repeated in "Crossing the Bar," "Silent Voices," "Faith," "The Death of the Duke of Clarence," and he reposed upon

that Love which is and was
My Father and my Brother and my God.

In spite of his declared unwillingness to formulate his creed, arising partly from his conviction that humility was the right intellectual attitude in the presence of the great mysteries, and partly from the feeling that men would not understand him if he tried to put his belief into definite forms, it is by no means impossible to discover in his poetry certain clear and vivid visions of religious truths from which his poetic life drew strength and beauty. Three of these truths stand out distinct and dominant.

The first is the real, personal, conscious life of God. "Take that away," said he, "and you take away the backbone of the Universe." Ten-

nyson is not a theological poet like Milton or Cowper, nor even like Wordsworth or Browning. But hardly anything that he has written could have been written as it is, but for his underlying faith that God lives, and knows, and loves. This faith is clearly expressed in "The Higher Pantheism." It is not really pantheism at all, for while the natural world is regarded as "the Vision of Him who reigns," it is also the sign and symbol that the human soul is distinct from Him. All things reveal Him, but man's sight and hearing are darkened so that he cannot understand the revelation. God is in all things: He is with all souls, but He is not to be identified with the human spirit, which has "power to feel 'I am I.'" Fellowship with Him is to be sought and found in prayer.

This confidence in the reality of prayer is expressed in many of Tennyson's deeper poems. We find it in "Enoch Arden," in "St. Agnes' Eve," in "The Palace of Art," in *In Memoriam*, in "The Two Voices," in the "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington," in "Doubt and Prayer," in "Lancelot and Elaine," in "Guinevere," in "Morte d'Arthur":—

Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of.

Tennyson's optimism was dependent upon his faith in a God to whom men can pray. It was not a matter of temperament, like Browning's optimism. Tennyson inherited from his father a strain of gloomy blood, a tendency to despondency. He escaped from it only by learning to trust in the Divine wisdom and love.

The second truth which stands out in the poetry of Tennyson is the freedom of the human will. This is a mystery:—

Our wills are ours we know not how.

It is also an indubitable reality:—

This main miracle, that thou art thou,
With power on thine own act and on the world.

[*De Profundis.*]

The existence of such liberty of action in created beings implies a self-limitation on the part of God, but it is essential to moral responsibility and vital communion with the Divine. If man is only a "magnetic mockery," a "cunning cast in clay," he has no real life of his own, nothing to give back to God. The joy of effort and the glory of virtue depend upon freedom. This is the meaning of Enid's Song, in "The Marriage of Geraint":—

For man is man and master of his fate.

This is the central thought of that strong little poem called "Will":—

O well for him whose will is strong!
He suffers, but he will not suffer long;
He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong.

This is the theme of the last lyric of *In Memoriam:*—

O living will that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock,
Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure.

The third truth which is vitally embodied in Tennyson's poems is the assurance of Life after Death. This he believed in most deeply and uttered most passionately. He felt that the present life would be poor and pitiful, almost worthless and unendurable, without the hope of Immortality. The rolling lines of "Vastness" are a long protest against the cold doctrine that death ends all. "Wages" is a swift utterance of the hope which inspires Virtue:—

Give her the wages of going on, and not to die.

The second "Locksley Hall," the Wellington Ode, "The May Queen," "Guinevere," "Enoch Arden," "The Deserted House," "The Poet's Song," "Happy," the lines on "The Death of

the Duke of Clarence," "Silent Voices,"—it is not possible to enumerate the poems in which the clear faith in a future life finds expression. *In Memoriam* is altogether filled and glorified with the passion of Immortality: not a vague and impersonal survival in other forms, but a continuance of individual life beyond the grave.

It is a vain and idle thing for men who are themselves indifferent to the spiritual aspects of life, or perhaps hostile and contemptuous toward a religious view of the universe, to declare that there is no place in poetry for such subjects, and to sneer at every poem in which they appear as "a disguised sermon." No doubt there are many alleged poems dealing with religion which deserve no better name: versified expositions of theological dogma: creeds in metre: moral admonitions tagged with rhyme; a weariness to the flesh. But so there are alleged poems which deal with the facts of the visible world and of human history in the same dreary, sapless manner: catalogues of miscellaneous trifles, records of unilluminating experiences, confused impressions of the insignificant, and unmelodious rhapsodies on subjects as empty as an old tin can in a vacant city lot.

It is not the presence of religion that spoils religious verse. It is the absence of poetry.

Poetry is vision. Poetry is music. Poetry is an overflow of wonder and joy, pity and love. Truths which lie in the spiritual realm have as much power to stir the heart to this overflow as truths which lie in the physical realm. There is an imaginative vision of the meaning of religious truths—a swift flashing of their significance upon the inward eye, a sudden thrilling of their music through the inward ear—which is as full of beauty and wonder, as potent to "surprise us by a fine excess," as any possible human experience. It is poetic in the very highest sense of the word. There may be poetry, and very admirable poetry, without it. But the poet who never sees it, nor sings of it, in whose verse there is no ray of light, no note of music, from beyond the range of the five senses, has never reached the heights nor sounded the depths of human nature.

The influence of Tennyson's poetry in revealing the reality and beauty of three great religious beliefs—the existence of the Divine Spirit who is our Father, the freedom of the human will, and the personal life after death—was deep, far-reaching, and potent. He stood among the doubts and conflicts of the last century as a witness for the things that are in-

visible and eternal: the things that men may forget if they will, but if they forget them their hearts wither, and the springs of inspiration run dry. His rich and musical verse brought a message of new cheer and courage to the young men of that questioning age who were fain to defend their spiritual heritage against the invasions of a hard and fierce materialism. In the vital conflict for the enlargement of faith to embrace the real discoveries of science, he stood forth as a leader. In the great silent reaction from the solitude of a consistent skepticism, his voice was a clear-toned bell calling the unwilling exiles of belief to turn again and follow the guidance of the Spirit. No new arguments were his. But the sweetness of a poet's persuasion, the splendour of high truths embodied in a poet's imagination, the convincing beauty of noble beliefs set forth in clear dream and solemn vision,—these were the powers that he employed.

In using them he served not only his own day and generation but ours and those that are to come.

II

THE FIRST FLIGHT

THE first appearance of a true poet usually bears at least one mark of celestial origin —he "cometh not with observation." A small volume is printed on some obscure press. The friends to whom it is sent, "with the compliments of the author," return thanks for it in words which compromise truth with affection. The local newspaper applauds it in a perfunctory way; some ogre of a critic, whose appetite for young poets is insatiable, may happen to make a hasty meal of it; or some kindly reviewer, who is always looking on the hopeful side of literature, may discover in it the buds of promise. But this is mainly a matter of chance; the certainty is that there will be few to buy the book with hard cash, and fewer still to read it, except from curiosity or friendship, and that the great world will roll on its way as serenely as if nothing of consequence had occurred.

Somewhat after this fashion many of the leading English poets have arrived. There

was no great stir made by the publication of *Descriptive Sketches*, or *Hours of Idleness*. The announcement of *Original Poems by Victor and Cazire* did not produce any excitement. Even *Venus and Adonis* failed to inform the public that the future creator of *Hamlet* and *Othello* had appeared The recognition of genius in a first flight rarely takes place at the proper time; it is reserved for those prophets who make their predictions after the event.

But surely there never was a poet of rank who slipped into print more quietly than the junior author of *Poems by Two Brothers*. The book was published in 1827 for J. & J. Jackson, of Louth, and W. Simpkin & B. Marshall, of London. The title-page bore an apologetic motto from Martial: "We know that these things amount to nothing." The preface repeated the same sentiment in more diffuse language.

"The following Poems were written from the ages of fifteen to eighteen, not conjointly, but individually, which may account for their differences of style and matter. To light upon any novel combination of images, or to open any vein of sparkling thought, untouched before, were no easy task; indeed, the remark itself is as old as the truth is clear; and no doubt,

if submitted to the microscopic eye of periodical criticism, a long list of inaccuracies and imitations would result from the investigation. But so it is; we have passed the Rubicon, and we leave the rest to fate, though its edict may create a fruitless regret that we ever emerged from the 'the shade' and courted notoriety."

That was surely a most gentle way of passing the Rubicon. The only suggestion of a flourish of trumpets was the capital P in "Poems." Fate, who sat smiling on the bank, must have been propitiated by a bow so modest and so awkward. Not even the names of the young aspirants for public favor were given, and only the friends of the family could have known that the two brothers who thus stepped out, hand in hand, from "the shade" were Charles and Alfred Tennyson.

It is difficult to conjecture—unless, indeed, we are prepared to adopt some theory of the disinterested benevolence of publishers—what induced the Jacksons to pay twenty pounds for the privilege of printing this book. But if they were alive to-day, and had kept a sufficient number of the first edition on their shelves, their virtue would have its reward; for I must confess to having paid half as much for a single copy as they gave for the copy-

right, and, as prices go, it was an excellent bargain.

Here it is—a rather stout little volume of two hundred and twenty-eight pages, paper not of the finest, print not without errors. It contains one hundred and two pieces of verse, in all kinds of metres, imitated after an amazing variety of models. There is nothing very bad and nothing very inspiring. *The Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review* came as near to the truth as one can expect of a newspaper when it said: "This volume exhibits a pleasing union of kindred tastes, and contains several little pieces of considerable merit." That is the only contemporary criticism which has been exhumed. And it would be absurd, at this late day, to turn the "microscopic eye," of which the brothers were so afraid, upon their immature production.

And yet, to one who can find a pleasure in tracing the river to its narrow source among the hills, this book is well worth reading. For somewhere between these covers, hardly to be distinguished from the spring of that twin rivulet of verse which ran so brief a course in the *Sonnets* and *Small Tableaux* of Charles Tennyson, lies the fountain-head of that deeper, clearer stream which flowed forth into *In Memoriam*

and the *Idylls of the King*, and refreshed the English-speaking world for more than sixty years with the poetry of Alfred Tennyson. Here we may pause for a moment and glance at some of the impulses which led him to commence poet, and the influences which directed his earliest efforts.

It seems to me that the most interesting and significant thing about this little book is the fact that the two brothers appear in it together; for this tells us a great deal in regard to the atmosphere of the home in which Tennyson's boyhood was passed. The seven sons and four daughters of the rector of Somersby were not ordinary children; nor was their education conducted in that dull, commonplace, Gradgrind spirit which so often crushes all originality out of a child. The doors of the ideal world were opened to them very early; they were encouraged to imagine as well as to think; they peopled their playgrounds with lofty visions of kings and knights, and fought out the world-old battles of right and wrong in their childish games, and wove their thoughts of virtue and courage and truth into long romances with which they entertained each other in turn at the dinner-table. The air of the house was full of poetry.

Charles, the second son, was probably the leader in this life of fancy. It was he, at all events, who first led his brother Alfred, his junior by a year, into the poetic path. One Sunday morning, when Alfred was to be left at home alone, Charles gave him a slate and told him to write some verses about the flowers in the garden. The task was eagerly accepted, and when the family had returned from church, the little boy came with his slate all written over with lines of blank verse, to ask for his brother's approval. Charles read them gravely and carefully, with the earnestness of a childish critic. Then he gave the slate back again, saying, "Yes, you can write." I doubt whether Alfred Tennyson ever heard a word of praise that gave him more true delight than this fraternal recognition.

Having found each other as kindred spirits, the two boys held closely together. They were intimate friends. They helped and cheered and criticised each other in their common studies and writings. It is a good omen for genius when it is capable of fraternity. It is the best possible safeguard against eccentricity and morbidness and solitary pride. Charles Lamb was right when he wrote to Coleridge: "O my friend, cultivate the filial feelings! and let no man think himself released from the kind chari-

ties of relationship." Tennyson's best work has never lost the insight of the heart. And if there were no other reason for valuing these *Poems by Two Brothers*, we should still prize them as the monument of a brotherly love to which the poet has paid this tribute in *In Memoriam:*

But thou and I are one in kind,
As moulded like in Nature's mint;
And hill and wood and field did print
The same sweet forms on either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd
Thro' all his eddying coves; the same
All winds that roam the twilight came
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows;
One lesson from one book we learn'd,
Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd
To black and brown on kindred brows.

Another notable feature in this book is the great number of quotations from modern and classical authors. Almost all of the poems have mottoes. I glance over them at random, and find scraps from Virgil, Addison, Gray, Clare, Cicero, Horace, Moore, Byron, Milton, Racine, Claudian, Rousseau, Scott, Hume, Ossian, Lucretius, Sallust, and *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. These school-boys must have loved their books well, if not wisely.

Moreover, there are foot-notes in which they tell us that "PIGHT is a word used by Spenser and Shakespeare," and that "none but the priests could interpret the Egyptian hieroglyphics," and that "Ponce de Leon discovered Florida when he was in search of the fabled fountain of youth," and that "Apollonius Rhodius was not born at Alexandria, but at Naucratis." The display of learning is amusing. But it is not without significance, for it distinctly marks Tennyson as one of those who, like Milton, were students as well as poets, and whose genius did not develop in solitude, but in

Converse with all forms
Of the many-sided mind.

The volume abounds in imitations; indeed, there is hardly a piece in it which does not sound like an echo of some other poet. The influence which is most clearly marked is that of Byron. He is quoted six times. There is a strong flavour of his dramatic melancholy in such lines as,

I wander in darkness and sorrow,
Unfriended and cold and alone;

and,

I stand like some lone tower
Of former days remaining,
Within whose place of power
The midnight owl is plaining.

It is evident that this grief could not have been very real to a school-boy between fifteen and eighteen. It was like the gloom of Shakespeare's young gentleman of France who was "sad as night only for wantonness." And the fashion of the sadness was learned from the author of *Childe Harold.* His metrical manner also is copied with undisguised enthusiasm. The lad who wrote,

Thou shalt come like a storm when the moonlight is dim,
And the lake's gloomy bosom is full to the brim;
Thou shalt come like the flash in the darkness of night,
When the wolves of the forest shall howl with affright,

had certainly been captured by the Assyrian who came down like the wolf on the fold.

After reading this it is interesting to hear Tennyson tell in his own words, spoken many years afterward, how the news of Byron's death had affected him: "Byron was dead. I thought the whole world was at an end. I thought everything was over and finished for every one—that nothing else mattered. I remember, I walked out alone and carved 'Byron is dead' into the sandstone."

The spell of this passionate devotion soon passed away, but perhaps we can see some lingering trace of its effects in poems as late as

"Locksley Hall" and *Maud*. Indeed, I think the influence of Byron upon Tennyson has been generally underrated.

There are a few other points of interest in this little volume. For instance, the variety of metrical forms indicates an unusual freedom and catholicity of taste. The result of such a miscellaneous admiration of all styles, from the finish of Horace to the formlessness of Ossian, might possibly be nothing better than a facility in general imitation, the fluency of a successful parodist. But if a boy had real genius it would lead him on to try experiments in many metres until he mastered those which were best fitted to express his thoughts, and gave new life to obsolete forms of verse, and finally, perhaps, created some original forms. And this, in fact, is what Tennyson has done. He has attempted almost every kind of measure. And though his early efforts were so irregular that Coleridge remarked that "Tennyson had begun to write poetry without knowing what metre was," yet in the long run he made himself one of the most musical of English poets.

In 1893, sixty-six years after the original publication, a new edition of *Poems by Two Brothers* was brought out, with a preface by Hallam, Lord Tennyson, the poet's son. In

this edition the poems were attributed, as far as possible, to their respective authors, on the evidence of the differences in the handwriting of the manuscript and the recollections of Mr. Frederick Tennyson, who, it now appears, contributed four or five poems to his brothers' volume.

It is interesting to note that the pieces which show the greatest freedom and rapidity, and also, it must be admitted, the greatest irregularity of metrical movement, are those which bear the initials A. T. The rule which is so painfully familiar to those who are learning to skate seems to hold good for those who are learning to write verse. Success is impossible without a good many falls.

Scattered through these early verses we find a number of thoughts and phrases which Tennyson used again in his more mature poems. I will give a few illustrations of these parallel passages.

In "Remorse" we find the lines:

To life, whose every hour to me
Hath been increase of misery.

"The Two Voices" gives us the same thought:

Thou art so full of misery,
Were it not better not to be?

In "Midnight" there is a reference to

the glutting wave
That saps eternally the cold gray steep;

which reminds us of

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!

In "Switzerland" the poet cries:

O! when shall Time
Avenge the crime?

and in "The Vision of Sin" he says again:

It was a crime
Of sense, avenged by sense that wore with time.

In the poem on "Sublimity" we find the phrase "holds communion with the dead," which occurs again in one of the most beautiful passages of *In Memoriam.*

In "Egypt" we find:

The first glitter of his rising beams
Falls on the broad-bas'd pyramids sublime.

The epithet recurs in "A Fragment," printed in an annual in 1830:

The great pyramids,
Broad-bas'd amid the fleeting sands.

Other passages might be quoted to show the connection between Tennyson's earlier and later

work. It is one of his characteristics that he uses the same image more than once, and that the repetition is almost always an improvement. But it will be more profitable to close this brief introductory essay with a few lines which are worthy to be remembered for their own sake, and which belong to the first genuine poetry of Alfred Tennyson. True and broad descriptive power is shown in such lines as these:

Like some far fire at night
Along the dun deep streaming.

A wan, dull, lengthen'd sheet of swimming light
Lies the broad lake—

The thunder of the brazen prows
O'er Actium's ocean rung.

But the passage which exhibits the most sustained vigour of expression is found in the poem entitled "Persia." It is a description of the great king contemplating the ruin of his empire. He spreads the dust upon his laurelled head, as he is forced

To view the setting of that star
Which beam'd so gorgeously and far
O'er Anatolia, and the fane
Of Belus, and Caïster's plain,
And Sardis, and the glittering sands
Of bright Pactolus, and the lands
Where Crœsus held his rich domain;

And further east, where broadly roll'd
Old Indus pours his streams of gold;
And southward to Cilicia's shore,
Where Cydnus meets the billows' roar;
And northward far to Trebizonde,
Renown'd for kings of chivalry,
Where Hyssus rolling from the strand
Disgorges in the Euxine Sea—
The Euxine, falsely named, which whelms
The mariner in the heaving tide—
To high Sinope's distant realms,
Where cynics rail'd at human pride.

This is not great poetry, but it is vigourous verse. It is glorified nomenclature. Milton himself need not have been ashamed to acknowledge it. The boy who could write like this before he was eighteen years old knew something, at least, of the music and magic of names. If we may read our history, like our Hebrew, backward, we can detect the promise of a true poet in the swing and sweep of these lines, and recognise the wing-trial of genius in Tennyson's first flight.

III

THE PALACE OF ART

THE year of our Lord eighteen hundred and thirty-three was a period of waiting and uncertainty in English literature. Twelve years had passed since the brief, bright light of Keats went out at Rome; eleven years, since the waters of Spezzia's treacherous bay closed over the head of Shelley; nine years, since the wild flame of Byron's heart burned away at Missolonghi; a few months, since the weary hand of Scott had at last let fall the wizard's wand. The new leaders were dead; the old leaders were silent. Wordsworth was reclining on the dry laurels of his *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* at Rydal Mount; Coleridge was pacing up and down the garden-path at Highgate talking transcendental metaphysics; Southey had ceased writing what he called poetry; Thomas Moore was warbling his old songs to an audience which had almost begun to weary of them. The coming man had not yet arrived. Dickens was a short-hand reporter in the House of Commons; Thackeray was running through his property in the ruinous dissipation of newspaper-pub-

lishing; Carlyle was wrestling with poverty and the devil at Craigenputtock; Robert Browning, a youth of twenty, was travelling in Italy; Matthew Arnold and Arthur Clough were boys at Rugby; William Morris and Algernon Charles Swinburne were yet unborn. In this somewhat barren and unpromising interval, the poetical reputation of Mr. Alfred Tennyson, late of the University of Cambridge, was trembling in the balance of Criticism.

Criticism with a large C; for the reign of their mighty Highnesses, the Reviewers, was still unshaken. Seated upon their lofty thrones in London and Edinburgh, they weighed the pretensions of all new-comers into their realms with severity if not with impartiality, and meted out praise and blame with a royal hand. In those rude days there was no trifling with a book in little "notices" of mild censure or tepid approbation,—small touches which, if unfavourable, hardly hurt more than pin-pricks, and if favourable, hardly help more than gentle pats upon the back. That is the suave, homœopathic method of modern times: but then—in the days of Herod the king—it was either the accolade or decapitation. Many an innocent had the dreadful Gifford slaughtered, and though he had done his last book, there were other

men, like Wilson and Croker and Lockhart, who still understood and practiced the art of speedy dispatch. *Blackwood* and *The Quarterly* still clothed themselves with Olympian thunder,

> *"And that two-handed engine at their door,*
> *Stood ready to smite once and smite no more."*

It was before this stern tribunal that young Tennyson had made his appearance in 1830 with a slim volume of *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical.* They were fifty-three in number, and covered only one hundred and fifty-four pages; yet within that narrow compass at least a score of different metres were attempted with amazing skill, and the range of subjects extended from "The Merman" to "Supposed Confessions of a Second-rate Sensitive Mind not in Unity with Itself." One can easily imagine the indignation and scorn which the latter title must have excited in the first-rate unsensitive mind of an orthodox Edinburgh Reviewer.

Nor were the general style and quality of the poems calculated to mollify these feelings. Dainty in finish, pre-raphaelite in their minute painting of mosses and flowers and in their super-subtle shading of emotions, musical yet irregular, modern in sentiment yet tinged with

some archaic mannerisms, the poems taken altogether made an impression of delicacy and artificiality which obscured the real strength of some of them, such as "Mariana," "The Poet," "Ode to Memory," and "The Deserted House." Arthur Henry Hallam praised them, but that counted for little, because he was Tennyson's friend. *The Westminster Review* praised them, but that counted for little, because it belonged to the party of literary revolt. Leigh Hunt praised them, but that counted for worse than nothing, because he was the arch-heretic of poetry, the leader of the so-called "Cockney school." The authoritative voice of Criticism was not heard until "Christopher North" took up the new poet in *Blackwood*, and administered the castigation which he thought necessary and salutary. Mingling a little condescending encouragement with his condemnation, and holding out the hope that if "Alfred" would only reform his style and get rid of his cockney admirers he might some day write something worth reading, the stern magister set to work in the meantime to demolish the dainty lyrics. Drivel, and more dismal drivel, and even more dismal drivel was what he called them; and in winding up his remarks upon the song entitled "The Owl," he said: "Alfred himself is the

greatest owl; all he wants is to be shot, stuffed, and stuck in a glass case, to be made immortal in a museum."

Truly this was Criticism of the athletic order; the humour of it lies in the unconscious absence of wit. Six months after this article was printed, in December, 1832, Tennyson put out his second volume. Its title-page ran as follows: *Poems by Alfred Tennyson.* London: Edward Moxon, 64, New Bond Street. MDCCCXXXIII. It is, therefore, properly speaking, the edition of 1833.

It lies on my desk now, a slender volume of one hundred and sixty-three pages, with Barry Cornwall's autograph on the fly-leaf, and his pencil-marks of approbation running along the margins. It contains only thirty poems, but among them are such fine things as "The Lady of Shalott," "The Miller's Daughter," "Œnone," "The Palace of Art," "The Lotos-Eaters," and "A Dream of Fair Women."

It was evident at once that the young poet had not changed his style, though he had enriched it. Fuller and stronger were his notes, more manly and of a wider range; but his singing was still marked by the same lyrical freedom, the same delicacy of imagination, the same unconventional choice of words, the same

peculiar blending of the classic with the romantic spirit,—qualities which to us have become so familiar that we can hardly realise how fresh and strange they must have seemed to the readers of eighty years ago. It was clear enough that this new writer was no mere disciple of Leigh Hunt, or neophyte of the Cockney school, to be frightened back into the paths of propriety by brutal thunders. He might be moving on the same lines which Keats had begun to follow, but he was going beyond his leader; he was introducing a new spirit and method into English verse; he bid fair to become the master of a new school of poetry. In the opinion of the reviewers he needed to be dealt with mildly, but firmly. And this time it was not "crusty Christopher," but a more dangerous critic, who undertook the task. The review of Tennyson's poems which appeared in the *Quarterly* for July, 1833, is one of the cleverest and bitterest things ever written, and though unacknowledged, it has always been attributed to the editor, James Gibson Lockhart, sometimes called "the scorpion," because of a certain peculiarity in the latter end of his articles.

He begins in a tone of ironical compliment, apologising for never having seen Mr. Tenny-

son's first volume, and proposing to repair his unintentional neglect by now introducing to the admiration of sequestered readers "a new prodigy of genius, another and a brighter star of that galaxy or *milky way* of poetry of which the lamented Keats was the harbinger." He proceeds to offer what he calls "a tribute of unmingled approbation," and selecting a few specimens of Mr. Tennyson's singular genius, "to point out now and then the peculiar brilliancy of some of the gems that irradiate his poetical crown."

This means, in plain words, to hold up the whole performance to ridicule by commending its weakest points in extravagant mock-laudation, and passing over its best points in silence. A method more unfair and exasperating can hardly be imagined. It is like applauding a musician for every false note. Lockhart's "unmingled approbation" was a thousand times more severe than old Christopher's blunt and often clumsy abuse. It was as if one had praised Pope for his amiable temper, or Wordsworth for his keen sense of humour.

And yet,—after all,—in spite of the malicious spirit and the unjust method of the article,—we may as well confess that on many points Lockhart was right. His hard, formal, opinion-

ated mind could not possibly appreciate the merits of Tennyson, but it could and it did detect the faults of his earlier work. In almost every case the shaft of the reviewer's irony found the joint in the poet's armour and touched some vulnerable spot.

The proof of this is furnished by Tennyson himself. For ten years he preserved an almost unbroken silence. When at length he published his *Poems, in Two Volumes*, in 1842, he was recognised immediately as the poet, not of a coterie, but of England. The majestic blank-verse of "Morte d'Arthur," the passionate force of "Locksley Hall," the sweet English beauty of "Dora," "The Gardener's Daughter," and "The Talking Oak," the philosophic depth and human intensity of "The Two Voices" and "The Vision of Sin,"—and perhaps more than all the simple, magical pathos of that undying song,

> *Break, break, break,*
> *On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!*

won the admiration of readers of every class. But no less significant than these new poems, in the history of his development, was the form in which his earlier poems were reprinted. The edition of 1842 contained a selection from the edition of 1833; and it is remarkable that all of

the weaker pieces which Lockhart had criticised most severely were omitted, while those which were retained were so carefully pruned and corrected as to seem almost rewritten. There is a certain importance, for example, in such a slight change as the omission of the accent from words like *charmèd* and *apparellèd*. It indicates a desire to avoid even the appearance of affectation.

Or take this passage from "The Miller's Daughter" in its first form:—

Remember you that pleasant day
When after roving in the woods,
('Twas April then), I came and lay
Beneath the gummy chestnut-buds
That glistened in the April blue.
Upon the slope so smooth and cool
I lay and never thought of you
But angled in the deep mill-pool.

A water-rat from off the bank
Plunged in the stream. With idle care
Downlooking through the sedges rank
I saw your troubled image there.
Upon the dark and dimpled beck
It wandered like a floating light,
A full fair form, a warm white neck
And two white arms—how rosy white!

These are very pretty lines, and doubtless quite true to nature, for the buds of the chestnut

are very sticky in April, and the water-rat has a habit of diving suddenly into the water. But as Lockhart politely observed, the accumulation of such tender images as the gummy buds and the plunging rat was somewhat unusual and disturbing.

Now a modern poet of the Impressionist, or Imagist, or Cubist School, would take such criticism very much amiss. He would hold that the unusual and disturbing quality of the gum and the rat was what gave them their poetic value, since poetry without shock is vapid. If he deigned to revise his verses at all, he would probably do it by inserting some water-spiders, a frog, and two or three stinging nettles in the *décor* of the play.

But Tennyson, being young but not omniscient, felt that there was something in Lockhart's criticism. He recognised that the canon of truth to nature must be supplemented by the canon of symmetry in art, and that facts which are incongruous and out of harmony must not be recorded. The water-rat was not profoundly suggestive of love at first sight. Moreover, as a point of realism, one who was looking up at the chestnut-buds would not have noticed their stickiness, but only their shining as they were moved by the wind. Here,

then, is the new version of the passage, quite as true but far more poetical, and made simpler by a more careful art:—

But, Alice, what an hour was that,
When after roving in the woods
('Twas April then), I came and sat
Below the chestnuts, when their buds
Were glistening to the breezy blue;
And on the slope, an absent fool
I cast me down, nor thought of you,
But angled in the higher pool.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood
I watch'd the little circles die;
They past into the level flood,
And there a vision caught my eye;
The reflex of a beauteous form,
A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,
As when a sunbeam wavers warm
Within the dark and dimpled beck.

Now a poet who could take criticism in this fashion and use it to such good purpose, was certainly neither weak nor wayward. Weighed in the balance, he was not found wanting but steadily growing. He would not abandon his art at the voice of censure, but correct and perfect it. The method and the result of this process of self-correction—which Tennyson has practiced more patiently and successfully than any other poet—may be traced most clearly

in the history of "The Palace of Art," the longest and in a certain sense the most important of the 1833 poems. Nor can I think of any better way to study the unfolding of his genius and the development of his style, than to observe carefully the number and nature of the changes which he has made in this poem.

The poem is an allegory, a splendid piece of symbolic verse. It shows a gifted but selfish soul, in its endeavours to live alone in its own enchanted world of refined and consummate pleasures, without caring for the interests or the sufferings of the great world of mankind. Such a life must be a failure and carry its punishment within itself. The poem is an æsthetic protest against æstheticism. But it is worthy of notice that, while the dedication in the first edition was addressed to a member of the æsthetic class,—an artist,—in the second edition these lines have disappeared. It is as if the poet desired to give a wider range to his lesson; as if he would say, "You are a man, and no matter what your occupation may be, you will feel the truth of this allegory."

This first alteration is characteristic. It shows us the transformation of Tennyson's feelings and purposes during those eventful ten years of silence. He had grown broader and deeper. He was no longer content to write

for a small and select circle of readers. His sympathies were larger and more humane. He began to feel that he had a country; and patriotism inspired him to write for England. He began to feel that the lives of common men and women were full of materials for poetry; and philanthropy inspired him to speak as a man to his fellow-men. This change was prophesied in the first conception of "The Palace of Art," but when the fulfilment came, it was so thorough that it had power to remould the form of the prophecy itself.

The Palace which the poet built for his soul is described as standing on a lofty tableland, secure and inaccessible, for his first object was to dwell apart from the world. Then follows, in the original edition, a description of its long-sounding corridors,

> *Roofed with thick plates of green and orange glass,*
> *Ending in stately rooms.*

In the second edition the architect's good taste has discarded this conservatory effect and these curiously combined colours. He describes instead the surroundings of the Palace, with its four great courts and its foaming fountains, its smooth lawns and branching cloisters. He draws a gilded parapet around the roof, and shows the distant landscape. In following this

order he has given reality and dignity to his structure, so that it seems less like a picture-gallery and more like a royal mansion.

Then he leads the soul through the different rooms, and describes the tapestries on the walls. As the poem stood at first these included the Madonna, Venus Anadyomene, St. Cecily, Arthur in the valley of Avilion, Kriemhilt pouring the Nibelungen gold into the Rhine, Europa, with her hand grasping the golden horn of the bull, and Ganymede borne upward by the eagle, together with landscapes of forest and pasture, sea-coast, mountain-glen, and woodland, interspersed with gardens and vineyards. When the Palace was changed, Venus and Kriemhilt disappeared, and Europa occupied a smaller place. Pictures of Numa and his wise wood-nymphs, Indian Cama seated on his summer throne, and the porch of Mohammed's Paradise thronged with houris, were added. And among the landscapes there were two new scenes, one of cattle feeding by a river, and another of reapers at their sultry toil.

The soul pauses here, in the first edition, and indulges in a little rhapsody on the evolution of the intellect. This disappears in the second edition, and we pass directly from the chambers hung with arras into the great hall, the central

apartment of the Palace. Here the architect had gathered, at first, a collection of portraits of great men which was so catholic in its taste as to be almost motley. Lockhart laughed derisively when he contemplated the gallery. "Milton, Shakespeare, Dante, Homer, Michael Angelo, Martin Luther, Francis Bacon, Cervantes, Calderon, King David, the Halicarnassean (*quære*, which of them?), Alfred himself (presumably not the poet),

Isaiah with fierce Ezekiel,
Swarth Moses by the Coptic sea,
Plato, Petrarca, Livy, Raphaël,
And eastern Confutzee."

This reminds Lockhart of a verse in that Hibernian poem, *The Groves of Blarney*, and he wonders whether Mr. Tennyson was not thinking of the Blarney collection—

"*Statues growing that noble place in*
Of heathen goddesses most rare;
Homer, Plutarch, and Nebuchadnezzar,
All standing naked in the open air."

But in the revised Palace all these have been left out, except the first four, and the architect has added a great

mosaic choicely plann'd
With cycles of the human tale
Of this wide world, the times of every land
So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,
Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads and stings;
Here play'd a tiger, rolling to and fro
The heads and crowns of kings;

Here rose an athlete, strong to break or bind
All force in bonds that might endure,
And here once more like some sick man declin'd
And trusted any cure.

This mosaic covered the floor, and over these symbols of struggling humanity the vainglorious soul trod proudly as she went up to take her throne between the shining windows on which the faces of Plato and Verulam were blazoned. In the first edition there was a gorgeous description of the banquet with which she regaled herself; piles of flavorous fruits, musk-scented blooms, ambrosial pulps and juices, graceful chalices of curious wine, and a service of costly jars and bossed salvers. Thus she feasted in solitary state, and

ere young night divine
Crowned dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils,
She lit white streams of dazzling gas,
And soft and fragrant flames of precious oils
In moons of purple glass.

This was written when the use of gas for illuminating purposes was new, and considered

rather romantic. When the Palace was remodelled the gas was turned off, and the supper was omitted. The soul was lifted above mere sensual pleasures, and sat listening to her own song and rejoicing in her royal seclusion.

There are a great many minor alterations scattered through the poem. Some of them are mere changes of spelling, like Avilion, which becomes Avalon; and Cecily, which is changed to Cicely in 1842, and back again to Cecily in later editions; and sweet Europa's mantle, which at first "blew unclasped," and then lost its motion and got a touch of colour, becoming "blue, unclasped," and finally returned to its original form. (Some one has said that a painter would not have been forced to choose between colour and motion, for he could have made the mantle at once blue and blown by the wind.) Corrections and re-corrections such as these show how carefully Tennyson sought the perfection of language.

But the most interesting change yet to be noted is directly due to Lockhart's sharp criticism; at least, it was he who first pointed out the propriety of it, in his usual ironical way. "In this poem," said he, "we first observed a stroke of art which we think very ingenious. No one who has ever written verses but must

have felt the pain of erasing some happy line, some striking phrase, which, however excellent in itself, did not exactly suit the place for which it was destined. How curiously does an author mould and remould the plastic verse in order to fit in the favourite thought; and when he finds that he cannot introduce it, as Corporal Trim says, *any how*, with what reluctance does he at last reject the intractable, but still cherished, offspring of his brain. Mr. Tennyson manages this delicate matter in a new and better way. He says, with great candour and simplicity, 'If this poem were not already too long *I should have added the following stanzas*,' and then *he adds them;* or, 'I intended to have added something on statuary, but I found it very difficult; but I have finished the statues of Elijah and Olympias; judge whether I have succeeded;' and then *we have those two statues.* This is certainly the most ingenious device that has ever come under our observation for reconciling the rigour of criticism with the indulgence of parental partiality."

The passages to which Mr. Lockhart alludes in this paragraph are the notes appended to pages 73 and 83 of the original edition. The former of these contains four stanzas on sculpture; the latter gives a description of one of

the favourite occupations of the self-indulgent soul, which is too fine to be left unquoted. Above the Palace a massive tower was built:

Hither, when all the deep unsounded skies
Were shuddering with silent stars, she clomb,
And, as with optic glasses, her keen eyes
Pierced thro' the mystic dome,

Regions of lucid matter taking forms,
Brushes of fire, hazy gleams,
Clusters and beds of worlds, and bee-like swarms
Of suns, and starry streams.

She saw the snowy poles of moonless Mars,
That marvellous round of milky light
Below Orion, and those double stars
Whereof the one more bright

Is circled by the other.

But, however admirable these lines may seem, and however much we may regret their loss, there can be no doubt that the manner of their introduction was incongruous and absurd. It was like saying, "This Palace is not to have a hall of statues, but I will simply put on a small wing as a sample of what is not to be done. And there is no room for an observatory, but I will construct a little bit of one in order that you may see what it would have been like." The poet himself seems to have recognised that the device was too "ingenious" to be dignified;

and in 1842 he restored the symmetry of the *Palace* by omitting the annex-buildings entirely.

Now let us sum up the changes which have been made in the *Palace* since it was first constructed. For this purpose it will be best to take Macmillan's final edition of the text, and lay it beside the edition of 1833.

In 1833 the poem, including the notes, contained eighty-three stanzas; in 1884 it has only seventy-five. Of the original number thirty-one have been entirely omitted—in other words, more than a third of the structure has been pulled down; and, in place of these, twenty-two new stanzas have been added, making a change of fifty-three stanzas. The fifty-two that remain have almost all been retouched and altered, so that very few stand to-day in the same shape which they had at the beginning. I suppose there is no other poem in the language, not even among the writings of Tennyson, which has been worked over so carefully as this.

But what is the significance of all this toilsome correction and remodelling? How does the study of it help us to a better comprehension of the poet? I think it shows us, first of all, the difference between the intellectual temper of Tennyson and that of a man who is possessed

by his theories, instead of possessing them, and whom they carry away into eccentricity. Suppose, for example, that such an article as Lockhart's had been written about Wordsworth's early work, what would he have done? Or rather, for the case is not hypothetical but actual, what did he do when the Philistines fell upon him? He replied to the attacks upon "Goody Blake" by publishing "Peter Bell"; he insisted upon using "the language of common life" even when he had nothing particular to say; he justified his poem upon an idiot and his pony, by producing a much longer poem upon a pedlar and his ass.

But with Tennyson the effect of criticism was different. He had the saving sense of humour, and could see the point of a clever jest even when it was directed against himself. He was willing to learn even from an enemy, and he counted no pains too great to take if only he could succeed in freeing his work from blemishes. The result of this, merely from a technical point of view, is seen in "The Palace of Art." It has gained in the rebuilding. The omission of unnecessary decoration is a good rule for the architect. Though we lose many rich and polished details, beautiful as the capitals of Corinthian pillars, their absence leaves

the Palace standing more clear and noble before the inward eye.

But when we look at the alterations from a higher point, when we consider their effect upon the meaning of the poem, we see how great has been the gain. The new lines and stanzas are framed, almost without exception, with a wondrous skill to intensify the allegory. Touch after touch brings out the picture of the self-centred soul: the indifference that hardens into cruel contempt, the pride that verges on insanity, the insatiate lust of pleasure that devours all the world can give and then turns to feed upon itself, the empty darkness of a life without love. It seems as if the poet had felt more deeply, as he grew older, the need of making this picture clear and strong. Take for instance these two stanzas which he has added to the poem, describing the exultation of the soul in her exclusive joy:—

O God-like isolation which art mine,
I can but count thee perfect gain,
What time I watch the darkening droves of swine
That range on yonder plain.

In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,
They graze and wallow, breed and sleep;
And oft some brainless devil enters in,
And drives them to the deep.

These lines are essential to the understanding of the poem. They touch the very core of the sin which defiled the Palace and destroyed the soul's happiness. It was not merely that she loved beauty and music and fragrance; but that in her love for these she lost her moral sense, denied her human duties, and scorned, instead of pitying and helping, her brother-men who lived on the plain below. This is the sin of selfish pride, the sin which drives out the Christ because He eats with publicans and sinners, the unpardonable sin which makes its own hell. And it is just this sin, the poet says, that transforms the Palace of Art into a prison of despair.

Is not this a lesson of which the age had need? The chosen few were saying to their disciples that the world is a failure, humanity a mass of wretchedness, religion an outworn dream,—the only refuge for the elect of wealth and culture is in art. Retreat into your gardens of pleasure. Let the plague take the city. Delight your eyes with all things fair and sweet. So shall it be well with you and your soul shall dwell at ease while the swine perish. It is the gospel of pessimism which despairs of the common people because it despises them, and seeks to secrete a selfish happiness in "the worst of all

possible worlds." Nebuchadnezzar tried it in Babylon; Hadrian tried it in Rome; Solomon tried it in Jerusalem; and from all its palaces comes the same voice: *vanitas vanitatum et omnia vanitas.*

It is not until the soul has learned a better wisdom, learned that the human race is one, and that none can really rise by treading on his brother-men, learned that true art is not the slave of luxury but the servant of humanity, learned that happiness is born, not of the lust to possess and enjoy, but of the desire to give and to bless,—then, and not until then, when she brings others with her, can the soul find true rest in her Palace.

Tennyson learned, as well as taught, this consecration of art. He was always an artist, but not for art's sake; a lover of beauty, but also a lover of humanity; a singer whose music has brightened and blessed thousands of homes wherever the English tongue is spoken, and led the feet of young men and maidens, by some Orphean enchantment, into royal mansions and gardens, full of all things pure and lovely and of good report.

IV

MILTON AND TENNYSON

A COMPARISON AND A CONTRAST

COMPARISON has long been recognised as one of the fruitful methods of criticism. But in using this method one needs to remember that it is the least obvious comparison which is often the truest and the most suggestive. The relationship of poets does not lie upon the surface; they receive their spiritual inheritance from beyond the lines of direct descent. Thus a poet may be most closely connected with one whose name we seldom join with his, and we may find his deepest resemblance to a man not only of another age, but of another school.

Tennyson has been compared most frequently with Keats; sometimes, but falsely, with Shelley; and sometimes, more wisely, with Wordsworth. The American critic, Edmund Clarence Stedman, who touched nothing that he did not adorn, has a chapter in his *Victorian Poets* on Tennyson and Theocritus. But the best comparison,—one which runs far below the outward appearance into the profound affinities of genius,—yet remains to be carefully traced.

Among all poets,—certainly among all English poets,—it seems to me that Tennyson's next of kin is Milton.

By this I do not mean to say that they are equally great or entirely alike. So far as perfect likeness is concerned, there is no such thing among the sons of men. Every just comparison involves a contrast. When we speak of greatness, Milton's place as the second poet of England is not now to be called in question by any rival claim. It may be too much to assert that Tennyson holds the third place. Yet who is there that has a larger or more substantial title than the author of *In Memoriam* and *Idylls of the King?* The conjunction of the names of Milton and Tennyson will be no unfamiliar event for the future; and for the present there is no better way of studying these two great poets than to lay their works side by side, and trace their lives through the hidden parallel of a kindred destiny.

I

There are two direct references to Milton in the works of Tennyson; and these we must examine first of all, in order that we may understand the attitude of his mind towards the elder

master. The first is in "The Palace of Art." The royal daïs on which the soul set up her intellectual throne is described as having above it four portraits of wise men.

There deephaired Milton like an angel tall
Stood limnèd, Shakespeare bland and mild,
Grim Dante pressed his lips, and from the wall
The bald blind Homer smiled.

Thus read the verse in the 1833 edition; and it tells us the rank which Tennyson, in his twenty-fourth year, assigned to Milton. But there is hardly an instance in which the fineness of Tennyson's self-correction is more happily illustrated than in the change which he has made in this passage. In the later editions it reads as follows:—

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,
Beside him, Shakespeare bland and mild;
And there the world-worn Dante grasped his song
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest;
A million wrinkles carved his skin;
A hundred winters snowed upon his breast,
From cheek and throat and chin.

Those who think that poetic expression is a matter of chance may well ponder upon this passage. Every alteration is an improvement;

and most of all the change in the first line. For now the poet has formed a true picture of Milton's genius, and shows a comprehension of its essential quality. Its sign is strength, but strength seraphic; not the rude, volcanic force of the Titan, but a power serene, harmonious, beautiful; a power of sustained flight, of far-reaching vision, of lofty eloquence, such as belongs to the seraphim alone. The word is not "angel," for the angels are lower beings, followers in the heavenly host, some weak, and some fallen; nor is the word "cherub," for the cherubim, in the ancient Hebrew doctrine, are silent and mysterious creatures, not shaped like men, voiceless and inapproachable; but the word is "seraph," for the seraphim hover on mighty wings about the throne of God, chanting His praise one to another, and bearing His messages from heaven to earth. This, then, is the figure which Tennyson chooses, with the precision of a great poet, to bring the spirit of Milton before us,—*a seraph strong.*

The second reference is found among the "Experiments in Quantity" which were printed in the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1863.

We have here the expression of Tennyson's mature feeling, carefully considered, and uttered with the strength of a generous and clear

conviction; an utterance well worth weighing, not only for the perfection of its form, but also for the richness of its contents and the revelation which it makes of the poet's own nature. Hear with what power and stateliness the tone-picture begins, rising at once to the height of the noble theme;—

O, mighty-mouth'd inventor of harmonies,
O, skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,
God-gifted organ-voice of England,
Milton, a name to resound for ages;
Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,
Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armouries,
Tower, as the deep-domed empyrean
Rings to the roar of an angel onset,—
Me rather all that bowery loneliness
The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring
And bloom profuse and cedar arches
Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,
Where some refulgent sunset of India
Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,
And crimson-hued the stately palm-woods
Whisper in odorous heights of even.

Thus the brief ode finds its perfect close, the rich, full tones dying away in the prolonged period, as the strains of some large music are lost in the hush of twilight. But one other hand could have swept these chords and evoked these tones of majestic sweetness,—the hand of Milton himself.

It was De Quincey who first spoke of the Miltonic movement as having the qualities of an organ voluntary. But the comparison which with him was little more than a fortunate and striking simile is transformed by the poet into a perfect metaphor.

The great organ, pouring forth its melodious thunders, becomes a living thing, divinely dowered and filled with music,—an instrument no longer, but a *voice*, majestic, potent, thrilling the heart,—the voice of England. Swept on the flood of those great harmonies, the mighty hosts of angels clash together in heaven-shaking conflict. But it is the same full tide of music which flows down in sweetest, lingering cadence to wander through the cool groves and fragrant valleys of Paradise. Here the younger poet will more gladly dwell, finding a deeper delight in these solemn and tranquil melodies than in the roar and clang of battles, even though angelic.

Is it not true? True, not only that the organ voice has the twofold gift of beauty and grandeur; true, not only that Tennyson has more sympathy with the loveliness of Eden than with the mingled splendours and horrors of the celestial battlefields; but true, also, that there is a no less potent and lasting charm in

Milton's description of the beautiful than in his description of the sublime. I do not think that "L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso," and "Comus" have any lower place in the world, or any less enduring life, than *Paradise Lost*. And even in that great epic there are no passages more worthy to be remembered, more fruitful of pure feelings and lofty thoughts, than those like the Hymn of Adam, or the description of the first evening in Eden, which show us the fairness and delightfulness of God's world. We have forgotten this; we have thought so much of Milton's strength and sublimity that we have ceased to recognise what is also true, that he, of all English poets, is by nature the supreme lover of beauty.

II

This, then, is the first point of vital sympathy between Tennyson and Milton: their common love of the beautiful, not only in nature, but also in art. And this we see most clearly in the youth and in the youthful writings of the two poets.

There is a resemblance in their early life. Both were born and reared in homes of modest comfort and leisure, under the blended influences of culture and religion. Milton's father was a

scrivener; deprived of his heritage because he obeyed his conscience to become a Protestant, but amassing a competence by his professional labour, he ordered his house well, softening and beautifying the solemnity of Puritan ways with music and literature. Tennyson was born in a country rectory, one of those fair homes of peace and settled order which are the pride and strength of England,—homes where "plain living and high thinking" produce the noblest types of manhood. His father also, like Milton's, was a musician, and surrounded his seven sons with influences which gave them poetic tastes and impulses. It is interesting to see how large a part music played in the development of these two poets. Milton, even in his poverty and blindness, would have an organ in his house to solace his dark hours. Tennyson, it is said, often asked one of his sisters to play to him while he composed; and in his dedication of the "Songs of the Wrens" to Sir Ivor Guest, he speaks of himself as "wedded to music."

It is of course no more than a coincidence that both of the young poets should have been students in the University of Cambridge. But there is something deeper in the similarity of their college lives and studies. A certain lofti-

ness of spirit, an habitual abstraction of thought, marked them even then. They drank deep at the springs of ancient poesy. Not alone the form, but the spirit, of the classics became familiar to them. They were enamoured of the beauty of the old-world legends, the bright mythologies of Hellas, and Latium's wondrous histories of gods and men. For neither of them was this love of the ancient poets a transient delight, a passing mood. It took strong hold upon them; it became a moulding power in their life and work. We can trace it in all their writings. Allusions, themes, illustrations, similes, forms of verse, echoes of thought, conscious or unconscious imitations,—a thousand tokens remind us that we are still beneath the influence of the old masters of a vanished world,—

> *"The dead, but sceptered sovereigns, who still rule*
> *Our spirits from their urns."*

And here, again, we see a bond of sympathy between Tennyson and Milton: they are among the most learned, the most classical, of England's poets.

Following their lives beyond the university, we find that both of them came out into a period of study, of seclusion, of leisure, of poetical

productiveness. Milton retired to his father's house at Horton, in Buckinghamshire, where he lived for five years. Tennyson's home at Somersby, in Lincolnshire, was broken up by his father's death in 1831; and after that, as Carlyle wrote to Emerson, "he preferred clubbing with his Mother and some Sisters, to live unpromoted and write Poems; . . . now here, now there; the family always within reach of London, never in it; he himself making rare and brief visits, lodging in some old comrade's rooms." The position and circumstances of the two young poets were alike. Both were withdrawn from the whirl and conflict of active life into a world of lovely forms, sweet sounds, and enchanting dreams; both fed their minds with the beauty of nature and of ancient story, charmed by the music of divine philosophy, and by songs of birds filling the sweet English air at dawn or twilight; both loved to roam at will over hill and dale and by the wandering streams; to watch the bee, with honeyed thigh, singing from flower to flower, and catch the scent of violets hidden in the green; to hear the sound of far-off bells swinging over the wide-watered shore, and listen to the sighing of the wind among the trees, or the murmur of the waves on the river-bank; to pore and dream

through long night-watches over the legends of the past, until the cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn, and the lark's song startled the dull night from her watch-tower in the skies. They dwelt as idlers in the land, but it was a glorious and fruitful idleness, for they were reaping

The harvest of a quiet eye
That broods and sleeps on his own heart.

How few and brief, and yet how wonderful, are the results of these peaceful years. "L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso," "Arcades," "Comus," "Lycidas," "Isabel," "Recollections of the Arabian Nights," "Ode to Memory," "The Dying Swan," "The Palace of Art," "A Dream of Fair Women," "Mariana," "The Lady of Shalott," "The Lotos-Eaters," "Œnone,"—these are poems to be remembered, read and re-read with ever fresh delight, perfect things of their kind. Grander poems, more passionate, more powerful, are many; but there are none in which the pure love of beauty, Greek in its healthy symmetry, Christian in its reverent earnestness, has produced work so complete and exquisite as the early poems of Milton and Tennyson.

Their best qualities are the same. They are marked by the same exact observation of Nature, the same sensitive perception of her most

significant aspects, the same charm of simple and musical description. Read Tennyson's "Ode to Memory,"—for instance, the description of the poet's home:—

Come from the woods that belt the gray hillside,
The seven elms, the poplars four
That stand beside my father's door;
And chiefly from the brook that loves
To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed sand
Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,
Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,
In every elbow and turn,
The filtered tribute of the rough woodland.
O! hither lead my feet!
Pour round my ears the livelong bleat
Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wattled folds
Upon the ridged wolds,
When the first matin-song hath waken'd loud,
Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,
What time the amber morn
Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung cloud.

Compare with this some lines from "L'Allegro":—

To hear the lark begin his flight,
And singing startle the dull night
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise!
. . . . . .
Some time walking, not unseen,
By hedge-row elms, on hillocks green,

Right against the eastern gate
Where the great sun begins his state,
Rob'd in flames and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;
While the ploughman, near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrow'd land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.
Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures
While the landscape round it measures;
Russet lawns and fallows gray,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
Mountains on whose barren breast
The labouring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim with daisies pied,
Shallow brooks and rivers wide.

Here are the same breadth of vision, delicacy of touch, atmospheric effect; the same sensitiveness to the simplest variations of light and sound; the same power to shed over the quiet scenery of the English country the light of an ideal beauty. It is an art beyond that of the landscape painter, and all the more perfect because so well concealed.

Another example will show us the similarity of the two poets in their more purely imaginative work, the description of that which they have seen only with the dreaming eyes of fancy.

Take the closing song, or epilogue of the Attendant Spirit, in "Comus":—

To the ocean now I fly
And those happy climes that lie
Up in the broad fields of the sky.
There I suck the liquid air,
All amidst the gardens fair
Of Hesperus, and his daughters three,
That sing about the golden tree:
Along the crisped shades and bowers
Revels the spruce and jocund Spring;
The graces and the rosy-bosomed Hours
Thither all their bounties bring;
There eternal summer dwells,
And west-winds, with musky wing,
About the cedarn alleys fling
Nard and cassia's balmy smells.
Iris there with humid bow
Waters the odourous banks, that blow
Flowers of more mingled hue
Than her purfled scarf can shew,
And drenches with Elysian dew
Beds of hyacinths and roses.

Compare this with Tennyson's "Recollections of the Arabian Nights":—

Thence thro' the garden I was drawn—
A realm of pleasance, many a mound,
And many a shadow-chequer'd lawn
Full of the city's stilly sound,

And deep myrrh-thickets blowing round
The stately cedar, tamarisks,
Thick rosaries of scented thorn,
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks
Graven with emblems of the time,
In honour of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

With dazed vision unawares
From the long alley's latticed shade
Emerged, I came upon the great
Pavilion of the Caliphat.
Right to the carven cedarn doors
Flung inward over spangled floors,
Broad-based flights of marble stairs
Ran up with golden balustrade,
After the fashion of the time,
And humour of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Here is more than a mere resemblance of words and themes, more than an admiring imitation or echoing of phrases; it is an identity of taste, spirit, temperament.

But the resemblance of forms also is here. We can trace it in such a minor trait as the skilful construction and use of double-words. This has often been noticed as a distinguishing feature of Tennyson's poetry. But Milton uses them almost as freely and even more magically. In "Comus," which has a few more

than a thousand lines, there are fifty-four double-epithets; in "L'Allegro" there are sixteen to a hundred and fifty lines; in "Il Penseroso" there are eleven to one hundred and seventy lines. Tennyson's "Ode to Memory," with a hundred and twenty lines, has fifteen double-words; "Mariana," with eighty lines, has nine; the "Lotos-Eaters," with two hundred lines, has thirty-two. If I should choose at random fifty such words from the early poems, I do not think that any one, not knowing them by heart, could tell at first glance which were Milton's and which Tennyson's. Let us try the experiment with the following list:—

Low-thoughted, empty-vaulted, rosy-white, rosy-bosomed, violet-embroidered, dew-impearled, over-exquisite, long-levelled, mild-eyed, white-handed, white-breasted, pure-eyed, sin-worn, self-consumed, self-profit, close-curtained, low-browed, ivy-crowned, gray-eyed, far-beaming, pale-eyed, down-steering, flower-inwoven, dewy-dark, moon-loved, smooth-swarded, quick-falling, slow-dropping, coral-paven, lily-cradled, amber-dropping, thrice-great, dewy-feathered, purple-spiked, foam-fountains, sand-built, night-steeds, full-flowing, sable-stoled, sun-steeped, star-led, pilot-stars, full-juiced, dew-fed, brazen-

headed, wisdom-bred, star-strown, low-embowed, iron-worded, globe-filled.

It will puzzle the reader to distinguish with any degree of certainty the authorship of these words. And this seems the more remarkable when we remember that there are two centuries of linguistic development and changing fashions of poetic diction between "Comus" and "Œnone."

Not less remarkable is the resemblance between Tennyson and Milton in their delicate yet wholesome sympathy with Nature, their perception of the relation of her moods and aspects to the human heart. This, in fact, is the keynote of "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso." The same world, seen under different lights and filled with different sounds, responds as deeply to the joyous, as to the melancholy, spirit. There is a profound meaning, a potent influence, in the outward shows of sky and earth. While the Lady of Shalott dwells in her pure seclusion, the sun shines, the lily blossoms on the river's breast, and the blue sky is unclouded; but when she passes the fatal line, and the curse has fallen on her, then

In the stormy eastwind straining
The pale yellow woods are waning,

The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining,
Over tower'd Camelot.

Thus, also, when the guilty pair in Eden had transgressed that sole command on which their happiness depended,—

Sky lowered, and muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completing of the mortal sin.

Ruskin says that this is "the pathetic fallacy"; for, as a matter of fact, the clouds do not weep, nor do the rivers complain, and he maintains that to speak of them as if they did these things is to speak with a certain degree of falsehood which is unworthy of the highest kind of art. But Ruskin may say what he pleases about Milton and Tennyson without much likelihood of persuading any sane person that their poetry is not profoundly true to Nature,—and most true precisely in its recognition of her power to echo and reflect the feelings of man. All her realities are but seemings; and she does seem to weep with them that weep, and to rejoice with them that do rejoice. Nothing can be more real than that. The chemistry of the sun is no more real than its message of joy; the specific gravity of the rain is of no greater consequence than its message

of sadness. And for the poet the first necessity is that he should be able to feel and interpret the sentiment of natural objects.

The art of landscape-poetry, I take it, consists in this: the choice and description of such actual images of external nature as are capable of being grouped and coloured by a dominant idea or feeling. Of this art the most perfect masters in English are Tennyson and Milton. And here I have reversed the order of the names, because I reckon that on this point Tennyson stands first. Take, for example, the little poem on "Mariana,"—that wonderful variation on the theme of loneliness, suggested by a single line in *Measure for Measure*. Here the thought is the weariness of waiting for one who does not come. The garden has grown black with moss, the nails in the wall are rusted, the thatch is full of weeds on the forsaken house; the moat is crusted over with creeping marsh-plants, the solitary poplar on the fen trembles eternally in the wind; slowly pass the night-hours, marked by the distant sounds of crowing cocks and lowing oxen; slower still the hours of day, while the fly buzzes on the window-pane, the mouse shrieks in the wainscot, the sparrow chirps on the roof; everything in the picture belongs to a life sunken in mo-

notony, lost in sadness, forgotten as a dead man out of mind. Even the light that falls into the moated grange is full of dust.

But most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.
Then, said she, "I am very dreary,
He will not come," she said;
She wept, "I am aweary, aweary,
Oh God, that I were dead."

Now all this is perfect painting of the things in nature which respond exactly to the sense of depression and solitude and intolerable, prolonged neglect, in a human soul. For an illustration of the opposite feeling turn to the description of the May morning in "The Gardener's Daughter." The passage is too long to quote here; but it is beyond doubt one of the most rich and joyous pictures in English verse. The world seems to be overflowing with blossom and song as the youth draws near to the maiden. It is love set to landscape. And yet there is not a single false touch; all is true and clear and precise, down to the lark's song which grows more rapid as he sinks towards his nest, and the passing cloud whose moisture brings out the sweet smell of the flowers.

Another trait common to the earlier poems of Milton and Tennyson is their purity of tone. They are sensuous,—indeed Milton declared that all good poetry must be sensuous,—but never for a moment, in a single line, are they sensual.

The Lady in "Comus" is the virginal embodiment of Milton's youthful ideal of virtue, clothed with the fairness of opening womanhood, armed with the sun-clad power of chastity. Darkness and danger cannot

Stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts.

Evil things have no power upon her, but shrink abashed from her presence.

So dear to heaven is saintly chastity
That when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liveried angels lackey her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt;
And in clear dream and solemn vision,
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear,
Till oft converse with heavenly habitants
Begins to cast a beam on th' outward shape,
The unpolluted temple of the mind,
And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
Till all be made immortal.

And now, beside this loveliest Lady, bring Isabel, with those

Eyes not down-dropt nor over-bright, but fed
With the clear-pointed flame of chastity,

Clear, without heat, undying, tended by
Pure vestal thoughts in the translucent fane
Of her still spirit.

Bring also her who, for her people's good, passed naked on her palfrey through the city streets,—Godiva, who

Rode forth, clothed on with chastity;
The deep air listen'd round her as she rode,
And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.

These are sisters, perfect in purity as in beauty, and worthy to be enshrined in the love of youth. They are ideals which draw the heart, not downward, but upward by the power of "*das ewig Weibliche.*"

There are many other points of resemblance between the early poems of Milton and Tennyson: echoes of thought like that sonnet, beginning

Check every outflash, every ruder sally
Of thought and speech: speak low, and give up wholly
Thy spirit to mild-minded melancholy,—

which seems almost as if it might have been written by "Il Penseroso": coincidences of taste and reading such as the fondness for the poet to whom Milton alludes as

Him that left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold,

Of Camball and of Algarsife
And who had Canace to wife,—

and whom Tennyson calls

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath
Preluded those melodious bursts that fill
The spacious times of great Elizabeth
With sounds that echo still:

likenesses of manner such as the imitation of the smooth elegiac poets in "Lycidas" and "Œnone." But a critic who wishes his conclusions to be accepted with a sense of gratitude must leave his readers to supply some illustrations for themselves. And this I will be prudent enough to do; expressing only the opinion that those who study the subject carefully will find that one of the closest kinships in literature is that between the early poems of Milton and Tennyson.

III

There are two causes which have power to change the natural or premeditated course of a man's life,—the shock of a great outward catastrophe, and the shock of a profound inward grief.

When the former comes, it shatters all his cherished plans, renders the execution of his

favourite projects impossible, directs the current of his energy into new channels, plunges him into conflict with circumstances, turns his strength against corporeal foes, and produces a change of manner, speech, life, which is at once evident and tangible. With the latter, it is different. The inward shock brings with it no alteration of the visible environment, leaves the man where he stood before, to the outward eye unchanged, free to tread the same paths and pursue the same designs; and yet, in truth, not free; most deeply, though most subtly, changed; for the soul, shaken from her serene repose, and losing the self-confidence of youth, either rises into a higher life or sinks into a lower; meeting the life-and-death questions which haunt the gloom of a deep personal bereavement, she finds an answer either in the eternal Yes or in the eternal No; and though form and accent and mode of speech remain the same, the thoughts and intents of the heart are altered forever.

To Milton came the outward conflict; to Tennyson, the inward grief. As we follow them beyond the charmed circle of their early years, we must trace the parallel between them, if indeed we can find it at all, far below the surface; although even yet we shall see some ex-

ternal resemblances amid many and strong contrasts.

Milton's catastrophe was the civil war, sweeping over England like a flood. But the fate which involved him in it was none other than his own conscience. This it was that drew him, by compulsion more strong than sweet, from the florid literary hospitality of Italian mutual laudation societies into the vortex of tumultuous London, made him "lay aside his singing robes" for the heavy armour of the controversialist, and leave his "calm and pleasant solitariness, fed with cheerful and confident thoughts, to embark on a troubled sea of noises and harsh disputes." His conscience, I say, not his tastes: all these led him the other way. But an irresistible sense of duty caught him, and dragged him, as it were by the neck, to the verge of the precipice, and flung him down into the thick of the stormiest conflict that England had ever seen.

Once there, he does not retreat. He quits himself like a man. He is not a Puritan. He loves many things that the grim Puritans hate, —art, music, fine literature, nature, beauty. But one thing he loves more than all,—liberty! For that he will fight,—fight on the Puritan side, fight against anybody, desperately, per-

tinaciously, with grand unconsciousness of possible defeat. He catches the lust of combat, and "drinks delight of battle with his peers." The serene poet is transformed into a thundering pamphleteer. He launches deadly bolts against tyranny in Church, in State, in society. He strikes at the corrupt clergy, at the false, cruel king, at the self-seeking bigots disguised as friends of freedom. He is absorbed in strife. Verse is forgotten. But one brief strain of true poetry bursts from him at the touch of personal grief. The rest is all buried, choked down, concealed. The full stream of his energy, unstinted, undivided, flows into the struggle for freedom and truth; and even when the war is ended, the good cause betrayed by secret enemies and foolish friends, the freedom of England sold back into the hands of the treacherous Stuarts, Milton fights on, like some guerilla captain in a far mountain region, who has not heard, or will not believe, the news of surrender.

The blow which fell on Tennyson was inward. The death of Arthur Henry Hallam, in 1833, caused no convulsion in English politics, brought no visible disaster to Church or State, sent only the lightest and most transient ripple of sorrow across the surface of society; but to the heart of one man it was the shock of a spiri-

tual earthquake, upheaving the foundations of life and making the very arch of heaven tremble. Bound to Hallam by one of those rare friendships passing the love of women, Tennyson felt his loss in the inmost fibres of his being. The world was changed, darkened, filled with secret conflicts. The importunate questions of human life and destiny thronged upon his soul. The ideal peace, the sweet, art-satisfied seclusion, the dreams of undisturbed repose, became impossible for him. He must fight, not for a party cause, but for spiritual freedom and immortal hopes, not against incorporate and embattled enemies, but against unseen foes,—thrones, principalities, and powers of darkness.

We have some record of this strife in poems like "Two Voices," and "The Vision of Sin." The themes here treated are the deepest and most serious that can engage the mind. The worth of life, the significance of suffering, the reality of virtue, the existence of truth, the origin and end of evil, human responsibility, Divine goodness, mysteries of the now and the hereafter,—these are the problems with which the poet is forced to deal, and he dares to deal with them face to face. I will not say that he finds, as yet, the true solution; there is a more

profound and successful treatment of the same problems to follow in *In Memoriam*. But I think that, so far as they go, these poems are right and true; and in them, enlightened by grief, strengthened by inward combat, the poet has struck a loftier note than can be heard in the beautiful poems of his youth.

For this, at least, is clear. The poet has now become a man. The discipline of sorrow has availed. Life is real and earnest to him. He grapples with the everlasting facts of humanity. Men and women are closer to him. He can write poems like "Dora," "Ulysses," "St. Simeon Stylites," as wonderful for their difference in tone and subject as for their intense humanity and absolute truth to nature. He has learned to feel a warm sympathy with

Men, my brothers, men, the workers:

to care for all that touches their welfare; to rejoice in the triumphs of true liberty; to thunder in scorn and wrath against the social tyrannies that crush the souls of men, and

The social lies that warp us from the living truth.

It is true that there is no actual and visible conflict, no civil war raging to engulf him. He is not called upon to choose between his love

of poetry and his love of country, nor to lay aside his singing-robes even for a time. It is his fortune, or misfortune, to have fallen upon an age of prosperity and settled government. But in that great unseen warfare which is ever waging between truth and error, right and wrong, freedom and oppression, light and darkness, he bears his part and bears it well, by writing such poems as "Locksley Hall," "Sea Dreams," "Enoch Arden," "Aylmer's Field"; and these entitle him to high rank as a poet of humanity.

Are they then so far apart, Milton and Tennyson, the Latin Secretary of Cromwell and the Poet Laureate of Queen Victoria,—are they so far apart in the spiritual activity of their lives as their circumstances seem to place them? Are they as unlike in the substance as they are in the form of their utterance on the great questions of life? I think not. Even here, where the lines of their work seem to diverge most widely, we may trace some deep resemblances, under apparent differences.

It is a noteworthy fact that a most important place in the thought and writing of both of these men has been occupied by the subject of marriage. How many of Tennyson's poems are devoted to this theme! "The Miller's Daughter," "The Lord of Burleigh," "Lady

Clare," "Edwin Morris," "The Brook," "The Gardener's Daughter," "Love and Duty," "Locksley Hall," *The Princess*, *Maud*, "Enoch Arden," "Aylmer's Field," "The Golden Supper," "The Window," "The First Quarrel," "The Wreck," "The Flight," and the *Idylls of the King*, all have the thought of union between man and woman, and the questions which arise in connection with it, at their root.

In "The Coming of Arthur," Tennyson makes his chosen hero rest all his power upon a happy and true marriage:—

> *What happiness to reign a lonely king*
> *Vext with waste dreams? For saving I be join'd*
> *To her that is the fairest under heaven,*
> *I seem as nothing in the mighty world,*
> *And cannot will my will nor work my work*
> *Wholly, nor make myself in mine own realm*
> *Victor and lord. But were I join'd with her,*
> *Then might we live together as one life,*
> *And reigning with one will in everything,*
> *Have power on this dark land to lighten it,*
> *And power on this dead world to make it live.*

Compare with this Adam's complaint in Paradise:—

> *In solitude*
> *What happiness? Who can enjoy alone?*
> *Or all enjoying what contentment find?*

his demand for a companion equal with himself,

"fit to participate all rational delight"; and his description of his first sight of Eve:

> *She disappeared and left me dark. I wak'd*
> *To find her, or forever to deplore*
> *Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure.*

Those four tremendous pamphlets on Divorce with which Milton horrified his enemies and shocked his friends, have underlying all their errors and extravagances the great doctrine that a genuine marriage must be a true companionship and union of souls—a doctrine equally opposed to the licentious, and to the conventional, view of wedlock.

This is precisely Tennyson's position. His bitterest invectives are against marriages of convenience and avarice. He praises "that true marriage, that healthful and holy family life, which has its roots in mutual affection, in mutual fitness, and which is guarded by a constancy as strong as heaven's blue arch and yet as spontaneous as the heart-beats of a happy child." But in praising this, Tennyson speaks of what he has possessed and known: Milton could have spoken only of what he had desired and missed save for one brief interval. A world-wide difference, more than enough to account for anything of incompleteness in Milton's views of women.

What injustice the world has done him on this point! Married at an age when a man who has preserved the lofty ideals and personal purity of youth is peculiarly liable to deception, to a woman far below him in character and intellect, a pretty fool utterly unfitted to take a sincere and earnest view of life or to sympathise with him in his studies; deserted by her a few weeks after the wedding-day; met by stubborn refusal and unjust reproaches in every attempt to reclaim and reconcile her; accused by her family of disloyalty in politics, and treated as if he were unworthy of honourable consideration; what wonder that his heart experienced a great revulsion, that he began to doubt the reality of such womanhood as he had described and immortalised in "Comus," that he sought relief in elaborating a doctrine of divorce which should free him from the unworthy and irksome tie of a marriage which was in truth but an empty mockery? That divorce doctrine which he propounded in the heat of personal indignation, disguised even from himself beneath a mask of professedly calm philosophy, was surely false, and we cannot but condemn it. But can we condemn his actual conduct, so nobly inconsistent with his own theory? Can we condemn the man, as

we see him forgiving and welcoming his wife driven by stress of poverty and danger to return to the home which she had frivolously forsaken; welcoming also, and to the best of his ability sheltering, her whole family of Philistines, who were glad enough, for all their pride, to find a refuge from the perils of civil war in the house of the despised schoolmaster and Commonwealth-man; bearing patiently, for his wife's sake, with their weary presence and shallow talk in his straitened dwelling-place until the death of the father-in-law, whose sense of honour was never strong enough to make him pay one penny of his daughter's promised marriage-portion,—can we condemn Milton as we see him acting thus? And as we see him, after a few months of happy union with a second wife, again left a widower with three daughters, two of whom, at least, never learned to love him; blind, poor, with few friends; disliked and robbed by his undutiful children, who did not scruple to cheat him in the marketings, sell his books to the rag-pickers, and tell the servants that the best news they could hear would be the news of their father's death; forced at length in very instinct of self-protection to take as his third wife a plain, honest woman who would be faithful and kind

in her care of him and his house; can we wonder if, after this experience, he thought somewhat doubtfully of women?

But of woman, woman as God made her and meant her to be, woman as she is in the true purity and unspoiled beauty of her nature, he never thought otherwise than nobly and reverently. His thought is expressed in his sonnet to his second wife, in whom for one fleeting year his heart tasted the best of earthly joys, the joy of a perfect companionship, but who was lost to him in the birth of her first child:—

Methought I saw my late espoused saint
Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
Rescued from death by force though pale and faint.
Mine, as whom washed from spot of child-bed taint
Purification in the old Law did save,
And such as yet once more I trust to have
Full sight of her in Heaven, without restraint,
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind;
Her face was veiled, yet to my fancied sight
Love, sweetness, goodness in her person shined
So clear as in no face with more delight.
But O, as to embrace me she inclined,
I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night.

There is no more beautiful and heartfelt praise of perfect womanhood in all literature than this: Tennyson has never written with more unfeigned worship of wedded love.

It is true, indeed, that Milton declares that woman is inferior to man "in the mind and inward faculties," but he follows this declaration with the most exquisite description of her peculiar excellences:

When I approach
Her loveliness, so absolute she seems
And in herself complete, so well to know
Her own, that what she wills to do or say
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best:
Authority and reason on her wait
As one intended first, not after made
Occasionally; and to consummate all,
Greatness of mind and nobleness their seat
Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
About her as a guard angelic placed.

It is true that he teaches, in accordance with the doctrine of the Bible, that it is the wife's duty to obey her husband, to lean upon, and follow, his larger strength when it is exercised in wisdom. But he never places the woman below the man, always at his side; the divinely-dowered consort and counterpart, not the same, but equal, supplying his deficiencies and solacing his defects,

His likeness, his fit help, his other self,

with whom he may enjoy

Union of mind or in us both one soul.

And love like this

Leads up to heaven; is both the way and guide.

Compare these teachings with those of Tennyson in *The Princess*, where under a veil of irony, jest mixed with earnest, he shows the folly of the modern attempt to change woman into a man in petticoats, describes the female lecturer and the sweet girl graduates in delightfully absurd aspects, overthrows the visionary towers of the Female College with a baby's touch, and closes the most good-humoured of satires with a picture of the true relationship of man and woman, so beautiful and so wise that neither poetry nor philosophy can add a word to it.

For woman is not undevelopt man,
But diverse: could we make her as the man,
Sweet Love were slain; his dearest bond is this,
Not like to like, but like in difference.
Yet in the long years liker must they grow;
The man be more of woman, she of man;
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world;
She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,
Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;
Till at the last she set herself to man
Like perfect music unto noble words.
. . . . . .

Then comes the statelier Eden back to men:
Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm:

Then springs the crowning race of humankind.
May these things be!

A second point in which we may trace a deep resemblance between Milton and Tennyson is their intense love of country. This is not always a prominent characteristic of great poets. In Goethe we see the cold indifference of the self-centred artistic mind, careless of his country's degradation and enslavement, provided only the all-conquering Napoleon will leave him his poetic leisure and freedom. In Byron we see the wild rebelliousness of the poet of passion, deserting, disowning, and reviling his native land in the sullen fury of personal anger. But Milton and Tennyson are true patriots—Englishmen to the heart's core. They do not say, "My country, right or wrong!" They protest in noble scorn against all kinds of tyrannies and hypocrisies. They are not bound in conscienceless servility to any mere political party. They are the partisans of England, because England to them means freedom, justice, righteousness, Christianity.

Milton sees her "rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks;" or "as an eagle, mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam; purging and scaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of

heavenly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms."

Tennyson sings her praise as

the land that freemen till,
That sober-suited Freedom chose,
The land where, girt with friends or foes,
A man may speak the thing he will.

He honours and reveres the Queen, but it is because her power is the foundation and defence of liberty; because of her it may be said that

Statesmen at her council met
Who knew the season when to take
Occasion by the hand, and make
The bounds of freedom wider yet,

By shaping some august decree,
Which kept her throne unshaken still,
Broad-bas'd upon the people's will,
And compass'd by the inviolate sea.

Think you he would have written thus if Charles Stuart, bribe-taker, extortioner, tyrant, dignified and weak betrayer of his best friends, had been his sovereign? His own words tell us on which side he would have stood in that

great revolt. In the verses written on "The Third of February, 1852," he reproaches the Parliament for their seeming purpose to truckle to Louis Napoleon, after the *coup d'état*, and cries:

Shall we fear him? *Our own we never feared.*
From our first Charles by force we wrung our claims.
Pricked by the Papal spur, we reared,
We flung the burthen of the second James.

And again, in the poem entitled "England and America in 1782," he justifies the American Revolution as a lesson taught by England herself, and summons his country to exult in the freedom of her children.

But Thou, rejoice with liberal joy!
Lift up thy rocky face,
And shatter, when the storms are black,
In many a streaming torrent back,
The seas that shock thy base.

Whatever harmonies of law
The growing world assume,
The work is thine,—the single note
From the deep chord that Hampden smote
Will vibrate to the doom.

Here is the grand Miltonic ring, not now disturbed and roughened by the harshness of opposition, the bitterness of disappointment, the sadness of despair, but rounded in the calm

fulness of triumph. "The whirligig of Time brings in his revenges." The bars of oppression are powerless to stay the tide of progress.

> *The old order changeth, yielding place to new,*
> *And God fulfils Himself in many ways.*

If Milton were alive to-day he would find his ideals largely realised; freedom of worship, freedom of the press, freedom of education, no longer things to be fought for, but things to be enjoyed; the principle of popular representation firmly settled in the constitution of the British monarchy (which Tennyson calls "a crowned Republic,") and the spirit of "the good old cause," the people's cause which seemed lost when the second Charles came back, now victorious and guiding the destinies of the nation into a yet wider and more glorious liberty.

But what would be the effect of such an environment upon such a character as his? What would Milton have been in the nineteenth century? If we can trust the prophecies of his early years; if we can regard the hints of his own preferences and plans, from whose fruition a stern sense of duty, like a fiery-sworded angel, barred him out, we must imagine the course of his life, the development of his genius, as something very different from what they ac-

tually were. An age of peace and prosperity, the comfort and quietude of a well-ordered home, freedom to pursue his studious researches and cultivate his artistic tastes to the full, an atmosphere of liberal approbation and encouragement,—circumstances such as these would have guided his life and work into a much closer parallel with Tennyson, and yet they never could have made him other than himself. For his was a seraphic spirit, strong, indomitable, unalterable; and even the most subtile influence of surroundings could never have destroyed or changed him fundamentally. So it was true, as Macaulay has said, that "from the Parliament and from the court, from the conventicle and from the Gothic cloister, from the gloomy and sepulchral rites of the Roundheads, and from the Christmas revel of the hospitable cavalier, his nature selected and drew to itself whatever was great and good, while it rejected all the base and pernicious ingredients by which these finer elements were defiled." And yet the very process of rejection had its effect upon him. The fierce conflicts of theology and politics in which for twenty years he was absorbed left their marks upon him for good and for evil. They tried him as by fire. They brought out all his strength of action and endurance. They

made his will like steel. They gave him the God-like power of one who has suffered to the uttermost. But they also disturbed, at least for a time, the serenity of his mental processes. They made the flow of his thought turbulent and uneven. They narrowed, at the same time that they intensified, his emotions. They made him an inveterate controversialist, whose God must argue and whose angels were debaters. They crushed his humour and his tenderness. Himself, however, the living poet, the supreme imagination, the seraphic utterance, they did not crush, but rather strengthened. And so it came to pass that in him we have the miracle of literature,—the lost river of poetry springing suddenly, as at Divine command, from the bosom of the rock, no trickling and diminished rill, but a sweeping flood, laden with richest argosies of thought.

IV

How to speak of *Paradise Lost* I know not. To call it a master-work is superfluous. To say that it stands absolutely alone and supreme is both true and false. Parts of it are like other poems, and yet there is no poem in the world like it. The theme is old; had been treated by

the author of Genesis in brief, by Du Bartas and other rhymers at length. The manner is old, inherited from Virgil and Dante. And yet, beyond all question, *Paradise Lost* is one of the most unique, individual, unmistakable poems in the world's literature. Imitations of it have been attempted by Montgomery, Pollok, Bickersteth, and other pious versifiers, but they are no more like the original than St. Peter's in Montreal is like St. Peter's in Rome, or than the pile of pinnacled limestone on New York's Fifth Avenue is like the Cathedral of Milan, with its

> *Chanting quires,*
> *The giant windows' blazoned fires,*
> *The height, the space, the gloom, the glory,*
> *A mount of marble, a hundred spires!*

Imitation may be the sincerest flattery, but imitation never produces the deepest resemblance. The man who imitates is concerned with that which is outward, but kinship of spirit is inward. He who is next of kin to a master-mind will himself be too great for the work of a copyist; he will be influenced, if at all, unconsciously; and though the intellectual relationship may be expressed also in some external traits of speech and manner, the true likeness will be in the temper of the soul and the same-

ness of the moral purpose. Such likeness, I think, we can discern between *Paradise Lost* and Tennyson's works, the *Idylls of the King* and *In Memoriam*.

I shall speak first and more briefly of the Idylls, because I intend to make them the subject of another study from a different point of view. At present we have to consider only their relations to the work of Milton.

In this connection we ought not to forget that Milton was the first to call attention to the legend of King Arthur as a fit subject for a great English poem. Having made up his mind to write a national epic which should do for England that which Tasso and Ariosto had done for Italy, "that which the greatest and choicest wits of Athens and Rome, and those Hebrews of old did for their country," Milton tells us that he entertained for a long time a design to

Revoke into song the kings of our island,
Arthur yet from his underground hiding stirring to warfare,
Or to tell of those that sat round him as Knights of his Table;
Great-souled heroes unmatched, and (O might the spirit but aid me),
Shiver the Saxon phalanxes under the shock of the Britons.

The design was abandoned: but it was a fortunate fate that brought it at last into the hands of the one man, since Milton died, who was able to carry it to completion.

Compare the verse of the *Idylls* with that of *Paradise Lost.*

Both Milton and Tennyson were led by their study of the classic poets to understand that rhyme is the least important element in certain forms of poetry; the noblest music is made by the concord rather than by the unison of sounds, and the coincidence of final consonants is but a slight matter compared with the cadence of syllables and the accented harmony of long vowels. Indeed it may be questioned whether the inevitable recurrence of the echo of rhyme does not sometimes disturb and break the music more than it enhances it. Certainly Milton thought so, and he frankly took great credit to himself for setting the example, "the first in English, of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poems from the troublesome and modern bondage of riming."

There were many to follow him in this path, but for the most part with failure. They fell into the mistake of thinking that because unrhymed verse was more free it was less difficult, and, making their liberty a cloak of poetic

license, they poured forth floods of accurately measured prose under the delusion that they were writing blank-verse.

The fact is that this is the one form of verse which requires the most delicate ear and the most patient labour. In Cowper, Coleridge, Southey, Wordsworth, Browning, these preconditions are often wanting. With the possible exception of Matthew Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum*, the first English blank-verse since Milton worthy to compare with that of *Paradise Lost*, is found in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*.

There is a marked contrast in the movement of the two poems. Each has its own distinctive quality. In Milton we observe a more stately and majestic march, more of rhythm: in Tennyson a sweeter and more perfect tone, more of melody. These qualities correspond, in verse, to form and colour in painting. We might say that Milton is the greater draughtsman, as Michael Angelo; Tennyson the better colourist, as Giorgione. But the difference between the two painters is greater than that between the two poets. For the methods by which the latter produce their effects are substantially the same; and their results differ chiefly as the work of a strong, but sometimes heavy, hand differs

from that of a hand less powerful, but better disciplined.

De Quincey has said, somewhere or other, that finding fault with Milton's versification is a dangerous pastime. The lines which you select for criticism have a way of justifying themselves at your expense. That which you have condemned as a palpable blunder, an unpardonable discord, comes out from the mouth of a better reader majestically right and harmonious. And so, continues De Quincey, when you attempt to take liberties with any passage of his, you feel as you might if you came upon what appeared to be a dead lion in a forest. You have an uncomfortable suspicion that he may not be dead, but only sleeping; or perhaps not even sleeping, but only shamming. Many an unwary critic has been thus unpleasantly surprised. Notably Drs. Johnson and Bentley, and in a small way Walter Savage Landor, roaring over Milton's mistakes, have proved themselves distinctly in the wrong.

But for all that, there *are* mistakes in *Paradise Lost*. I say it with due fear, and not without a feeling of gratitude that the purpose of this essay does not require me to specify them. But a sense of literary candour forces me to confess the opinion that the great epic

contains passages in which the heaviness of the thought has overweighted the verse, passages which can be read only with tiresome effort, lines in which the organ-player's foot seems to have slipped upon the pedals and made a ponderous discord. This cannot be said of the Idylls. Their music is not broken or jangled. It may never rise to the loftiest heights, but it never falls to the depths. Tennyson has written nothing as strong as the flight of Satan through Chaos, nothing as sublime as the invocation to Light, nothing as rich as the first description of Eden; but taking the blank-verse of the Idylls through and through, as a work of art, it is more finished, more perfectly musical than that of *Paradise Lost*.

The true relationship of these poems lies, as I have said, beneath the surface. It consists in their ideal unity of theme and lesson. For what is it in fact with which Milton and Tennyson concern themselves? Not the mere story of Adam and Eve's transgression; not the legendary wars of Arthur and his knights; but the everlasting conflict of the human soul with the adversary, the struggle against sin, the power of the slightest taint of evil to infect, pollute, destroy all that is fairest and best. Both poets tell the story of a paradise lost, and lost through sin; first, the happy garden de-

signed by God to be the home of stainless innocence and bliss, whose gates are closed forever against the guilty race; and then, the glorious realm of peace and love and law which the strong and noble king would make and defend amid the world's warfares, but which is secretly corrupted, undermined, destroyed at last in blackening gloom.

To Arthur, as to Adam, destruction comes through that which seems, and indeed is, the loveliest and the dearest. The beauteous mother of mankind, fairer than all her daughters since, drawn by her own desire of knowledge into disobedience, yields the first entrance to the fatal sin; and Guinevere, the imperial-moulded queen, led by degrees from a true friendship into a false love for Lancelot, infects the court and the whole realm with death. Vain are all safeguards and defenses; vain all high resolves and noble purposes; vain the instructions of the archangel charging the possessors of Eden to

> *Be strong, live happy, and love! but first of all*
> *Him whom to love is to obey!*

vain the strait vows and solemn oaths by which the founder of the Table bound his knights

> *To reverence the King as if he were*
> *Their conscience, and their conscience as their King,*
> *To break the heathen and uphold the Christ.*

All is vain, for sin comes creeping in; and sin, the slightest, the most seeming-venial, the most beautiful, is the seed of shame and death. This is the profound truth to which the *Idylls of the King* and *Paradise Lost* alike bear witness. And to teach this, to teach it in forms of highest art which should live forever in the imagination of the race, was the moral purpose of Milton and Tennyson.

But there is another aspect of this theme, which is hardly touched in the *Idylls*. Sin has a relation to God as well as to man, since it exists in His universe. Is it stronger than the Almighty? Is His will wrath? Is His purpose destruction? Is darkness the goal of all things, and is there no other significance in death; no deliverance from its gloomy power? In *Paradise Lost* Milton has dealt with this problem also. Side by side with the record "of man's first disobedience" he has constructed the great argument whereby he would

Assert eternal Providence
And justify the ways of God to men.

The poem has, therefore, parallel with its human side, a divine side, for which we shall look in vain among the *Idylls of the King*. Tennyson has approached this problem from another

standpoint in a different manner. And if we wish to know his solution of it, his answer to the mystery of death, we must look for it in *In Memoriam.*

This poem is an elegy for Arthur Hallam, finished throughout its seven hundred and twenty-four stanzas with all that delicate care which the elegiac form requires, and permeated with the tone of personal grief, not passionate, but profound and pure. But it is such an elegy as the world has never seen before, and never will see again. It is the work of years, elaborated with such skill and adorned with such richness of poetic imagery as other men have thought too great to bestow upon an epic. It is the most exquisite structure ever reared above a human grave, more wondrous and more immortal than that world-famous tomb which widowed Artemisia built for the Carian Mausolus. But it is also something greater and better. Beyond the narrow range of personal loss and loneliness, it rises into the presence of the eternal realities, faces the great questions of our mysterious existence, and reaches out to lay hold of that hope which is unseen but abiding, whereby alone we are saved. Its motto might well be given in the words of St. Paul: *For our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for*

us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

At first sight it may seem almost absurd to compare the elegy with the epic, and impossible to discover any resemblance between those long-rolling, thunderous periods of blank-verse and these short swallow-flights of song which "dip their wings in tears and skim away." The comparison of *In Memoriam* with "Lycidas" would certainly appear more easy and obvious; so obvious, indeed, that it has been made a thousand times, and is fluently repeated by every critic who has had occasion to speak of English elegies. But this is just one of those cases in which an external similarity conceals a fundamental unlikeness. For, in the first place, Edward King, to whose memory *Lycidas* was dedicated, was far from being an intimate friend of Milton, and his lament has no touch of the deep heart-sorrow which throbs in *In Memoriam*. And, in the second place, "Lycidas" is in no sense a philosophical poem, does not descend into the depths or attempt to answer the vexed questions. But *In Memoriam* is, in its very essence, profoundly and

thoroughly philosophical; and this brings it into relation with *Paradise Lost*. They are the two most famous poems—with the supreme exception of Dante's *Divine Comedy*—which deal directly with the mysteries of faith and reason, the doctrine of God and immortality.

There is a point, however, in which we must acknowledge an essential and absolute difference between the great epic and the great elegy, something deeper and more vital than any contrast of form and metre. *Paradise Lost* is a theological poem, *In Memoriam* is a religious poem. The distinction is narrow, but deep. Religion differs from theology as life differs from biology.

Milton approaches the problem from the side of reason, resting, it is true, upon a supernatural revelation, but careful to reduce all its contents to a logical form, demanding a clearly-formulated and closely-linked explanation of all things, and seeking to establish his system of truth upon the basis of sound argument. His method is distinctly rational; Tennyson's is emotional. He has no linked chain of deductive reasoning; no sharp-cut definition of objective truths. His faith is subjective, intuitive. Where proof fails him, he will still believe. When the processes of reason are shaken, dis-

turbed, frustrated; when absolute demonstration appears impossible, and doubt claims a gloomy empire in the mind, then the deathless fire that God has kindled in the breast burns towards that heaven which is its source and home, and the swift answer of immortal love leaps out to solve the mystery of the grave. Thus Tennyson *feels* after God, and leads us by the paths of faith and emotion to the same goal which Milton reaches by the road of reason and logic.

Each of these methods is characteristic not only of the poet who uses it, but also of the age in which it is employed. *Paradise Lost* does not echo more distinctly the time of the Westminster divines than *In Memoriam* represents the time of Maurice and Kingsley and Robertson. It is a mistake to think that the tendency of our day is towards rationalism. That was the drift of Milton's time. Our modern movement is towards emotionalism, a religion of feeling, a subjective system in which the sentiments and affections shall be acknowledged as tests of truth. This movement has undoubtedly an element of danger in it, as well as an element of promise. It may be carried to a false extreme. But this much is clear,—it has been the strongest inspiration of the men of

our own time who have fought against atheism and the cold negations of scientific despair. The music of it is voiced forever in *In Memoriam*. It is the heart now, not the colder reason, which rises to

Assert eternal Providence
And justify the ways of God to men.

But the answer is none other than that which was given by the blind poet. The larger meanings of *In Memoriam* and *Paradise Lost*—whatever we may say of their lesser meanings—find their harmony in the same

Strong Son of God.

Is Tennyson a Pantheist because he speaks of

One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves?

Then so is Milton a Pantheist when he makes the Son say to the Father,—

Thou shalt be all in all, and I in thee
Forever, and in me all whom thou lovest.

Is Tennyson an Agnostic because he speaks of the "truths that never can be proved," and finds a final answer to the mysteries of life only

in a hope which is hidden "behind the veil"? Then so is Milton an Agnostic, because he declares

Heaven is for thee too high
To know what passes there. Be lowly wise;
Think only what concerns thee and thy being.
Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid;
Leave them to God above.

Is Tennyson a Universalist because he says,

Oh, yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood?

Then so is Milton a Universalist when he exclaims,—

O, goodness infinite, goodness immense,
That all this good of evil shall produce,
And evil turn to good!

The faith of the two poets is one; the meaning of *In Memoriam* and *Paradise Lost* is the same. The hope of the universe is in the Son of God, whom Milton and Tennyson both call "Immortal Love." To Him through mists and shadows we must look up,

Gladly behold, though but his utmost skirts
Of glory, and far-off his steps adore.

Thus our cry out of the darkness shall be answered. Knowledge shall grow from more to more.

Light after light well-used we shall attain,
And to the end persisting safe arrive.

But this can come only through self-surrender and obedience, only through the consecration of the free-will to God who gave it; and the highest prayer of the light-seeking, upward-striving human soul is this:—

O, living will that shalt endure,
When all that seems shall suffer shock,
Rise in the spiritual Rock,
Flow through our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out the dust
A voice as unto him that hears,
A cry above the conquered years,
To one that with us works and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be proved
Until we close with all we love,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

V

THE PRINCESS AND MAUD

IT was somewhere in the forties of the last century that Edgar Allan Poe put forth a new doctrine of poetry, which, if I remember rightly, ran somewhat on this wise: 'The greatest poems must be short. For the poetic inspiration is of the nature of a flash of lightning and endures only for a moment. But what a man writes between the flashes is worth comparatively little. All long poems are therefore, of necessity, poor in proportion to their length,—or at best they are but a mass of pudding in which the luscious plums of poetry are embedded and partially concealed.'

This ingenious theory (which has a slight air of special pleading) has never been generally accepted. Indeed, at the very time when Poe was propounding it, and using the early poems of Tennyson as an illustration, the world at large was taking for granted the truth of the opposite theory, and demanding that the newly discovered poet should prove his claim to greatness by writing something long. "We want to

see," said one of the best of the critics in 1842, "a poem of power and *sustained energy*. Mr. Tennyson already enjoys a high position; let him aim at one still higher; why not the highest?"

I believe that it was, at least partly, in answer to demands of this kind that *The Princess* appeared in 1847. Poe might have claimed it as an illustration of his theory. For it certainly adds more to the bulk of Tennyson's poems than it contributes to the lasting fame of his poetry. Its length is greater than its merit. There are parts of it in which the style falls below the level of poetry of the first rank; and these are the very parts where the verse is most diffuse and the story moves most slowly through thickets of overgrown description. The "flash of lightning" theory of poetic inspiration, although it is very far from being true or complete as a whole, appears to fit this poem with peculiar nicety; for the finest things in it are quite distinct, and so much better than the rest that they stand out as if illumined with sudden light.

Perhaps there are still some admirers of Tennyson who will dispute this opinion. They may point out the admirable moral lesson of *The Princess*, which is all too evident, and

dwell upon its influence in advancing the higher education of women, which is indisputable. They may insist upon its manifest superiority to other contemporary novels in verse, like *Lucile* or *The Angel in the House*. Grant all this. Still it does not touch the point of the criticism. For it is Tennyson himself who gives the standard of comparison. If Giulio Romano had painted the "Madonna di Foligno," we might call it a great success—for him, but not for Raphael. Beside "La Sistina," or even beside the little "Madonna del Granduca," it suffers. "Enoch Arden," "Dora," "Locksley Hall," are all shorter than *The Princess* but they are better. Their inspiration is more sustained. The style fits the substance more perfectly. The poetic life in them is stronger and more enduring. One might say of them that they have more soul and less body. In brief, what I mean is this: *The Princess* is one of the minor poems of a major poet.

But there is poetry enough scattered through it to make the reputation of a man of ordinary talent. What I want to do in this chapter is to value this element of genuine poetry at its true worth, and to distinguish it, if I can, from the lower elements which seem to me to mar the beauty and weaken the force of the poem.

The Princess has for its theme the emancipation of woman,—a great question, certainly, but also a vexed question, and one which is better adapted to prose than to poetry, at least in the present stage of its discussion. It has so many sides, and such humourous aspects, and such various complications, that it is difficult to deal with it altogether in the realm of the ideal; and yet I suppose the man does not live, certainly the poet can hardly be found, who would venture to treat it altogether as a subject for realistic comedy. That would be a daring, perhaps a fatal experiment,—especially now, since women have so largely obtained that political suffrage which some of them have long and justly demanded, and are beginning to enjoy, (more or less,) the privilege of going in person to the polls to cast their votes.

This aspect of the subject was still remote in the middle of the Nineteenth Century when Tennyson wrote. He was dealing with the "woman-question" in its primary form, particularly in its relation to education. But even so he appears to have felt its difficulties and perils, and to have had a touch of that malady which the French call *froid aux yeux*, and the Americans "cold feet."

He calls his story of the Princess Ida, who set

out to be the deliverer of her sex by founding a Woman's University, and ended by marrying the Prince who came to woo her in feminine disguise, "a Medley." He represents the imaginary poet, who appears in the Prologue, and who undertakes to dress up the story in verse for the ladies and gentlemen to whom it was told at a picnic, as being in a strait betwixt two parties in the audience: one party demanding a burlesque; the other party wishing for something "true-heroic." And so he says,—

> *I moved as in a strange diagonal,*
> *And maybe neither pleased myself nor them.*

This diagonal movement may have been prudent; but it is unquestionably a little confusing. One hardly knows how to take the poet. At one moment he is very much in earnest; the next moment he seems to be making fun of the woman's college. The style is like a breeze which blows northwest by southeast; it may be a very lively breeze, and full of sweet odours from every quarter; but the trouble is that we cannot tell which way to trim our sails to catch the force of it, and so our craft goes jibing to and fro, without making progress in any direction.

I think we feel this uncertainty most of all

in the characters of the Princess and the Prince, —and I name the Princess first because she is evidently the hero of the poem. Sometimes she appears very admirable and lovable, in a stately kind of beauty; but again she seems like a woman from whom a man with ordinary prudence and a proper regard for his own sense of humour would promptly and carefully flee away, appreciating the truth of the description which her father, King Gama, gives of her,—

Awful odes she wrote,
Too awful sure for what they treated of,
But all she says and does is awful.

There is a touch of her own style, it seems to me, here and there in the poem. The epithets are too numerous and too stately. The art is decidedly arabesque; there is a surplus of ornament; and here, more than anywhere else, one finds it difficult to defend Tennyson from the charge of over-elaboration. For example, he says of the eight "daughters of the plough," who worked at the woman's college, that

Each was like a Druid rock;
Or like a spire of land that stands apart
Cleft from the main, and wail'd about with mews.

The image is grand,—just a little too grand for a group of female servants, summoned to

eject the three masculine intruders from the university.

The Princess was the first of Tennyson's poems to become widely known in America, and it is a curious fact that the most favourable, as well as the most extensive, criticisms of it have come from this side of the Atlantic. First, there was Professor James Hadley's thoughtful review in 1849; then Mr. Edmund Clarence Stedman's eloquent paragraphs in "Victorian Poets"; then Mr. S. E. Dawson's admirable monograph published in Montreal; and finally Mr. William J. Rolfe's scholarly "variorum" edition of *The Princess*, with notes. Mr. Dawson's excellent little book was the occasion of drawing from Tennyson a letter, which seems to me one of the most valuable, as it is certainly one of the longest, pieces of prose that he has ever given to the public. It describes his manner of observing nature and his practice of making a rough note in four or five words, like an artist's sketch, of whatever struck him as picturesque, that is to say, fit to go into a picture.

The Princess is full of the results of this kind of work, scattered here and there like flowers in a tangle of meadow-grass. For example, take these two descriptions of dawn:—

Notice of a change in the dark world
Was lispt about the acacias, and a bird
That early woke to feed her little ones
Sent from her dewy breast a cry for light.—
Morn in the white wake of the morning star
Came furrowing all the orient into gold.—

These are as different in feeling as possible, yet each is true, and each is fitted to the place in which it stands; for the one describes the beginning of a day among the splendours of the royal college before it was broken up; the other describes the twilight of the morning in which the Princess began to yield her heart to the tender touch of love. Or take again these two pictures of storm:—

And standing like stately pine
Set in a cataract on an island-crag,
When storm is on the heights, and right and left
Suck'd from the dark heart of the long hills roll
The torrents, dash'd to the vale.—

As one that climbs a peak to gaze
O'er land and main, and sees a great black cloud
Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of night,
Blot out the slope of sea from verge to shore,
And suck the blinding splendour from the sand,
And quenching lake by lake and tarn by tarn,
Expunge the world.—

Tennyson says that the latter of these passages is a recollection of a coming tempest watched

from the summit of Snowdon. Work like this, so clear, so powerful, so exact, would go far to redeem any poem, however tedious.

But better still is the love-scene in the last canto, where the poet drops the tantalising vein of mock-heroics, and tells us his real thought of woman's place and work in the world, in words which are as wise as they are beautiful. I have quoted them in another place and may not repeat them here. But there is one passage which I cannot forbear to give, because it seems to describe something of Tennyson's own life.

Alone, from earlier than I know,
Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world,
I loved the woman: he that doth not, lives
A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,
Or pines in sad experience worse than death,
Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt with crime:
Yet was there one thro' whom I loved her, one
Not learned, save in gracious household ways,
Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,
No angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
In angel instincts, breathing Paradise,
Interpreter between the gods and men,
Who look'd all native to her place, and yet
On tiptoe seemed to touch upon a sphere
Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce
Sway'd to her from their orbits as they moved,
And girded her with music. Happy he
With such a mother! faith in womankind

Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high
Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and fall
He shall not blind his soul with clay.

This is worthy to be put beside Wordsworth's—

"*A creature not too bright or good*
For human nature's daily food."

But the very best things in the poem are, "Tears, idle tears," the "small, sweet Idyl," and the songs which divide the cantos. Tennyson said that these songs were not an afterthought; that he had designed them from the first, but doubted whether they were necessary, and did not overcome his laziness to insert them until the third edition in 1850. It may be that he came as near as this to leaving out the jewels which are to the poem what the stained-glass windows are to the confused vastness of York Minster,—the light and glory of the structure. It would have been a fatal loss. For he has never done anything more pure and perfect than these songs, clear and simple and musical as the chime of silver bells, deep in their power of suggestion as music itself. Not a word in them can be omitted or altered, neither can they be translated. The words *are* the songs. "Sweet and low," "Ask me no more," and

"Blow, bugle, blow" will be remembered and sung, as long as English hearts move to the sweet melody of love and utter its secret meanings in the English tongue.

Maud may well be considered in the same chapter with *The Princess*, because they have some important things in common. They are both very modern; both deal with the passion of romantic love; in both, the story is an element of interest. But these points of resemblance bring out more clearly the points of contrast. The one is a light epic; the other is a lyrical drama. The one is complicated; the other is simple. The style of the one is narrative, diffuse, decorated; the style of the other is personal, direct, condensed. In the one you see rather vague characters, whose development depends largely upon the unfolding of the plot; in the other you see the unfolding of the plot controlled by the development of a single, strongly-marked character. In fact, Tennyson himself has given us the only true starting-point for the criticism of each of these poems in a single word, by calling ing *The Princess* "a Medley," and *Maud* "a Monodrama."

I will confess frankly, although frank con-

fession is not precisely fashionable among critics, that for a long time I misunderstood *Maud* and underrated it. This came from looking at it from the wrong point of view. I was enlightened by hearing the poet read the poem aloud at the close of his last summer of life, August, 1892.

Tennyson's reading was extraordinary. His voice was deep, strong, masculine, limited in its range, with a tendency to monotone, broadening and prolonging the vowels and rolling the *r*'s. It was not flexible, nor melodious in the common sense of the word, but it was musical in a higher sense, as the voice of the sea is musical. When he read he ignored all the formal rules of elocution, raised his voice a little above his usual tone in speaking, and poured out the poem in a sustained rhythmic chant. He was carried away and lost in it. In the passionate passages his voice rose and swelled like the sound of the wind in the pine-trees; in the lines which express grief and loneliness it broke and fell like the throbbing and murmuring of the waves on the beach. I felt the profound human sympathy of the man, the largeness and force of his nature. I understood the secret of the perfection of his lyrical poems. Each one of them had been composed to a distinct music

of its own. He had heard it in his mind before he had put it into words. I saw also why his character-pieces were so strong. He had been absorbed in each one of them. The living personality had been real to him, and he had entered into its life.

All this came home to me as I sat in the evening twilight in the study at Aldworth, and listened to the poet, with his massive head outlined against the pale glow of the candles, his dark, dreamy eyes fixed closely upon the book, lifted now and then to mark the emphasis of a word or the close of a forceful line, and his old voice ringing with all the passion of youth, as he chanted the varying cantos of the lyrical drama of *Maud*. It was easy to see why he loved it, and what it meant to him. There was no vanity, but a touch of that childlike candour which belongs to the great, in what he said to me at the close of the reading: "I don't claim that 'Maud' is one of my *greatest* poems, but I think it is one of my *most original* poems."

It is permissible, after so long a lapse of time, to condense the substance of the remarks and comments which he made during and after the reading, and to put them in single quotation-marks, to show that while his exact words may

not be used, the purport of what he said is faithfully rendered.

'You must remember always, in reading it, what it is meant to be—a drama in lyrics. It shows the unfolding of a lonely, morbid soul, touched with inherited madness, under the influence of a pure and passionate love. Each lyric is meant to express a new moment in this process. The things which seem like faults belong not so much to the poem as to the character of the hero.

'He is wrong, of course, in much that he says. If he had been always wise and just he would not have been himself. He begins with a false comparison—"blood-red heath." There is no such thing in nature; but he sees the heather tinged like blood because his mind has been disordered and his sight discoloured by the tragedy of his youth. He is wrong in thinking that war will transform the cheating tradesman into a great-souled hero, or that it will sweep away the dishonesties and lessen the miseries of humanity. The history of the Crimean War proves his error. But this very delusion is natural to him: it is in keeping with his morbid, melancholy, impulsive character to seek a cure for the evils of peace in the horrors of war.

'He is wild and excessive, of course, in his

railings and complainings. He takes offense at fancied slights, reviles those whom he dislikes, magnifies trifles, is subject to hallucinations, hears his name called in the corners of his lonely house, fancies that all the world is against him. He is not always noble even in the expression of his love at first. He sometimes strikes a false note and strains the tone of passion until it is almost hysterical. There is at least one passage in which he sings absurdly of trifles, and becomes, as he himself feared that he would, "fantastically merry." But all this is just what such a man would do in such a case. The psychological study is complete, from the first outburst of moody rage in the opening canto, through the unconscious struggle against love and the exuberant joy which follows its entrance into his heart and the blank despair which settles upon him when it is lost, down to the picture of real madness with which the second part closes. It is as true as truth itself.'

The spell of that day when the poet interpreted his own work to me is still potent in my memory, and renews itself as often as I read the poem. But there still remain certain questions to ask in regard to it. What is there in the story to make it worth the telling? What

elements of beauty has the poet conferred upon it? What has he given to this strange and wayward hero to redeem him? Three gifts.

First, the gift of exquisite, delicate, sensitive perception. He sees and hears the wonderful, beautiful things which only a poet can see and hear. He knows that the underside of the English daisy is pink, and when Maud passes homeward through the fields he can trace her path by the upturned flowers,—

For her feet have touch'd the meadows
And left the daisies rosy.

He sees how the tops of the trees on a windy morning are first bowed by the wind and then tossed from side to side,—

Caught and cuff'd by the gale.

He has noted the colour of the red buds on the lime-tree in the spring, and how the green leaves burst through them,—

A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime.

He has heard the "broad-flung shipwrecking roar of the tide" and the sharp "scream" of the pebbles on the beach dragged down by the receding wave. He has listened to the birds that seem to be calling, "Maud, Maud, Maud,

Maud,"—and he knows perfectly well that they are not nightingales, but rooks, flying to their nests in the tall trees around the Hall. The poem is rich in observations of nature.

The second gift which is bestowed upon the hero of *Maud* is the power of song. And in bestowing this the poet has proved the fineness and subtlety of his knowledge. For it is precisely this gift of song which sometimes descends upon a wayward, eccentric life,—as it did upon Shelley's,—and draws from it tones of ravishing sweetness; not harmonies, for harmony belongs to the broader mind, but melodies, which catch the heart and linger in the memory forever. Strains of this music come to us from *Maud:* the song of triumphant love,—

> *I have led her home, my love, my only friend.*
> *There is none like her, none,—*

the nocturne that rises like the breath of passion from among the flowers,—

> *Come into the garden, Maud,—*

and the lament,—

> *O that 't were possible.*

These lyrics are magical, unforgettable; they give an immortal beauty to the poem.

The third gift, and the greatest, which belongs to the hero of *Maud*, is the capacity for intense, absorbing, ennobling love. It is this that makes Maud love him, and saves him from himself, and brings him out at last from the wreck of his life, a man who has awaked to the nobler mind and knows—

It is better to fight for the good than rail at the ill.

How clearly this awakening is traced through the poem! His love is tinged with selfishness at first. He thinks of the smile of Maud as the charm which is to make the world sweet to him; he says:

Then let come what come may
To a life that has been so sad,
I shall have had my day.

But unconsciously it purifies itself. He looks up at the stars and says:—

But now shine on, and what care I,
Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl
The countercharm of space and hollow sky,
And do accept my madness, and would die
To save from some slight shame one simple girl.

And at last, when his own fault has destroyed his happiness and divided him from her forever, his love does not perish, but triumphs over the selfishness of grief.

Comfort her, comfort her, all things good,
While I am over the sea!
Let me and my passionate love go by,
But speak to her all things holy and high,
Whatever happen to me!
Me and my harmful love go by;
But come to her waking, find her asleep,
Powers of the height, Powers of the deep,
And comfort her tho' I die.

This is the meaning of *Maud*. Love is the power that redeems from self.

VI

IN MEMORIAM

MANY beautiful poems, and some so noble that they are forever illustrious, have blossomed in the valley of the shadow of death. But among them all none is more rich in significance, more perfect in beauty of form and spirit, or more luminous with the triumph of light and love over darkness and mortality, than *In Memoriam*, the greatest of English elegies.

How splendid is the poetic company in which it stands! Milton's stately and solemn lament for "Lycidas"; Gray's pure and faultless "Elegy in a Country Churchyard"; Shelley's musical and mournful "Adonaïs"; Matthew Arnold's pensive "Thyrsis," and his deeper "Lines at Sunset in Rugby Chapel"; Emerson's profound, passionate, lovely "Threnody" on the death of his little son,—these all belong to the high order of poetry which lives, and these all came forth from the heart of man at the touch of death.

In Memoriam differs from the others in two things: first, in the fulness and intimacy

with which it discloses the personal relations and the personal loss and sorrow out of which it grew; and, second, in the breadth and thoroughness with which it enters into the great questions of philosophy and religion that rise out of the experience of bereavement. It has, therefore, a twofold character; it is a glorious monument to the memory of a friend, and it is the great English classic on the love of immortality and the immortality of love.

It was published in 1850, and the title-page bore no name, either of the author or of the person to whom it was dedicated. But every one knew that it was written by Alfred Tennyson in memory of his friend Arthur Henry Hallam. Their friendship was formed at Trinity College, Cambridge, where they had entered as students in October, 1828, Tennyson being then in his twentieth year. Hallam, who was a year and a half younger, was the son of Henry Hallam, the historian, and had already distinguished himself among his contemporaries by the beauty and force of his character and the brilliancy of his attainments, especially in the study of modern poetry and art, in philosophy, and in argumentative discussion. He did not incline strongly to the study of the classics, and towards mathematics, the favourite discipline of Cam-

bridge, he was almost entirely indifferent. These mental indispositions, together with a lack of power or willingness to retain in his memory the mass of uninteresting facts and dates which are required for success in examinations, and a delicacy of health which at times made him subject to serious depression of spirits, unfitted him to contend for university honours. But he was a natural leader among the high-spirited youth who found in the reality of university life and the freedom of intellectual intercourse a deeper and broader education than the routine of the class-room could give. There was a debating society in Cambridge at this time, familiarly called "The Twelve Apostles," which included such men of promise as Richard Monckton Milnes (afterward Lord Houghton), W. H. Thompson (afterward Master of Trinity), Richard Chevenix Trench (afterward Archbishop of Dublin), Henry Alford (afterward Dean of Canterbury), Frederick Denison Maurice, W. H. Brookfield, James Speeding, Edmund Lushington, and G. S. Venables. In this society Hallam shone with a singular lustre, not only by reason of the depth and clearness of his thought and the vigour of his expression, but also because of the sweetness and purity of his character and the sincerity of his religious

spirit, strengthened and ennobled by conflict with honest doubt. One of his friends wrote of him: "I have met with no man his superior in metaphysical subtlety; no man his equal as a philosophical critic on works of taste; no man whose views on all subjects connected with the duties and dignities of humanity were more large, more generous and enlightened." Gladstone, recalling his intimacy with Hallam at Eton, bears witness to "his unparalleled endowments and his deep, enthusiastic affections, both religious and human."

It was by such qualities that Alfred Tennyson was drawn to Arthur Hallam; and although, or perhaps because, they were unlike in many things, their minds and hearts were wedded in a friendship which was closer than brotherhood, and in which Hallam's influence was the stronger and more masculine element, so that Tennyson spoke of himself as "widowed" by his loss.

The comradeship of the two men was of the most intimate nature. They were together in study and in recreation, at home and abroad. In 1829 they were friendly rivals for the medal in English verse, which Tennyson won with his poem "Timbuctoo." In 1830 they made an excursion together to the Pyrenees, carrying

money and letters of encouragement to the Spanish revolutionists. This visit is alluded to in the poem called "In the Valley of Cauteretz." About this time they were planning to bring out a volume of poems in company, after the example of Wordsworth and Coleridge; but by the wise advice of Hallam's father this project was abandoned, and Tennyson's slender volume of *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* appeared alone. Hallam's review of this book in *The Englishman's Magazine* for August, 1831, was one of the very earliest recognitions that a new light had risen in English poetry. He said:—

"Mr. Tennyson belongs decidedly to the class we have already described as Poets of Sensation. He sees all the forms of nature with the *eruditus oculus*, and his ear has a fairy fineness. There is a strange earnestness in his worship of beauty, which throws a charm over his impassioned song, more easily felt than described, and not to be escaped by those who have once felt it. . . . We have remarked five distinctive excellencies of his own manner. First, his luxuriance of imagination, and at the same time his control over it. Secondly, his power of embodying himself in ideal characters, or rather moods of character, with such extreme accuracy of adjustment that the circumstances

of the narrative seem to have a natural correspondence with the predominant feeling, and, as it were, to be evolved from it by assimilative force. Thirdly, his vivid, picturesque delineation of objects, and the peculiar skill with which he holds all of them *fused*, to borrow a metaphor from science, in a medium of strong emotion. Fourthly, the variety of his lyrical measures, and exquisite modulation of harmonious sounds and cadences to the swell and fall of the feelings expressed. Fifthly, the elevated habits of thought implied in these compositions, and imparting a mellow soberness of tone, more impressive to our minds than if the author had drawn up a set of opinions in verse, and sought to instruct the understanding rather than to communicate the love of beauty to the heart."

This may still stand, among later and more searching criticisms, as an intelligent and suggestive appreciation of the sources of Tennyson's poetical charm and power.

Many allusions to incidents in Hallam's brief life may be discovered in *In Memoriam*. He was a frequent visitor in the home of the Tennysons at Somersby, in Lincolnshire, coming in winter and summer holidays. In 1832, the year of his graduation at Cambridge, he was engaged to Miss Emily Tennyson, the poet's

sister. His home was with his father in Wimpole Street, called the longest street in London. On leaving college he began the study of law, looking forward to the higher life of public service, in which so many of England's best young men find their mission. In August, 1833, he went with his father to Germany. On the way from Pesth to Vienna he was exposed to inclement weather and contracted an intermittent fever. The symptoms were slight and seemed to be abating, but the natural frailty of his constitution involved unforeseen danger. There was a weakness of the heart which the strength of the spirit had concealed. On the 15th of September, while he seemed to be reposing quietly, the silver cord was loosed and the golden bowl was broken.

In Vienna's fatal walls
God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.

The sharp and overwhelming shock of losing such a friend suddenly, irretrievably, in absence, with no opportunity of speaking a word of love and farewell, brought Tennyson face to face with the inexorable reality of death—the great mystery which must either darken all life and quench the springs of poesy, or open a new world of victory to the spirit, and refresh

it with deeper and never-failing fountains of inspiration.

In Memoriam begins with the confession of this dreadful sense of loss, and the firm resolve to hold fast the memory of his grief, even though he doubts whether he can

> *reach a hand through time to catch*
> *The far-off interest of tears.*

The arrangement of the poem does not follow strictly the order of logic or the order of time. It was not written consecutively, but at intervals, and the period of its composition extends over at least sixteen years. The Epithalamium with which it closes was made in 1842, the date of the marriage of Miss Cecilia Tennyson to Edmund Law Lushington, the friend addressed in the eighty-fifth canto. The Proem, "Strong Son of God, immortal Love," was added in 1849, to sum up and express the final significance of the whole lyrical epic of the inner life which had grown so wonderfully through these long years of spiritual experience. "The general way of its being written," said Tennyson, "was so queer that if there were a blank space I would put in a poem." And yet there is a profound coherence in the series of separate lyrics; and a clear advance towards a definite goal of thought

and feeling can be traced through the freedom of structure which characterises the poem.

I follow here in prose the grouping of the sections which was given by Tennyson himself. If any one wishes to feel the essential difference between poetry and prose he has only to compare this outline with the successive cantos of *In Memoriam.*

The first division of the poem, from the first to the eighth canto, moves with the natural uncertainty of a lonely and sorrowful heart; questioning whether it is possible or wise to hold fast to sorrow; questioning whether it be not half a sin to try to put such a grief into words; questioning whether the writing of a memorial poem can be anything more than a

sad, mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

But the conclusion is that, since the lost friend loved the poet's verse, this poem shall be written for his sake and consecrated to his memory.

The second division, beginning with the ninth canto and closing with the nineteenth, describes in lyrics of wondrous beauty the home-bringing of Arthur's body in a ship from Italy, and the burial at Clevedon Church, which stands on a solitary hill overlooking the Bristol Channel.

This took place on January 3, 1834. A calmer, stronger, steadier spirit now enters into the poem, and from this point it moves forward with ever deepening power and beauty, to pay its tribute to the immortal meaning of friendship, and to pour its light through the shadows of the grave.

The third division, beginning with the twentieth canto, returns again to the subject of personal bereavement and the possibility of expressing it in poetry. It speaks of the necessity in the poet's heart for finding such an expression, which is as natural as song is to the bird. He turns back to trace the pathway of friendship, and remembers how love made it fair and sweet, doubling all joy and dividing all pain. That companionship is now broken and the way is dreary. The love to which he longs to prove himself still loyal is now the minister of lonely sorrow. And yet the very capacity for such suffering is better than the selfish placidity of the loveless life:

> *'Tis better to have loved and lost*
> *Than never to have loved at all.*

The fourth division opens, in the twenty-eighth canto, with a Christmas poem. The poet wonders how it is possible to keep the joyous

household festival under the shadow of this great loss. But through the saddened and half-hearted merry-making there steals at last, in the silence, the sense that those who have left the happy circle still live and are unchanged in sympathy and love. From the darkness of Christmas eve rises the prayer for the dawning of Christmas day and

The light that shone when Hope was born.

Led by this thought, the poet turns to the story of Lazarus, and to Mary's faith in Him who was the Resurrection and the Life. Such a faith is so pure and sacred that it demands the reverence even of those who do not share it. For what would our existence be worth without immortality? Effort and patience would be vain. It would be better to drop at once into darkness. Love itself would be changed and degraded if we knew that death was the end of everything. These immortal instincts of our manhood came to their perfect expression in the life and teachings of Christ. And though the poet's utterance of these divine things be but earthly and imperfect, at least it is a true tribute to the friend who spoke of them so often. Thus he stands again beside the funereal yew-tree, of which he wrote, in the

second canto, that it never blossomed, and sees that, after all, it has a season of bloom, in which the dust of tiny flowers rises from it. Even so his thoughts of death are now blossoming in thoughts of a higher life into which his friend has entered—thoughts of larger powers and nobler duties in the heavenly existence. But may not this mysterious and sudden advancement divide their friendship? No; for if the lost friend is moving onward so swiftly now, he will be all the better fitted to be a teacher and helper when their intercourse is renewed; but if death should prove to be "an intervital trance," then when he awakens the old love will awaken with him. From this assurance the poet passes to wondering thoughts of the manner of life of "the happy dead," and rises to the conviction that it must include an unchanged personal identity and a certain personal recognition and fellowship. This is not uttered by way of argument, but only with the brevity and simplicity of songs which move like swallows over the depths of grief,—

Whose muffled motions blindly drown
The bases of my life in tears.

The fifth division of the poem, in the fiftieth canto, begins with a prayer that his unseen

friend may be near him in the hours of gloom and pain and doubt and death. Such a presence would bring with it a serene sympathy and allowance for mortal ignorance and weakness and imperfection. For doubtless this lower life of ours is a process of discipline and education for something better. Good must be the final goal of ill. We feel this but dimly and blindly; our expression of it is like the cry of a child in the night; but at least the desire that it may be true comes from that which is most Godlike in our souls. Can it be that God and Nature are at strife? Is it possible that all the hopes and prayers and aspirations of humanity are vain dreams, and that the last and highest work of creation must crumble utterly into dust? This would be the very mockery of reason. And yet the sure answer is not found; it lies behind the veil. So the poet turns away, thinking to close his song with a last word of farewell to the dead; but the Muse calls him to abide a little longer with his sorrow, in order that he may "take a nobler leave."

This is the theme with which the sixth division opens, in the fifty-ninth canto. The poet is to live with sorrow as a wife, and to learn from her all that she has to teach. He turns

again to the thought of the strange difference in wisdom and purity between the blessed dead and the living, and finds new comfort and strength in the thought that this difference cannot destroy love. He thinks of the tablet to Hallam's memory in Clevedon Church, silvered by the moonlight or glimmering in the dawn. He dreams of Hallam over and over again. Night after night they seem to walk and talk together, as they did on their tour in the Pyrenees.

The seventy-second canto opens the seventh division of the poem with the anniversary of Hallam's death—an autumnal dirge, wild and dark, followed by sad lyrics which ring the changes on the perishableness of all earthly fame and beauty. But now the Christmas-tide returns and brings the tender household joys. This is a brighter Christmas than the last. The thought of how faithfully and nobly Arthur would have borne the sorrow, if he had been the one to be left while his friend was taken, calms and strengthens the poet's heart. He reconciles himself more deeply with death; learns to believe that it has ripened friendship even more than earthly intercourse could have done; assures himself that the transplanted life

is still blooming and bearing richer fruit; and at last complains only because death has

put our lives so far apart
We cannot hear each other speak.

Now the spring comes, renewing the face of the earth; and with it comes a new tenderness and sweetness into the poet's song. There is a pathetic vision of all the domestic joys that might have been centred about Arthur's life if it had been spared, and of the calm harmony of death if the two friends could have arrived together at the blessed goal,

And He that died in Holy Land
Would reach us out the shining hand,
And take us as a single soul.

This vision almost disturbs the new peace that has begun in the poet's heart; but he comes back again, in the eighty-fifth canto (the longest in the poem, and its turning-point), to the deep and unalterable feeling that love with loss is better than life without love. Another friend, the same who was to be married later to Tennyson's sister, has asked him whether his sorrow has darkened his faith and made him incapable of friendship. The answer comes from the inmost depths of the soul; recalling all the noble

and spiritual influences of the interrupted comradeship; confessing that it still abides and works as a potent, strengthening force in his life; and seeking for the coming years a new friendship, not to rival the old, nor ever to supplant it, but to teach his heart still

to beat in time with one
That warms another living breast.

Now the glory of the summer earth kindles the poetic fancy once more to rapture; now the old college haunts are revisited and the joys of youth live again in memory. The thought of Arthur's spiritual presence lends a new and loftier significance to these common delights, brings more sweetness than sadness, makes his letters, read in the calm summer midnight, seem like a living voice. The remembrance of his brave conflict with his doubts gives encouragement to faith. Now he is delivered from the struggle; he has attained unto knowledge and wisdom: but the poet, still lingering among the shadows and often confused by them, holds fast to the spiritual companionship:

I cannot understand: I love.

The eighth division, from the ninety-ninth to the one hundred and third canto, opens with

another anniversary of Hallam's death, which brings the consoling thought that, since grief is common, sympathy must be world-wide. The old home at Somersby is now to be forsaken, and the poet takes farewell of the familiar scenes. The division ends with a mystical dream, in which he is summoned to a voyage upon the sea of eternity, and the human powers and talents, in the guise of maidens who have served him in this life, accompany him still, and the man he loved appears on the ship as his comrade.

The ninth and last division begins, in the one hundred and fourth canto, with the return of another Christmas eve. The Tennyson family had removed in 1837 to Beech Hill House, and now, as the time draws near the birth of Christ, they hear, not the fourfold peal of bells from the four hamlets lying around the rectory at Somersby, but a single peal from the tower of Waltham Abbey, dimly seen through the mist below the distant hill. It is a strange, solemn, silent holiday season; but with the ringing of the bells on the last night of the old year there comes into it a new, stirring melody of faith, of hope, of high desire and victorious trust. This is a stronger, loftier song than the poet could have reached before grief

ennobled him; and from this he rises into that splendid series of lyrics with which the poem closes. The harmony of knowledge with reverence; the power of the heart of man to assert its rights against the colder conclusions of mere intellectual logic; the certainty that man was born to enjoy a higher life than the physical, and that though his body may have been developed from the lower animals, his soul may work itself out from the dominion of the passions to an imperishable liberty; the supremacy of love; the sure progress of all things towards a hidden goal of glory; the indomitable courage of the human will, which is able to purify our deeds, and to trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be proved
Until we close with all we loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul,—

these are the mighty and exultant chords with which the poet ends his music.

In Memoriam is a dead-march, but it is a march into immortality.

The promise of Arthur Hallam's life was not broken. Threescore years and ten of earthly labour could hardly have accomplished anything greater than the work which was inspired by his early death and consecrated to his be-

loved memory. The heart of man, which can win such victory out of its darkest defeat and reap such harvest from the furrows of the grave, is neither sprung from dust nor destined to return to it. A poem like *In Memoriam*, more than all flowers of the returning spring, more than all shining wings that flutter above the ruins of the chrysalis, more than all sculptured tombs and monuments of the beloved dead, is the living evidence and intimation of an endless life.

VII

IDYLLS OF THE KING

I

THE history of Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* is one of the most curious and unlikely things in all the annals of literature. Famous novels have so often been written piecemeal and produced in parts, that readers of fiction have made a necessity of virtue, and learned to add to their faith, patience. But that a great poet should be engaged on his largest theme for more than half a century; that he should touch it first with a lyric; then with an epical fragment and two more lyrics; then with a poem which was suppressed as soon as it was written; then with four romantic idyls, followed, ten years later, by four others, and two years later by two others, and thirteen years later by yet another idyl, which is to be placed, not before or after the rest, but in the very centre of the cycle; that he should begin with the end, and continue with the beginning, and end with the middle of the story, and produce at last a poem

which certainly has more epical quality than anything that has been made in English since Milton died, is a thing so marvellous that no man would credit it save at the sword's point of fact. Yet this is the exact record of Tennyson's dealing with the Arthurian legend.

"The Lady of Shalott," that dreamlike foreshadowing of the story of Elaine, was published in 1832; "Sir Galahad" and "Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere" in 1842. Underneath their smooth music and dainty form they hide the deeper conceptions of character and life which the poet afterwards worked out more clearly and fully. They compare with the *Idylls* as a cameo with a statue. But the germ of the whole story of the fall of the Round Table lies in this description of Guinevere:—

She looked so lovely, as she swayed
The rein with dainty finger-tips,
A man had given all other bliss,
And all his worldly worth for this,
To waste his whole heart in one kiss
Upon her perfect lips.

"Morte d'Arthur" was printed in the same volume and marks the beginning of a new manner of treatment, not lyrical, but epical. It is worth while to notice the peculiar way in which it is introduced. A brief prelude, in Ten-

nyson's conversational style, says that the poem was a fragment of an "Epic of King Arthur," which had contained twelve cantos, but which the poet, being discontented with their antiquated style, and regarding them as

Faint Homeric echoes, nothing worth,

had determined to burn. This one book had been picked from the hearth by a friend, and was the sole relic of the conflagration.

I do not imagine that we are to interpret this preface so literally as to conclude that Tennyson had actually written and destroyed eleven other books upon this subject; for though he has exercised a larger wisdom of suppression in regard to his immature work than almost any other poet, such a wholesale destruction of his offspring would have an almost Saturnine touch about it. But we may certainly infer that he had contemplated the idea of an Arthurian epic, and had abandoned it after severe labour as impracticable, and that he had intended not to conclude the poem with the death of Arthur, but to follow it with a sequel; for we must observe the fact, which has hitherto escaped the notice of the critics, that this rescued fragment was not the twelfth but the eleventh canto in the original design. We cannot help

wondering what the conclusion would have been if this first plan had been carried out. Perhaps some vision of the island valley of Avilion; perhaps some description of the return of the King in modern guise as the founder of a new order of chivalry; but whatever it might have been we can hardly regret its loss, for it is evident now that the "Morte d'Arthur" forms the true and inevitable close of the story.

How long the poet held to his decision of abandoning the subject, we cannot tell. The first sign that he had begun to work at it again was in 1857, when he printed privately a poem called "Enid and Nimue; or, The True and the False." This does not seem to have satisfied his fastidious taste, for it was never published, though a few copies are said to be extant in private hands.

In June, 1858, Clough "heard Tennyson read a third Arthur poem,—the detection of Guinevere and the last interview with Arthur." In 1859 appeared the first volume, entitled *Idylls of the King*, with a motto from the old chronicle of Joseph of Exeter,—"*Flos regum Arthurus.*" The book contained four idyls: "Enid," "Vivien," "Elaine," and "Guinevere." "Enid" has since been divided into "The Marriage of Geraint," and "Geraint and Enid."

This first volume, therefore, contained the third, fourth, sixth, seventh, and eleventh idyls.

In 1862 there was a new edition, dedicated to the Prince Consort. In 1870 four more idyls were published: "The Coming of Arthur," "The Holy Grail," "Pelleas and Ettarre," and "The Passing of Arthur,"—respectively the first, the eighth, the ninth, and the twelfth, in the order as it stands now. In 1872 "Gareth and Lynette" and "The Last Tournament" were produced,—the second and the tenth parts of the cycle. In 1885 the volume entitled *Tiresias and Other Poems* contained an idyl with the name of "Balin and Balan," which was designated in a note as "an introduction to 'Merlin and Vivien,'" and thus takes the fifth place in the series.

I have been careful in tracing the order of these poems because it seems to me that the manner of their production throws light upon several important points. Leaving out of view the Arthurian lyrics, as examples of a style of treatment which was manifestly too light for the subject; setting aside also the first draught of the "Morte d'Arthur," as a fragment whose full meaning and value the poet himself did not recognise until later; we observe that the significance of the story of Arthur and the

legends that clustered about it was clearly seen by Tennyson somewhere about the year 1857, and that he then began to work upon it with a large and positive purpose. For at least thirty years he was steadily labouring to give it form and substance; but the results of his work were presented to the world in a sequence of which he alone held the clue: the third and fourth, the sixth, seventh, and eleventh, the first, the eighth, the ninth, the twelfth, the second, the tenth, the fifth,—such was the extraordinary order of parts in which this work was published.

This fact will account, first of all, for the failure of the public to estimate the poems in their right relation and at their true worth. Their beauty of imagery and versification was at once acknowledged; but so long as they were regarded as separate pictures, so long as their succession and the connection between them were concealed, it was impossible to form any complete judgment of their meaning or value. As Wagner said of his "Siegfried": "It cannot make its right and unquestionable impression as a *single* whole, until it is allotted its necessary place in the *complete* whole. Nothing must be left to be supplemented by thought or reflection: every reader of unprejudiced human feeling must be able to com-

prehend *the whole* through his artistic perceptions, because then only will he be able rightly to understand the single incidents." *

In the second place, this fact makes clear to us the reason and justification of the general title which Tennyson has given to these poems. He has been criticised very frequently for calling them Idylls. And if we hold the word to its narrower meaning,—"a short, highly wrought poem of a descriptive and pastoral character," —it certainly seems inappropriate. But if we go back to the derivation of the word, and remember that it comes from εἶδος, which means not merely the form, the figure, the appearance of anything, but more particularly that form which is characteristic and distinctive, the ideal element, corresponding to the Latin *species*, we can see that Tennyson was justified in adapting and using it for his purpose. He intended to make pictures, highly wrought, carefully finished, full of elaborate and significant details. But each one of these pictures was to be animated with an idea, clear, definite, unmistakable. It was to make a form express a soul. It was to present a type, not separately, but in relation to other types. This was the method which he had chosen. His design was

* Wagner's letter to Liszt, November 20, 1851.

not purely classical, nor purely romantic, but something between the two, like the Italian Gothic in architecture. He did not propose to tell a single straightforward story for the sake of the story; nor to bring together in one book a mass of disconnected tales and legends, each of which might just as well have stood alone. He proposed to group about a central figure a number of other figures, each one of which should be as finished, as complete, as expressive, as he could make it, and yet none of which could be clearly understood except as it stood in its own place in the circle. For this kind of work he needed to find or invent a name. It may be that the word "Idylls" does not perfectly express the meaning. But at least there is no other word in the language which comes so near to it.

In the third place, now that we see the *Idylls* all together, standing in their proper order and relation, now that we perceive that with all their diversity they do indeed belong to the King, and revolve about him as stars about a central sun, we are able to appreciate the force of the poet's creative idea which could sustain and guide him through such long and intricate labour and produce at last, from an apparent chaos of material, an harmonious

work of art of a new order. For this was the defect, hitherto, of the romantic writers, descending by ordinary generation from Sir Walter Scott,—that their work had lacked unity; it was confused, fragmentary, inorganic. And this was the defect, hitherto, of the classical writers, descending by ordinary generation from Alexander Pope,—that their work had lacked life, interest, colour, detail. But Tennyson has succeeded at least to some extent, in doing what Victor Hugo described in his criticism of *Quentin Durward:*—

"Après le roman pittoresque mais prosaïque de Walter Scott, il restera un autre roman à créer, plus beau et plus complet encore selon nous. C'est le roman à la fois drame et épopée, pittoresque mais poétique, réel mais idéal, vrai mais grand, qui enchassera Walter Scott dans Homère."

II

The material which Tennyson has used for his poem is the strange, complex, mystical story of King Arthur and his Round Table. To trace the origin of this story would lead us far afield and entangle us in the thickets of controversy which are full of thorns. Whether Arthur was a real king who ruled in Britain after the de-

parture of the Romans, and founded a new order of chivalry, and defeated the heathen in various more or less bloody battles, as Nennius and other professed historians have related; or whether he was merely "a solar myth," as the Vicomte de la Villemarque has suggested; whether that extremely patriotic Welshman, Geoffrey of Monmouth, commonly called "the veracious Geoffrey," who wrote in 1138 a full account of Arthur's glorious achievements, really deserved his name; or whether his chronicle was merely, as an irreverent Dutch writer has said, "a great, heavy, long, thick, palpable, and most impudent lie;" whether the source of the story was among the misty mountains of Wales or among the castles of Brittany,—all these are questions which lead aside from the purpose of this essay. This much is certain: in the twelfth century the name of King Arthur had come to stand for an ideal of royal wisdom, chivalric virtue, and knightly prowess which was recognised alike in England and France and Germany.

His story was told again and again by Trouvère and Minnesinger and prose romancer. In camp and court and cloister, on the banks of the Loire, the Rhine, the Thames, men and women listened with delight to the description

of his character and glorious exploits. A vast undergrowth of legends sprang up about him. The older story of Merlin the Enchanter; the tragic tale of Sir Lancelot and his fatal love; the adventures of Sir Tristram and Sir Gawain; the mystical romance of the Saint Graal, with its twin heroes of purity, Percivale and Galahad, —these and many other tales of wonder and of woe, of amourous devotion and fierce conflict and celestial vision, were woven into the Arthurian tapestry. It extended itself in every direction, like a vast forest; the paths crossing and recrossing each other; the same characters appearing and disappearing in ever-changing disguises; beauteous ladies and valiant knights and wicked magicians and pious monks coming and going as if there were no end of them; so that it is almost impossible for the modern reader to trace his way through the confusion, and he feels like the Frenchman who complained that he "could not see the wood for the trees."

It was at the close of the age of chivalry, in the middle of the fifteenth century, when the inventions of gunpowder and printing had begun to create a new order of things in Europe, that an English knight, Sir Thomas Malory by name, conceived the idea of rewriting the Arthurian story in his own language, and

gathering as many of these tangled legends as he could find into one complete and connected narrative. He must have been a man of genius, for his book was more than a mere compilation from the French. He not only succeeded in bringing some kind of order out of the confusion; he infused a new and vigourous life into the ancient tales, and clothed them in fine, simple, sonorous prose, so that his "Morte d'Arthur" is entitled to rank among the best things in English prose romance.

William Caxton, the printer, was one of the first to recognise the merits of the book, and issued it from his press at Westminster, in 1485, with a delightful preface—in which he tells what he thought of the story. After a naïve and intrepid defence of the historical reality of Arthur, which he evidently thinks it would be as sacrilegious to doubt as to question the existence of Joshua, or King David, or Judas Maccabeus, he goes on to say: "Herein may be seen noble chivalry, courtesy, humanity, friendliness, hardiness, love, friendship, cowardice, murder, hate, virtue, and sin. Do after the good and leave the evil, and it shall bring you to good fame and renommee. And for to pass the time this book shall be pleasant to read in, but for to give faith and belief that all is

true that is contained herein, ye be at your liberty: but all is written for our doctrine, and for to beware that we fall not to vice nor sin, but to exercise and follow virtue, by the which we may come and attain to good fame and renown in this life, and after this short and transitory life to come into everlasting bliss in heaven; the which He grant us that reigneth in heaven, the blessed Trinity. Amen."

This pleasant and profitable book was for several generations the favourite reading of the gentlemen of England. After falling into comparative obscurity for a while, it was brought back into notice and favour in the early part of the nineteenth century. In 1816 two new editions of it were published, the first since 1634; and in the following year another edition was brought out, with an introduction and notes by Southey. It was doubtless through the pages of Malory that Tennyson made acquaintance with the story of Arthur, and from these he has drawn most of his materials for the *Idylls*.

One other source must be mentioned: in 1838 Lady Charlotte Guest published *The Mabinogian*, a translation of the ancient Welsh legends contained in the "red book of Hergest," which is in the library of Jesus College at Ox-

ford. From this book Tennyson has taken the story of Geraint and Enid.

Turning to look at the manner in which the poet has used his materials, we observe two things: first, that he has taken such liberties with the outline of the story as were necessary to adapt it to his own purpose; and second, that he has thrown back into it the thoughts and feelings of his own age.

In speaking of the changes which he has made in the story I do not allude to the omission of minor characters and details, nor to the alterations in the order of the narrative, but to changes of much deeper significance. Take for example the legend of Merlin: Malory tells us that the great Mage "fell in a dotage on a damsel that hight Nimue and would let her have no rest, but always he would be with her. And so he followed her over land and sea. But she was passing weary of him and would fain have been delivered of him, for she was afraid of him because he was a devil's son. And so on a time it happed that Merlin shewed to her in a rock, whereas was a great wonder, and wrought by enchantment, that went under a great stone. So by her subtle working she made Merlin to go under that stone, to let her into of the marvels there, but

she wrought so there for him that he came never out for all the craft that he could do. And so she departed and left Merlin."

How bald is this narrative compared with the version which Tennyson has given! He has created the character of Vivien, the woman without a conscience, a feminine Iago, in modern phrase "a Vampire." He has made her, not the pursued, but the pursuer,—the huntress, but of another train than Dian's. He has painted those weird scenes in the forest of Broceliande, where the earthly wisdom of the magician proves powerless to resist the wiles of a subtler magic than his own. He has made Merlin yield at last to an appeal for protection which might have deceived a nobler nature than his. He tells the ancient charm in a moment of weakness; and while he sleeps, Vivien binds him fast with his own enchantment. He lies there, in the hollow oak, as dead,

And lost to life and use and name and fame,

while she leaps down the forest crying "Fool!" and exulting in her triumph. It is not a pleasant story. In some respects it is even repulsive: it was meant to be so. But it has a power in it that was utterly unknown to the old legend; it is the familiar tale of Sophocles' Ajax, or of

Samson and Delilah, told with unrivalled skill and beauty of language.

There is another change, of yet greater importance, which affects not a single idyl, but the entire cycle. Malory has made the downfall of the Round Table and the death of Arthur follow, at least in part, a great wrong which the King himself had committed. Modred, the traitor, is represented as the son of Bellicent, whom Arthur had loved and betrayed in his youth, not knowing that she was his own half-sister. Thus the story becomes a tragedy of Nemesis. The King is pursued and destroyed, like Œdipus in the Greek drama, by the consequences of his own sin. Tennyson has entirely eliminated this element. He makes the King say of Modred,

> *I must strike against the man they call*
> *My sister's son—no kin of mine.*

He traces the ruin of the realm to other causes, —the transgression of Lancelot and Guinevere, the corruption of the court through the influence of Vivien, and the perversion of Arthur's ideals among his own followers.

Swinburne—the most eloquent of dogmatists —asserts that this change is a fatal error, that the old story was infinitely nobler and more

poetic, and that Tennyson has ruined it in the telling. Lavish in his praise of other portions of the Laureate's work, he has been equally lavish in his blame of the *Idylls*. He calls them the "Morte d'Albert, or Idylls of the Prince Consort"; he pours out the vials of his contempt upon the character of "the blameless king," and declares that it presents the very poorest and most pitiful standard of duty or of heroism. All this wrath, so far as I can understand it, is caused chiefly by the fact that Tennyson has chosen to free Arthur from the taint of incest, and represent him, not as the victim of an inevitable tragic destiny, but rather as a clean, brave soul, who fights in one sense vainly, but in another and a higher sense successfully, against the forces of evil in the world around him.

But when we come to consider Swinburne's criticism more closely, we can see that it is radically unjust because it is based upon ignorance. He does not seem to know that the element of Arthur's spiritual glory belongs to the ancient story just as much as the darker element of blind sin, clinging shame, and remorseless fate. At one time, in the Arthurian legend, the King is described as the very flower of humanity, the most perfect man that God

had made since Adam; at another time he is exhibited as a slayer of innocents planning to destroy all the "children born of lords and ladies, on May-day," because Merlin had predicted that one of them would be his own rival and destroyer. Malory has woven together these incongruous threads after the strangest fashion. But no one who has read his book can doubt which of the two threads is the more important. It is the excellence of Arthur, his superiority to his own knights, his noble purity and strength, that really control the story; and the other, darker thread sinks gradually out of sight, becomes more and more obscure, until finally it is lost, and Arthur's name is inscribed upon his tomb as *Rex quondam, rexque futurus.*

Now it was open to Tennyson to choose which of the threads he would follow; but it was impossible to follow both. He would have had no hero for his poem, he would have been unable to present any consistent picture of the King unless he had exercised a liberty of selection among these incoherent and at bottom contradictory elements which Malory had vainly tried to blend.

If he had intended to make a tragedy after the old Greek fashion, in which Nemesis should be the only real hero, that would have been

another thing: then he must have retained the unconscious sin of Arthur, his weakness, his impotence to escape from its consequences, as the central and dominant motive of the story. But his design was diametrically the opposite of this. He was writing in the modern spirit, which lays the emphasis not on Fate, but on Free-will. He meant to show that the soul of man is not bound in inextricable toils and foredoomed to hopeless struggle, but free to choose between good and evil, and that the issues of life, at least for the individual, depend upon the nature of that choice. It was for this reason that he made Arthur, as the ideal of the highest manhood, pure from the stains of ineradicable corruption, and showed him rising, moving onward, and at last passing out of sight, like a star which accomplishes its course in light and beauty.

Swinburne had a right to find fault with Arthur's character as an ideal; he had a right to say that there are serious defects in it, that it lacks virility, that it has a touch of insincerity about it, that it comes perilously near to self-complacency and moral priggishness. There may be truth in some of these criticisms. But to condemn the *Idylls* because they are not built upon the lines of a Greek Tragedy is as

superfluous and unjust as it would be to blame a pine-tree for not resembling an oak, or to despise a Gothic cathedral because it differs from a Doric temple.

It was legitimate, then, for Tennyson to select, out of the mass of materials which Malory had collected, such portions as were adapted to form the outline of a consistent story, and to omit the rest as unnecessary and incapable of being brought into harmony with the design. But was it also legitimate for the poet to treat his subject in a manner and spirit so distinctly modern,—to make his characters discuss the problems and express the sentiments which belong to the nineteenth century?

It cannot be denied that he has done this. Not only are many of the questions of morality and philosophy which arise in the course of the *Idylls*, questions which were unknown to the Middle Ages, but the tone of some of the most suggestive and important speeches of Merlin, of Arthur, of Lancelot, of Tristram, is manifestly the tone of these latter days. Take for example Merlin's oracular triplets in "The Coming of Arthur":—

> *Rain, rain and sun! a rainbow on the lea!*
> *And truth is this to me, and that to thee;*
> *And truth or clothed or naked let it be.*

We recognise here the accents of the modern philosopher who holds that all knowledge is relative and deals only with phenomena, the reality being unknowable. Or listen to Tristram as he argues with Isolt:—

The vows?
O ay—the wholesome madness of an hour.
. . . The wide world laughs at it.
And worldling of the world am I, and know
The ptarmigan that whitens ere his hour
Woos his own end; we are not angels here,
Nor shall be: vows—I am woodman of the woods
And hear the garnet-headed yaffingale
Mock them: my soul, we love but while we may;
And therefore is my love so large for thee,
Seeing it is not bounded save by love.

That is the modern doctrine of free love, not only in its conclusion, but in its argument drawn from the example of the birds,—the untimely ptarmigan that invites destruction, and the red-crested woodpecker that pursues its amours in the liberty of nature.

Or hear the speech which Arthur makes to his knights when they return from the quest of the Holy Grail:—

And some among you held, that if the King
Had seen the sight he would have sworn the vow:
Not easily, seeing that the King must guard
That which he rules, and is but as the hind,

To whom a space of land is given to plough,
Who may not wander from the allotted field
Before his work be done.

That is the modern conception of kingship, the idea of responsibility as superior to authority. Public office is a public trust. The discharge of duty to one's fellow-men, the work of resisting violence and maintaining order and righting the wrongs of the oppressed, is higher and holier than the following of visions. The service of man is the best worship of God. But it was not thus that kings thought, it was not thus that warriors talked in the sixth century.

Has the poet any right to transfer the ideas and feelings of his own age to men and women who did not and could not entertain them? The answer to this question depends entirely upon the view which we take of the nature and purpose of poetry. If it is to give an exact historical account of certain events, then of course every modern touch in an ancient story, every reflection of the present into the past, is a blemish. But if the object of poetry is to bring out the meaning of human life, to quicken the dead bones of narrative with a vital spirit, to show us character and action in such a way that our hearts shall be moved and purified by pity and fear, indignation and love; then

certainly it is not only lawful but inevitable that the poet should throw into his work the thoughts and emotions of his own age. For these are the only ones that he can draw from the life.

There is a certain kind of realism which absolutely destroys reality in a work of art. It is the shabby realism of the painter who took it for granted that the only way to paint a sea-beach with accuracy was to sprinkle his canvas with actual sand; the shabby realism of the writers who are satisfied with reproducing the dialect, the dress, the manners of the time and country in which the scene of their story is laid, without caring whether their *dramatis personæ* have any human nature and life in them or not. Great pictures or great poems have never been produced in this way. They have always contained anachronisms.

Every poet of the first rank has idealised—or let us rather say, vitalised—his characters by giving to them the thoughts and feelings which he has himself experienced, or known by living contact with men and women of his own day. Homer did this with Ulysses, Virgil with Æneas, Shakespeare with Hamlet, Goethe with Faust. From the very beginning, the Arthurian legends have been treated in the same way. Poets and

prose romancers have made them the mirror of their own chivalric ideals and aspirations. Compared with the Rolands and the Aliscans of the *chansons de geste*, Lancelot and Gawain and Percivale are modern gentlemen. And why? Not because the supposed age of Arthur was really better than the age of Charlemagne, but simply because Chrétien de Troyes and Wolfram von Eschenbach had higher and finer conceptions of knighthood and piety and courtesy and love, which they embodied in their heroes of the Round Table.

No one imagines that the "Morte d'Arthur" in any of its forms is an exact reproduction of life and character in Britain in the time of the Saxon invasion. It is a reflection of the later chivalry—the chivalry of the Norman and Angevin kings. If the story could be used to convey the ideals of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, why not also the ideals of the nineteenth century? If it be said that Arthur was not really a modern gentleman, it may be answered that it is just as certain that he was not a mediæval gentleman; possibly he was not a gentleman at all. There was no more necessity that Tennyson should be true to Malory, than there was that Malory should be true to Walter Map or Robert de Borron. Each

of them was a poet, a maker, a creator for his own age. The only condition upon which it was possible for Tennyson to make a poem about Arthur and his knights was that he should cast his own thoughts into the mould of the ancient legends, and make them represent living ideas and types of character. This he has done so successfully that the *Idylls* stand among the representative poems of the Victorian age.

III

Two things are to be considered in a work of art: the style and the substance.

So far as the outward form of the *Idylls* is concerned, they take a very high place in English verse. In music of rhythm, in beauty of diction, in richness of illustration, they are unsurpassed. They combine in a rare way two qualities which seem irreconcilable,—delicacy and grandeur, the power of observing the most minute details and painting them with absolute truth of touch, and the power of clothing large thoughts in simple, vigourous, sweeping words.

It would be an easy matter to give examples of the first of these qualities from every page of the *Idylls*. They are full of little pictures

which show that Tennyson has studied Nature at first hand, and that he understands how to catch and reproduce the most fleeting and delicate expressions of her face. Take, for instance, some of his studies of trees. He has seen the ancient yew-tree tossed by the gusts of April,—

That puff'd the swaying branches into smoke,—

little clouds of pollen rising from the blossoms, as if it were on fire. He has noted the resemblance between a crippled, shivering beggar and

An old dwarf-elm
That turns its back on the salt blast;

and the line describes exactly the stunted, suffering, patient aspect of a tree that grows beside the sea and is bent landward by the prevailing winds. He has felt the hush that broods upon the forest when a tempest is coming,—

And the dark wood grew darker toward the storm
In silence.

Not less exact is his knowledge of the birds that haunt the forests and the fields. He has seen the

Careful robins eye the delver's toil;

and listened to

The great plover's human whistle.

He knows, also, how the waters flow and fall; how a wild brook

Slopes o'er a little stone,
Running too vehemently to break upon it;

how, in a sharper rapid, there is a place

Where the crisping white
Plays ever back upon the sloping wave.

Most remarkable of all is his knowledge of the sea, and his power to describe it. He has looked at it from every standpoint and caught every phase of its changing aspect. Take these four pictures. First, you stand upon the cliffs of Cornwall and watch the huge Atlantic billows, blue as sapphire and bright with sunlight, and you understand how Isolt could say,

O sweeter than all memories of thee,
Deeper than any yearnings after thee,
Seem'd those far-rolling, westward-smiling seas.

Then, you lie upon the smooth level of some broad beach, on a summer afternoon,

And watch the curled white of the coming wave
Glass'd in the slippery sand before it breaks.

Then, you go into a dark cavern like that of Staffa, and see the dumb billows rolling in, one after another, groping their way into the

farthest recesses as if they were seeking to find something that they had lost, and you know how it was with Merlin when

So dark a forethought roll'd about his brain,
As on a dull day in an ocean cave
The blind wave feeling round his long sea-hall
In silence.

But if it should be asserted that lines like these prove the fineness of Tennyson's art rather than the greatness of his poetry, the assertion might be granted, and still we should be able to support the larger claim by pointing to passages in the *Idylls* which are unquestionably magnificent,—great not only in expression but great also in thought. There are single lines which have the felicity and force of epigrams:

Obedience is the courtesy due to kings.

He makes no friend who never made a foe.

Man dreams of fame while woman wakes to love.

A doubtful throne is ice on summer seas.

Mockery is the fume of little hearts.

There are longer passages in which the highest truths are uttered without effort, and in language so natural and inevitable that we have to look twice before we realise its grandeur. Take for example the description of human error in "Geraint and Enid":

O purblind race of miserable men,
How many among us even at this hour
Do forge a life-long trouble for ourselves
By taking true for false, or false for true;
Here, thro' the feeble twilight of this world,
Groping, how many, until we pass and reach
That other, where we see as we are seen!

Or take Arthur's speech to Lancelot in "The Holy Grail":—

Never yet
Could all of true and noble in knight and man
Twine round one sin, whatever it might be,
With such a closeness, but apart there grew
. . . . . .
Some root of knighthood and pure nobleness:
Whereto see thou, that it may bear its flower.

Or, best of all, take that splendid description of Lancelot's disloyal loyalty to Guinevere, in "Elaine":—

The shackles of an old love straitened him:
His honour rooted in dishonour stood,
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

It is an admirable example of what has been called "the grand style,"—terse yet spacious, vigourous yet musical, clear yet suggestive; not a word too little or too much, and withal a sense of something larger in the thought, which words cannot fully reveal.

It would be superfluous to quote at length such a familiar passage as the parting of Arthur and Guinevere at Almesbury. But let any reader take this up and study it carefully; mark the fluency and strength of the verse; the absence of all sensationalism, and yet the thrill in the far-off sound of the solitary trumpet that blows while Guinevere lies in the dark at Arthur's feet; the purity and dignity of the imagery, the steady onward and upward movement of the thought, the absolute simplicity of the language as it is taken word by word, and yet the richness and splendour of the effect which it produces,—and if he is candid, I think he must admit that there have been few English poets masters of a style more grand than this.

But of course the style alone does not make a masterpiece, nor will any number of eloquent fragments redeem a poem from failure if it lacks the soul of greatness. The subject of it must belong to poetry; that is to say, it must be adapted to move the feelings as well as to arouse the intellect, it must have the element of mystery as well as the element of clearness. Whether the form be lyric or epic, dramatic or idyllic, the poet must make us feel that he has something to say that is not only worth saying, but

also fitted to give us pleasure through the quickening of the emotions. The central idea of the poem must be vital and creative; it must have power to sustain itself in our minds while we read; it must be worked out coherently, and yet it must suggest that it belongs to a larger truth whose depths are unexplored and inaccessible. It seems to me that these are the conditions of a great poem. We have now to consider whether or not they are fulfilled in the *Idylls of the King.*

The meaning of the *Idylls* has been distinctly stated by the poet himself, and we are bound to take his words as the clue to their interpretation. In the "Dedication to the Queen" he says:—

> *Accept this old imperfect tale*
> *New-old, and shadowing Sense at war with Soul,*
> *Rather than that gray king, whose name, a ghost*
> *Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from mountain-peak,*
> *And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still: or him*
> *Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Malleor's, one*
> *Touched by the adulterous finger of a time*
> *That hover'd between war and wantonness,*
> *And crownings and dethronements.*

This is a clear disavowal of an historical purpose in the *Idylls.* But does it amount to the confession that they are an allegory pure

and simple? It is in this sense that the critics have commonly taken the statement. But I venture to think that they are mistaken, and that the mistake has been a barrier to the thorough comprehension of the poem and a fertile source of errors in some of the essays which have been written about it.

Precisely what is an allegory? It is not merely a representation of one thing by another which resembles it in its properties or circumstances, a picture where the outward form conveys a hidden meaning, a story

"Where more is meant than meets the ear."

It is a work in which the figures and characters are confessedly unreal, a masquerade in which the actors are not men and women, but virtues and vices dressed up in human costume. The distinguishing mark of allegory is personification. It does not deal with actual persons, but with abstract qualities which are treated as if they were persons, and made to speak and act as if they were alive. It moves, therefore, altogether in a dream-world: it is not only improbable but impossible: at a touch its figures dissolve into thin air.

For example, Dürer's picture of "Death and the Knight" has allegorical features in it, but

it is not an allegory, because the Knight is an actual man of flesh and blood,—or perhaps one ought to say (remembering that grim figure), of bone and nerve. "Melancolia," on the contrary, is an allegory of the purest type. Goethe's *Faust* is not an allegory, although it is full of symbolism and contains a hidden meaning. Spenser's *Faerie Queene* is an allegory, because its characters are only attributes in disguise, and its plot is altogether arbitrary and artificial.

The defect of strict allegory is that it always disappoints us. A valiant knight comes riding in, and we prepare to follow his adventures with wonder and delight. Then the poet informs us that it is not a knight at all, but only Courage, or Temperance, or Patience, in armour; and straightway we lose our interest; we know exactly what he is going to do, and we care not what becomes of him. A fair damsel appears upon the scene, and we are ready to be moved to pity by her distress, and to love by her surpassing beauty, until presently we are reminded that it is not a damsel at all, but only Purity, or Faith, or Moral Disinterestedness, running about in woman's clothes; and forthwith we are disenchanted. There is no speculation in her eyes. Her hand is like a stuffed

glove. She has no more power to stir our feelings than a proposition in Euclid. We would not shed a drop of blood to win her ghostly favour, or to rescue her from all the giants that ever lived.

But if the method were reversed; if instead of a virtue representing a person, the poet gave us a person embodying and representing a virtue; if instead of the oppositions and attractions of abstract qualities, we had the trials and conflicts and loves of real men and women in whom these qualities were living and working,—then the poet might remind us as often as he pleased of the deeper significance of his story; we should still be able to follow it with interest.

This is the point which I desire to make in regard to the *Idylls of the King*. It is a distinction which, so far as I know, has never been clearly drawn. The poem is not an allegory, but a parable.

Of course there are a great many purely allegorical figures and passages in it. The Lady of the Lake, for example, is a personification of Religion. She dwells in a deep calm, far below the surface of the waters, and when they are tossed and troubled by storms,

Hath power to walk the water like our Lord.

She gives to the King his sword Excalibur, to represent either the spiritual weapon with which the soul wars against its enemies, or, as seems to me more probable, the temporal power of the church. For it bears the double inscription:—

On one side
Graven in the oldest tongue of all this world,
"Take me," but turn the blade and ye shall see,
And written in the speech ye speak yourselves,
"Cast me away." And sad was Arthur's face
Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd him
"Take thou and strike! the time to cast away
Is yet far-off." So this great brand the King
Took, and by this will beat his foemen down.

The necessity of actual flesh-and-blood warfare against the heathen is proclaimed in the ancient language; the uselessness of such weapons under the new order, in the modern conflict, is predicted in the language of to-day.

The Lady of the Lake is described as standing on the keystone of the gate of Camelot:—

All her dress
Wept from her sides, as water flowing away:
But, like the cross, her great and goodly arms
Stretch'd under all the cornice, and upheld:
And drops of water fell from either hand:
And down from one a sword was hung, from one
A censer, either worn with wind and storm;

And o'er her breast floated the sacred fish;
. . . . . and over all,
High on the top, were those three Queens, the friends
Of Arthur, who should help him at his need.

This is an allegory of the power of religion in sustaining the fabric of society. The forms of the church are forever changing and flowing like water, but her great arms are stretched out immovable, like the cross. The sword is the symbol of her justice, the censer is the symbol of her adoration, and both bear the marks of time and strife. The drops that fall from her hands are the water baptism, and the fish is the ancient sign of the name of Christ.

The three Queens who sit up aloft are the theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity.

It is a fine piece of work from the mystical standpoint; elaborate, spiritual, suggestive, and full of true philosophy; Ambrogio Lorenzetti might have painted it. But after all, it has little or nothing to do with the substance of the poem. The watery Lady stands like a painted figure on the wall, and the three Queens play no real part in the life of Arthur. Apparently they continue to sit upon the cornice in ornamental idleness while the King loves and toils and fights and "drees his weird;" and we are almost surprised at their unwonted ac-

tivity when they appear at last in the black barge and carry him away to the island-valley of Avilion.

There is another passage of the same character in "The Holy Grail," which describes the probations of Percivale. He is allured from his quest, first by appetite under the figure of an orchard full of pleasant fruits, then by domestic love under the figure of a fair woman spinning at a cottage door, then by wealth under the figure of a knight clad in gold and jewels, then by fame under the figure of a mighty city filled with shouts of welcome and applause; but all these are only visions, and when they vanish at Percivale's approach we cannot feel that there was any reality in his trials, or that he deserves any great credit for resisting them.

The most distinct example of this kind of work is found in "Gareth and Lynette," in the description of the carving on the rock. There are five figures of armed men, Phosphorous, Meridies, Hesperus, Nox, and Mors, all chasing the human soul,—

A shape that fled
With broken wings, torn raiment and loose hair,
For help and shelter to the hermit's cave.

This is definitely called an allegory, and its significance is explained as

The war of Time against the soul of man.

But there is all the difference in the world between these graven images and the brave boy Gareth riding through the forest with the bright, petulant, audacious maiden Lynette. If the former are properly called allegorical, the latter must certainly be described by some other adjective. Gareth is alive, very much alive indeed, in his ambition to become a knight, in his quarrel with Sir Kay the crabbed seneschal, in his sturdy courtship of the damsel with "the cheek of apple-blossom," in his conflict with the four caitiffs who kept Lyonors shut up in her castle. We follow his adventures with such interest that we are fairly vexed with the poet for refusing to tell us at the end whether this cheerful companion and good fighter married Lynette or her elder sister.

We must distinguish, then, between the allegorical fragments which Tennyson has woven into his work, and the substance of the *Idylls;* between the scenery and mechanical appliances, and the actors who move upon the stage. The attempt to interpret the poem as a strict allegory breaks down at once and spoils the story. Suppose you say that Arthur is the Conscience, and Guinevere is the Flesh, and Merlin is the Intellect; then pray what is Lancelot, and what is Geraint, and what is Vivien? What business has the Conscience to fall in love with

the Flesh? What attraction has Vivien for the Intellect without any passions? If Merlin is not a man, "*Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère?*" The whole affair becomes absurd, unreal, incomprehensible, uninteresting.

But when we take the King and his people as men and women, when we put ourselves into the story and let it carry us along, then we understand that it is a parable; that is to say, it casts beside itself an image, a reflection, of something spiritual, just as a man walking in the sunlight is followed by his shadow. It is a tale of human life, and therefore, being told with a purpose, it

Shadows Sense at war with Soul.

Let us take up this idea of the conflict between sense and soul and carry it out through the *Idylls*.

Arthur is intended to be a man in whom the spirit has already conquered and reigns supreme. It is upon this that his kingship rests. His task is to bring his realm into harmony with himself, to build up a spiritual and social order upon which his own character, as the best and highest, shall be impressed. In other words, he works for the uplifting and purification of humanity. It is the problem of civiliza-

tion. His great enemies in this task are not outward and visible,—the heathen,—for these he overcomes and expels. But the real foes that oppose him to the end are the evil passions in the hearts of men and women about him. So long as these exist and dominate human lives, the dream of a perfected society must remain unrealised; and when they get the upper hand, even its beginnings will be destroyed. But the conflict is not an airy, abstract strife; it lies in the opposition between those in whom the sensual principle is regnant and those in whom the spiritual principle is regnant, and in the inward struggle of the noble heart against the evil and of the sinful heart against the good.

This contest may be traced through its different phases in the successive stories which make up the poem.

In "The Coming of Arthur," doubt, which judges by the senses, is matched against faith, which follows the spirit. The question is whether Arthur is a pretender and the child of shamefulness, or the true King. Against him, stand the base-minded lords and barons who are ready to accept any evil story of his origin rather than accept him as their ruler. For him, stand such knights as Bedivere,—

For bold in heart and act and word was he
Whenever slander breathed against the King.

Between the two classes stands Leodogran, the father of Guinevere, uncertain whether to believe or doubt. The arguments of the clever Queen Bellicent do not convince him. But at last he has a dream in which he sees the King standing out in heaven, crowned,—and faith conquers. Guinevere is given to Arthur as his wife. His throne is securely established, and his reign begins prosperously.

Then comes "Gareth and Lynette." Here the conflict is between a true ambition and a false pride. Gareth is an honest, ardent fellow who longs for "good fame and renommee." He wishes to rise in the world, but he is willing to work and fight his way upward; even to serve as a kitchen-knave if so he may win his spurs at last and ride among the noble knights of the Round Table. His conception of nobility grasps the spirit of it without caring much for the outward form. Lynette is a "society girl," a worshipper of rank and station; brave, high-spirited, lovable, but narrow-minded, and scornful of every one who lacks the visible marks of distinction. She judges by the senses. She cannot imagine that a man who comes apparently from among the lower classes can possibly be a knight, and despises Gareth's proffered services. But his pride, being true, is stronger

than hers, being false. He will not be rebuffed; follows her, fights her battles, wins first her admiration, then her love, and brings her at last to see that true knighthood lies not in the name but in the deed.

The atmosphere of this Idyll is altogether pure and clear. There is as yet no shadow of the storm that is coming to disturb Arthur's realm. The chivalry of the spirit wins its victory in a natural, straightforward, joyous way, and all goes well with the world.

But in "Geraint and Enid" there is a cloud upon the sky, a trouble in the air. The fatal love of Lancelot and Guinevere has already begun to poison the court with suspicions and scandals. It is in this brooding and electrical atmosphere that jealousy, in the person of Geraint, comes into conflict with loyalty, in the person of Enid. The story is the same that Boccaccio has told so exquisitely in the tale of "Griselda," and Shakespeare so tragically in *Othello*,—the story of a woman, sweet and true and steadfast down to the very bottom of her heart, joined to a man who is exacting and suspicious. Geraint wakens in the morning to find his wife weeping, and leaps at once to the conclusion that she is false. He judges by the sense and not by the soul. But Enid loves him

too well even to defend herself against him. She obeys his harsh commands and submits to his heavy, stupid tests. Yet even in her obedience she distinguishes between the sense and the spirit. As long as there is no danger she rides before him in silence as he told her to do; but when she sees the robbers waiting in ambush she turns back to warn him:

> *I needs must disobey him for his good;*
> *How should I dare obey him to his harm?*
> *Needs must I speak, and tho' he kill me for it,*
> *I save a life dearer to me than mine.*

So they move onward through many perils and adventures, she like a bright, clear, steady flame, he like a dull, smouldering, smoky fire, until at last her loyalty conquers his jealousy, and he sees that it is better to trust than to doubt, and that a pure woman's love has the power to vindicate its own honour against the world, and the right to claim an absolute and unquestioning confidence. The soul is once more victorious over the sense.

In "Balin and Balan" the cloud has grown larger and darker, the hostile influences in the realm begin to make themselves more deeply felt. The tributary court of Pellam, in which the hypocritical old king has taken to holy things in rivalry of Arthur,

And finds himself descended from the Saint
Arimathean Joseph,

and collects sacred relics, and drives out all women from his palace lest he should be polluted, while his son and heir, Garlon, is a secret libertine and murderer,—is a picture of religion infected by asceticism. Balin and Balan are two brothers, alike in daring, in strength, in simplicity, but differing in this: Balin is called "the savage," swift in impulse, fierce in anger, unable to restrain or guide himself; Balan is master of his passion, clear-hearted and self-controlled, his brother's better angel. Both men represent force; but one is force under dominion of soul, the other is force under dominion of sense. By the falsehood of Vivien, who now appears on the scene, they are involved in conflict and ignorantly give each other mortal wounds. It would seem as if violence had conquered. And yet, in truth not so. Balin's last words are:—

Goodnight! for we shall never bid again
Goodmorrow—Dark my doom was here, and dark
It will be there.

But Balan replies with a diviner faith, drawing his brother upward in death even as he had done in life,—

Goodnight, true brother here! goodmorrow there!

Thus far the higher principle has been victorious, though in the last instance the victory is won only in the moment of an apparent defeat. But now, in "Merlin and Vivien," sense becomes the victor. The old magician is a man in whom the intellect appears to be supreme. One might think him almost impregnable to temptation. But the lissome snake Vivien, also a type of keen and subtle intelligence, though without learning, finds the weak point in his armour, overcomes him and degrades him to her helpless thrall.

The conflict in "Lancelot and Elaine" is between a pure, virgin love and a guilty passion. The maid of Astolat is the lily of womanhood. The Queen is the rose, full-blown and heavy with fragrance. Never has a sharper contrast been drawn than this: Elaine in her innocent simplicity and singleness of heart; Guinevere in her opulence of charms, her intensity, her jealous devotion. Between the two stands the great Sir Lancelot, a noble heart though erring. If he were free he would turn to the pure love. But he is not free; he is bound by ties which are interwoven with all that seems most precious in his life. He could not break them if he would. And so the guilty passion conquers and he turns back to the fatal sweetness of his old allegiance.

"The Holy Grail" shows us the strife between superstition, which is a sensual religion, and true faith, which is spiritual. This is in some respects the richest of the *Idylls*, but it is also, by reason of its theme, the most confused. Out of the mystical twilight which envelops the action this truth emerges: that those knights who thought of the Grail only as an external wonder, a miracle which they fain would see because others had seen it, "followed wandering fires;" while those to whom it became a symbol of inward purity and grace, like Galahad and Percivale and even the dull, honest, simple-minded Bors and the sin-tormented Lancelot, finally attained unto the vision. But the King, who remained at home and kept the plain path of daily duty, is the real hero of the Idyll, though he bore no part in the quest.

In "Pelleas and Ettarre" the victory falls back to the side of sense. Pelleas is the counterpart of Elaine, a fair soul who has no thought of evil. Amid the increasing darkness of the court he sees nothing but light. He dreams that the old ideals of chivalry are still unbroken; to him all ladies are perfect, and all knights loyal. He is in love with loving, *amans amare*, as St. Augustine put it,—and when Ettarre

crosses his track he worships her as a star. But she—"of the earth, earthy"—despises him as a child, mocks him, and casts him off. Gawain, the flower of courtesy, betrays him basely. Driven mad by scorn and treason, he rushes away at last into the gloom,—a gallant knight overthrown by the perfidy of a wicked world.

The fool is the hero of "The Last Tournament." He knows that Arthur's dream will never be fulfilled, knows that the Queen is false, and the Knights are plotting treason, and the whole realm is on the verge of ruin; but still he holds fast to his master, and believes in him, and will not break his allegiance to follow the downward path of the court. Arthur has lifted him out of the baseness of his old life and made him a man. Maimed wits and crippled body, yet he has a soul,—this little, loyal jester,—and he will not lose it.

> *I have had my day and my philosophies,—*
> *And thank the Lord I am King Arthur's fool.*

In contrast to him stands Sir Tristram, the most brilliant and powerful of the new knights who followed the King only for glory, and despised him in their hearts, and broke his vows as if they had never sworn them. Poet, musician, huntsman, warrior, perfect in face

and form, victor in love and war, Tristram is one to whom faith is foolishness and the higher life an idle delusion. He denies his soul, mocks at it, flings it away from him.

New leaf, new life—the days of frost are o'er:
New life, new love, to suit the newer day;
New loves are sweet as those that went before:
Free love—free field—we love but while we may.

In him the triumph of the senses is complete. He wins the prize in the "Tournament of the Dead Innocence," and the shouts of the people hail him as their favourite. He clasps the jewels around the neck of Isolt as she sits with him in her tower of Tintagil by the sea, lightly glorying in his conquests. But out of the darkness the battle-axe of the craven King Mark strikes him dead. Meanwhile, at Camelot, Arthur comes home; Guinevere has fled;—

And while he climb'd,
All in a death-dumb autumn-dripping gloom,
The stairway to the hall, and look'd and saw
The great Queen's bower was dark,—about his feet
A voice clung sobbing till he question'd it,
"What are thou?" and the voice about his feet
Sent up an answer, sobbing, "I am thy fool,
And I shall never make thee smile again."

Yes, a fool, but also a soul, faithful even unto death, and therefore shining steadfastly like a

star when the false meteor of sense has dropt into endless night.

The next Idyll should be called "Arthur and Guinevere." The conflict now draws to its final issue. It lies between these two: one the victim of a great sin, a crime of sense which chose the lower rather than the higher love; the other the hero of a great faith, which knows that pardon follows penitence, and seeks to find some light of hope for the fallen. Is Guinevere to be separated from Arthur forever?—that is the question whose answer hangs upon the issue of this struggle. And the Queen herself tells us the result, when she says,—

> *Ah, great and gentle lord,*
> *Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint*
> *Among his warring senses, to thy knights—*
> *. . . Now I see thee what thou art,*
> *Thou art the highest and most human too,*
> *Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there none*
> *Will tell the King I love him tho' so late?*
> *Now—ere he goes to that great Battle? none:*
> *Myself must tell him in that purer life,*
> *But now it were too daring.*

In "The Passing of Arthur" we have a picture of the brave man facing death. All the imagery of the poem is dark and shadowy. The great battle has been fought; the Round Table

has been shattered; the bodies of the slain lie upon the field, friends and foes mingled together, and not a voice to stir the silence.

Only the wan wave
Brake in among dead faces, to and fro
Swaying the helpless hands, and up and down
Tumbling the hollow helmets of the fallen,
And shiver'd brands that once had fought with Rome,
And rolling far along the gloomy shores
The voice of days of old and days to be.

This is the tide of Time which engulfs all things mortal. Arthur's hour has come: he has lived his life and must pass away. To Sir Bedivere, valiant, simple-hearted knight, but still unable to look beyond the outward appearance of death, this seems a fatal end of all his hopes. He cannot bear to cast away his master's sword, but would fain keep it as a relic. He cries:—

Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead;
. . . . . .

But now the whole Round Table is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world,
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years
Among new men, strange faces, other minds.

But the soul of Arthur is stronger, clearer-sighted. In this last conflict with the senses he

is victorious. He answers Bedivere, with heroic confidence, that death does not end all.

> *The old order changeth, yielding place to new,*
> *And God fulfils himself in many ways*
> *Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.*

He believes that by prayer

> *the whole round earth is every way*
> *Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.*

He enters fearlessly upon the mysterious voyage into the future. And as the barge floats with him out of sight, from beyond the light of the horizon there come

> *Sounds as if some fair city were one voice*
> *Around a king returning from his wars.*

Thus the conflict is ended, and the victorious soul enters its rest.

What shall we say of this picture of life which Tennyson has given us in his greatest poem? Is it true? Does it grasp the facts and draw from them their real lesson?

First of all, I think we must admit that there is a serious defect in the very place where it is most to be regretted,—in the character of Arthur. He is too faultless for perfection. Tennyson either meant to paint a man who never had any conflict with himself, which is impos-

sible; or he intended to exhibit a man in whom the conflict had been fought out, in which case Arthur surely would have borne some of the scars of contest, shown some sense of personal imperfection, manifested a deeper feeling of comprehension and compassion for others in their temptations. But he appears to regard his own character and conduct as flawless.

Even in that parting interview with Guinevere—one of the most lofty passages in literature—his bearing verges perilously on sublime self-complacency. He shows no consciousness of any defect on his own part. He acts and speaks as if he were far above reproach.

But was that possible? Could such a catastrophe have come without blame on both sides? Guinevere was but a girl when she left her father's court. It was natural—yes, and it was right—that she should desire warmth and colour in her life. She rode among the flowers in May with Lancelot. Is it any wonder that she found delight in the journey? She was married to the solemn King before the stateliest of Britain's altar-shrines with pompous ceremonies. Is it any wonder that she was oppressed and made her vows with drooping eyes? And then, at once, the King began his state-banquets and negotiations with the Roman ambassadors.

He was absorbed in the affairs of his kingdom. He left the young Queen to herself,—and to Lancelot. The King seemed to be 'dreaming of fame while woman woke to love.' Is it strange that she thought him cold, neglectful, irresponsive, and said to herself, "He cares not for me"? Is it to be marvelled at that she found an outlet for her glowing heart in her companionship with Lancelot? Perhaps Arthur's conduct was inevitable for one immersed as he was in the cares of state; perhaps he was unconscious that he was exposing his wife, defenceless and alone, to a peril from which he only could have protected her; but when at last the consequence was discovered, he was bound to confess that he had a share in the transgression and the guilt. It is the want of this note that mars his parting speech. A little more humanity would have compensated for a little less piety. Had Arthur been a truer husband, Guinevere might have been a more faithful wife. The excess of virtue is a vice. The person who feels no consciousness of sin must be either more or less than man.

This is the worst defect of the *Idylls*,—that the central character comes so near to being

Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null.

But this fault is partly compensated by the fact that the poem, after all, does recognise, and bring out in luminous splendour, the great truths of human life.

The first of these truths is that sin is the cause of disorder and misery, and until it is overcome the perfect society cannot be securely established. And by sin Tennyson does not mean the desire of existence, but the transgression of law. The right to live—the right to desire to live—is not denied for a moment. It is in fact distinctly asserted. But life must be according to righteousness, if it is to be harmonious and happy.

Love is the motive force of the poem. The King himself acknowledges its dominion, and says,—

> *For saving I be join'd*
> *To her that is the fairest under heaven,*
> *I seem as nothing in the mighty world,*
> *And cannot will my will, nor work my work*
> *Wholly, nor make myself, in mine own realm,*
> *Victor and lord.*

But love also must move within the bounds of law, must be true to its vows. Not even the strongest and most beautiful soul may follow the guidance of passion without restraint; for the greater the genius, the beauty, the power,

of those who transgress, the more fatal will be the influence of their sin upon other lives.

This indeed is the meaning of the fall of Lancelot and Guinevere. It was because they stood so high, because they were so glorious in their manhood and womanhood, that their example had power to infect the court.

Sin is the principle of disintegration and death. It is this that corrupts societies, and brings about the decline and fall of nations; and so long as sin dwells in the heart of man all efforts to create a perfect state, or even to establish an order like the Round Table in self-perpetuating security, must fail. The redemption and purification of the earth is a long task, beyond human strength; as Tennyson has said in "Locksley Hall, Sixty Years After,"—

Ere she reach her heavenly-best a God must mingle with the game.

But side by side with this truth, and in perfect harmony with it, Tennyson teaches that the soul of man has power to resist and conquer sin within its own domain, to triumph over sense by steadfast loyalty to the higher nature, and thus to achieve peace and final glory. When I say he teaches this, I do not mean that he sets it forth in any formal way

as a doctrine. I mean that he shows it in the life of Arthur as a fact. The King chooses his ideal, and follows it, and it lifts him up and sets him on his course like a star. His life is not a failure, as it has been called, but a glorious success, for it demonstrates the freedom of the will and the strength of the soul against the powers of evil and the fate of sin.

Finally, the *Idylls* bring out the profound truth that there is a vicarious element in human life, and that no man lives to himself alone. The characters are distinct, but they are not isolated. They are parts of a vast organism, all bound together, all influencing one another.

The victory of sense over soul is not a solitary conquest; it has far-reaching results. The evil lives of Modred, of Vivien, of Tristram, spread like a poison through the court.

But no less fruitful, no less far-reaching, is the victory of soul over sense. Gareth, and Enid, and Balan, and Bors, and Bedivere, and Galahad, have power to help and to uplift others. Their lives are not wasted: nor does Arthur himself live in vain, though his Round Table is dissolved: for he is "joined to her that is the fairest under heaven," not for a time only, but forever. His faith triumphs over her sin. Guinevere is not lost; she is redeemed by love. From

the darkness of the convent at Almesbury, where she lies weeping in the dust, we hear a voice like that which thrills through the prison of Marguerite in *Faust*. The fiend mutters, *She is lost!* But the angel cries, *She is saved!*

VIII

THE DRAMATIC TRILOGY

THE appearance of Tennyson, in 1875, as a dramatic poet was a surprise. It is true that he had already shown that his genius was versatile and disposed to explore new methods of expression. True, also, that from the year 1842 a dramatic tendency had been manifest in his works. "Ulysses," "St. Simeon Stylites," "Love and Duty," "Locksley Hall," "Lucretius," "The Northern Farmer," "The Grandmother," different as they are in style, are all essentially dramatic monologues. *Maud* is rightly entitled, in the late editions, *a Monodrama*. *The Princess* has been put upon the amateur stage in very pretty fashion; and the success of Mr. George Parsons Lathrop's acting version of "Elaine" proved not only his own ability, but also the dramatic quality of that splendid Idyll.

But not even these hints that Tennyson had a creative impulse not yet fully satisfied were clear enough to prepare the world for his attempt to master another form of art. He was

acknowledged as a great artist in lyric and idyllic poetry. People were not ready to see him come out in the seventh decade of his life in a new character, and take the stage as a dramatist. It seemed like an attempt to compete with his own fame already won.

The first feeling of the public at the production of *Queen Mary* was undisguised astonishment. With this a good deal of displeasure was mingled. For the public, after all, is not fond of surprises. Having formed its opinion of a great man, and labelled him once for all as a sweet singer, or a sound moralist, or a brilliant word-painter, or an interesting story-teller, it likes not to consider him in any other light. It is confused and puzzled. The commonplaces of easy criticism become unavailable for further use. People shrink from the effort which is required for a new and candid judgment; and so they fall back upon stale and unreasonable comparisons. They say, "Why does the excellent cobbler go beyond his last? The old songs were admirable. Why does not the poet give us more of them, instead of trying us with a play?"

Thus it came to pass that *Queen Mary* was received with general dissatisfaction; respectful, of course, because it was the work of a

famous man; but upon the whole the public was largely indifferent, and said in a tone of polite authority that the new drama was not nearly as powerful as *Hamlet* or *Macbeth*, nor as melodious even as "Œnone" and "The Lotos-Eaters." A like fate befell *Harold* in 1877, except that a few critics began to feel the scruples of literary conscience, and made an honest effort to judge the drama on its own merits.

The Falcon, a play founded upon Boccaccio's well-known story, was produced in 1879, and the accomplished Mrs. Kendal, as the heroine, made it at least a partial success. In 1881 *The Cup*, a dramatisation of an incident narrated in Plutarch's treatise *De Mulierum Virtutibus*, was brought out at the Lyceum with Mr. Henry Irving and Miss Ellen Terry in the principal rôles. It received hearty and general applause, and was by far the most popular of Tennyson's dramas. But its effect upon his fame as a playwright was more than counterbalanced by the grievous failure of *The Promise of May* in 1882. This piece was intended to be an exposure of the pernicious influences of modern secularism. It was upon the whole a dismal bit of work. Not even the eccentric conduct of the Marquis of Queens-

bury, who rose from his seat at one of the performances and violently protested against the play as a libel upon the free-thinkers of England, availed to give it more than a momentary notoriety.

At the close of the year 1884 Tennyson published the longest and most ambitious of his dramas, *Becket*, with a distinct avowal that it was "not intended in its present form to meet the exigencies of the modern stage." The wisdom of this limitation is evident. It contains also a shrewd hint of criticism on the present taste of the average play-goer. There is a demand for pungent realism, for startling effect, for exaggerated action easy to be followed, and for a sharp climax in a striking tableau,—in short, for a play which stings the nerves without taxing the mind. Even Shakespeare has to be revised to meet these exigencies. To win success nowadays the dramatist must take the stage-manager into partnership. When *Becket* was put on the stage, successfully, by Henry Irving, in 1891, it was submitted to these conditions. But there is a higher standard. We may consider *Queen Mary*, *Harold*, and *Becket*, from another point of view, as dramas not for acting, but for reading.

It seems to me that this consideration is a

debt of honour which we owe to the poet. These tragedies are not to be dismissed as the mistakes and follies of an over-confident and fatally fluent genius. A poet like Tennyson does not make three such mistakes in succession. They are not the idle recreations of one who has finished his life-work and retired. They are not the feeble and mechanical productions of a man in his dotage. On the contrary, they are full of fire and force; and if they err at all it is on the side of exuberance. Their intensity of passion and overflow of feeling make them sometimes turbulent and harsh and incoherent. They would do more if they attempted less. And yet in spite of their occasional overloading and confusion they have a clear and strong purpose which makes them worthy of careful study. The judgment of a critic so intelligent as George Eliot is not to be disregarded, and she expressed her opinion that "Tennyson's plays run Shakespeare's close."

The point of view from which they must be regarded is that of historical tragedy. By this I mean a tragedy which involves not only individuals, but political parties and warring classes of society. Its object is to trace the fate of individuals as it affects the fate of nations; to exhibit the conflict of opposing char-

acters not for themselves alone, but as the exponents of those great popular forces and movements which play beneath the surface; to throw the vivid colours of life into the black and white outlines on the screen of history and show that the figures are not mere shadows but human beings of like passions with ourselves.

Tennyson's dramatic trilogy is a picture of the Making of England. The three periods of action are chosen with the design of touching the most critical points of the long struggle. The three plots are so developed as to bring into prominence the vital issues of the strife. And the different characters, almost without exception, are exhibited as the representatives of the different races and classes and faiths which were contending for supremacy. Let us take up the plays in their historical order.

In *Harold* we see the close of that fierce triangular duel between the Saxons, the Danes, and the Normans, which resulted in the Norman conquest and the binding of England, still Saxon at heart, to the civilization of the Continent. The crisis of the drama is the second scene of the second act, where Harold, a prisoner in the Palace of Bayeux, is cajoled and threatened and deceived by William into swearing an oath to help him to the crown of England. The

fierce subtlety of the Norman is matched against the simplicity and frankness of the Saxon. Craft triumphs. Harold discovers that he has sworn, not merely by the jewel of St. Pancratius, on which his hand was laid, but by the sacred bones of the saints concealed beneath it,—an oath which admits of no evasion, the breaking of which afterwards breaks his faith in himself and makes him fight the battle of Senlac as a man foredoomed to death. Both William and Harold are superstitious. But William's superstition is of a kind which enables him to use religion as his tool; Harold's goes only far enough to weaken his heart and make him tremble before the monk even while he defies him. Harold is the better man; William is the more potent ruler. His words over the body of his fallen rival on the battlefield are prophetic of the result of the Norman conquest:—

Since I knew battle,
And that was from my boyhood, never yet—
No, by the splendour of God—have I fought men
Like Harold and his brethren and his guard
Of English. Every man about his king
Fell where he stood. They loved him: and pray God
My Normans may but move as true with me
To the door of death. Of one self-stock at first,
Make them again one people—Norman, English;

And English, Norman;—we should have a hand
To grasp the world with, and a foot to stamp it . . .
Flat. Praise the Saints. It is over. No more blood!
I am king of England, so they thwart me not,
And I will rule according to their laws.

It is worth recalling, in this connection, that Tennyson himself was of Norman descent. Yet surely there never was a man more thoroughly English than he.

In *Becket* we are spectators of a conflict less familiar, but more interesting and important,—the conflict between the church and the crown, between the ecclesiastical and the royal prerogatives, which shook England to the centre for many years, and out of the issues of which her present constitution has grown.

In this conflict the Papacy played a much smaller part than we usually imagine; and religion, until the closing scenes, played practically no part at all. It was in fact a struggle for supreme authority in temporal affairs. First the king was contending against the nobility, and the church took sides with the king. Then the king attempted to subjugate the people, and the church, having become essentially English, took sides with the people. Then the nobles combined against the king, and the church took sides with the nobles. Then the king revolted

from the foreign domination of the church, and the people took sides with the king. Then the king endeavoured to use the church to crush the people, and the people under Cromwell rose against church and king and broke the double yoke. Then the people brought back the king, and he tried to reinstate the church as an instrument of royal absolutism. But the day for that was past. After another struggle, prolonged and bitter, but in the main bloodless, the English church lost almost the last vestige of temporal authority, and the English kingdom became simply "a crowned republic."

Now the point at which *Becket* touches this long conflict is the second stage. King Henry II., Count of Anjou, surnamed "Plantagenet," owed his throne to the church. It was the influence of the English bishops, especially of Theobald, Anselm's great successor in the See of Canterbury, which secured Henry's succession to the crown of his cousin and enemy, King Stephen. But the wild, wicked blood of Anjou was too strong in Henry for him to remain faithful to such an alliance. He was a thoroughly irreligious man: not only dissolute in life and cruel in temper, but also destitute of the sense of reverence, which sometimes exists even in immoral men. He spent his time

at church in looking at picture-books and whispering with his friends. He despised and neglected the confessional. He broke out, in his passionate fits, into the wildest imprecations against God. The fellowship of the church was distasteful to him; and even the bond of gratitude to so good a man as Archbishop Theobald was too irksome to be borne.

Moreover he had gotten from the church all that he wanted. He was now the most mighty monarch in Christendom. His foot was on the neck of the nobles. The royal power had broken down the feudal, and stood face to face with the ecclesiastical, as its only rival. The English Church, whose prerogative made her in effect the supreme judge and ruler over all the educated classes (that is to say over all who could read and write and were thus entitled to claim "the benefit of clergy"), was the only barrier in Henry's path to an unlimited monarchy. He resolved that this obstacle must be removed. He would brook no rivalry in England, not even in the name of God. And therefore he thrust his bosom-friend, his boon-companion, his splendid chancellor, Thomas Becket, into the Archbishopric of Canterbury, hoping to find in him a willing and skilful ally in the subjugation of the church to the throne.

Becket's rebellion and Henry's wrath form the plot of Tennyson's longest and best drama.

The character of Becket is one of the standing riddles of history. He compels our admiration by his strength, his audacity, his success in everything that he undertook. He is one of those men who are so intensely virile that they remain alive after they are dead: we cannot be indifferent to him: we are for him or against him. At the same time he perplexes us and stimulates our wonder to the highest pitch by the consistent inconsistencies and harmonious contradictions of his character. The son of an obscure London merchant; the proudest and most accomplished of England's chivalrous youth; a student of theology in the University of Paris; the favourite pupil of the good Archbishop Theobald; the boon-companion of the riotous King Henry; a skilful diplomatist; the best horseman and boldest knight of the court; the hatred of the nobles, and the delight of the peasantry; the most lavish and luxurious, the most chaste and laborious, of English grandees; the most devout and ascetic, the most ambitious and the least selfish, of English bishops; as unwearied in lashing his own back with the scourge as he had been in smiting his country's enemies with the sword; as much at home in sackcloth

as in purple and fine linen; the prince of dandies and of devotees; the king's most faithful servant and most daring rival, most darling friend and most relentless foe,—what was this Becket? hero or villain? martyr or criminal? true man or traitor? worldling or saint?

Tennyson gives us his key to the riddle in the opening scene of the drama. The King and Becket are playing at chess. The King's fancy is wandering; he is thinking and talking of a hundred different things. But Becket is intent upon the game; he cannot bear to do anything which he does not do well; he pushes steadily forward and wins.

I think this scene gives us the secret of Becket's personality. An eager desire to be perfect in whatever part he took, an impulse to lead and conquer in every sphere that he entered, —this was what Henry failed to understand. He did not see that in transforming this intense and absolute man from a chancellor into an archbishop, he was giving him a new part in which his passion for thoroughness would make him live up to all its requirements and become the most inflexible defender of the church against the encroachment of the throne.

But Becket understood himself and foresaw the conflict into which the King's plan would

plunge him. He knew that for him a change of relations meant a change of character. He resisted the promotion. Tennyson depicts most graphically the struggle in his mind. When Henry first broaches the subject, Becket answers:

> *Mock me not. I am not even a monk.*
> *Thy jest—no more! Why, look, is this a sleeve*
> *For an archbishop?*

But Henry lays his hand on the richly embroidered garment, and says:

> *But the arm within*
> *Is Becket's who hath beaten down my foes.*
> *I lack a spiritual soldier, Thomas,*
> *A man of this world and the next to boot.*

Now this is just what Thomas can never be. To either world he can belong, but not to both. He can change, but he cannot compromise. While he is the defender of the throne he is serviceable and devoted to the King; when he becomes the leader of the Church he will be equally absorbed in her service.

The drama exhibits this strange transformation and its consequences. Forced by the urgency of the headstrong King, and persuaded by a message from the death-bed of his former friend and master Theobald, Becket yields at

last and accepts the mitre. From this moment he is another man. With all his doubts as to his fitness for the sacred office, he has now given himself up to it, heart and soul. The tremendous mediæval idea of the Catholic Church as the visible kingdom of God upon earth takes possession of him. He sees also that the issue of the political conflict in England depends upon the church, which is the people's "tower of strength, their bulwark against Throne and Baronage." He feels that he is called to be the champion of the cause of God and the people.

I am the man.
And yet I seem appall'd,—on such a sudden
At such an eagle height I stand, and see
The rift that runs between me and the king.
I serv'd our Theobald well when I was with him;
I serv'd King Henry well when I was Chancellor;
I am his no more, and I must serve the church.
And all my doubts I fling from me like dust,
Winnow and scatter all scruples to the wind,
And all the puissance of the warrior,
And all the wisdom of the Chancellor,
And all the heap'd experiences of life,
I cast upon the side of Canterbury,—
Our holy mother Canterbury, who sits
With tatter'd robes.

Here
I gash myself asunder from the king,
Though leaving each a wound: mine own, a grief

To show the scar forever—his, a hate
Not ever to be healed.

Both of these predictions are fulfilled: and herein lies the interest of the drama. All through the conflict between the monarch and the prelate, Becket's inflexible resistance to the royal commands is maintained only at the cost of a perpetual struggle with his great personal love for Henry, and Henry's resolve to conquer the stubborn archbishop is inflamed and embittered by the thought that Becket was once his dearest comrade. It is a tragic situation. Tennyson has never shown a deeper insight into human nature, than by making this single combat between divided friends the turning-point of his drama.

The tragedy is enhanced by the introduction of Rosamund de Clifford—the King's

One sweet rose of the world.

Her beauty, her innocence, the childlike confidence of her affection for the fierce monarch, who is gentle only with her and whom she loves as her true husband, her songs and merry games with her little boy in the hidden bower, fall like gleams of summer sunlight into the stormy gloom of the play.

Becket becomes her guardian and protector against the cruel, murderous jealousy of Queen Eleanor. A most perilous position: a priest charged by the King whom he is resisting with the duty of defending and guarding the loveliest of women, and keeping her safe and secret for a master whom he cannot but condemn. What a conflict of duty and desire, of conscience and loyalty, of passion and friendship! How did Becket meet it? Did he love Rosamund? Would he have loved her if he had not been bound by straiter vows? Was there anything of disloyalty in his persuading her to flee from her bower and take refuge with the nuns at Godstow? Tennyson thinks not. He paints his hero as a man true to his duty even in this sharpest trial; upright, steadfast, fearless, seeking only to save the woman whom his former master loved, and to serve the King even while seeming to disobey him. But Henry cannot believe it. When he hears of Rosamund's flight, his anger against Becket is poisoned with the madness of jealousy. He breaks out with a cry of fierce desire for his death. And at this hint, four of the Barons, who have long hated Becket, set out to assassinate him.

The final scene in the Cathedral is full of strength and splendour. Even here a ray of

sweetness falls into the gloom, in the presence of Rosamund, praying for Becket in his perils:—

Save that dear head which now is Canterbury,
Save him, he saved my life, he saved my child,
Save him, his blood would darken Henry's name,
Save him, till all as saintly as thyself,
He miss the searching flame of Purgatory,
And pass at once to perfect Paradise.

But the end is inevitable. Becket meets it as fearlessly as he has lived, crying as the blows of the assassins fall upon him before the altar,—

At the right hand of Power—
Power and great glory—for thy church, O Lord—
Into thy hands, O Lord—into thy hands—

Two years afterwards, he was canonised as a saint. His tomb became the richest and most popular of English shrines. King Henry himself came to it as a pilgrim, and submitted to public penance at the grave of the man who was too strong for him, even in death. The homage of the nation may not prove that Becket was a holy martyr, but at least it proves that he was one of the first of those great Englishmen "who taught the people to struggle for their liberties," and that Tennyson was right in choosing this man as the hero of his noblest historic drama.

In *Queen Mary*, we are called to watch the third great conflict of England. Church and people have triumphed. It has already become clear that the English throne must be

Broad-bas'd upon the people's will,

and that religion will be a controlling influence in the life of the nation. But what type of religion? The Papacy and the Reformation have crossed swords and are struggling together for the possession of the seagirt island. How sharp was the contest, how near the friends of Spain and Italy came to winning the victory over the friends of Germany and Holland and Switzerland, Tennyson has shown in his vivid picture of Mary's reign.

The characters are sharply drawn. Philip, with his icy sensuality and gigantic egotism; Gardiner, with his coarse ferocity,

His big baldness,
That irritable forelock which he rubs,
His buzzard beak, and deep incavern'd eyes;

Reginald Pole, the suave, timorous, selfish ecclesiastic; Sir Thomas Wyatt and Sir Ralph Bagenhall, brave, steadfast, honest men, English to the core; Cranmer, with his moments of weakness and faltering, well atoned for by

his deep faith and humble penitence and heroic martyrdom; all these stand out before us like living figures against the background of diplomatic intrigue and popular tumult. And Mary herself,—never has that unhappy queen, the victim of her own intense, passionate delusions, had such justice done to her. She came near to wrecking England. Tennyson does not let us forget that; but he softens our hatred and our horror with a touch of human pity for her own self-wreck as he shows her sitting upon the ground, desolate and desperate, moaning for the treacherous Philip in

A low voice
Lost in a wilderness where none can hear!
A voice of shipwreck on a shoreless sea!
A low voice from the dust and from the grave.

The drama which most naturally invites comparison with *Queen Mary* is Shakespeare's *Henry VIII.* And it seems to me that if we lay the two works side by side, Tennyson's suffers a little but not overmuch even by this hazardous propinquity. In lyrics,—the interludes of the drama,—I would almost dare to claim the advantage for *Queen Mary.* Take the song of Queen Catherine:

Orpheus with his lute made trees
And the mountain-tops that freeze

Bow themselves when he did sing:
To his music plants and flowers
Ever sprung; as Sun and showers
There had made a lasting spring.

Everything that heard him play
Even the billows of the sea
Hung their heads and then lay by.
In sweet music is such art,
Killing care and grief of heart
Fall asleep, or, hearing, die.

And then read Queen Mary's song:—

Hapless doom of woman happy in betrothing!
Beauty passes like a breath and love is lost in loathing:
Low, my lute: speak low, my lute, but say the world is nothing—
Low, lute, low!

Love will hover round the flowers when they first awaken;
Love will fly the fallen leaf and not be overtaken:
Low, my lute! oh low, my lute! we fade and are forsaken—
Low, dear lute, low!

This is infinitely more pathetic as well as more musical than Shakespeare's stiff little lyric.

If this comparison seem unfair, then try the two dramas by their strength of character-painting. Is not Tennyson's Philip as vivid and as consistent as Shakespeare's Henry? Does not the later Gardiner stand out more clearly than the earlier, and the younger Howard

surpass the elder? Is not the legate Pole more lifelike than the legate Campeius? Is not Cecil's description of Elizabeth more true and sharp, though less high-flown, than Cranmer's? We must admit that there are "purple patches" of eloquence, like Wolsey's famous speech upon ambition, in Shakespeare's work, which are unrivalled. But taken altogether, as an historic drama, *Queen Mary* does not rank far below *Henry VIII.*

It is not at all likely that Tennyson will be remembered chiefly as a dramatist. His shortcomings are too great, and his rank as a lyrical and narrative poet is too high, for that. But the wholesale condemnation and neglect of his dramatic work is a reproach to the intelligence of our critics. J. R. Green, the late historian of *The English People* said that "all his researches into the annals of the twelfth century had not given him so vivid a conception of the character of Henry II. and his court as was embodied in Tennyson's *Becket.*" Backed by an authority like this it is not too daring to predict that the day is coming when the study of Tennyson's Dramatic Trilogy will be reckoned important to an understanding of English history.

IX

THE BIBLE IN TENNYSON

IT is safe to say that there is no other book which has had so great an influence upon the literature of the world as the Bible. And it is almost as safe—at least with no greater danger than that of starting an instructive discussion—to say that there is no other literature which has felt this influence so deeply or shown it so clearly as the English.

The cause of this latter fact is not far to seek. It may be, as a French critic suggests, that it is partly due to the inborn and incorrigible tendency of the Anglo-Saxon mind to drag religion and morality into everything. But certainly this tendency would never have taken such a distinctly Biblical form had it not been for the beauty and vigour of our common English version of the Scriptures. These qualities were felt by the people even before they were praised by the critics. Apart from all religious prepossessions, men and women and children were attracted by the power and grace of the book. The English Bible was popular, in the

broadest sense, long before it was recognised as one of our noblest English classics. It has coloured the talk of the household and the street, as well as moulded the language of scholars. It has been something more than a "well of English undefiled"; it has become a part of the spiritual atmosphere. We hear the echoes of its speech everywhere; and the music of its familiar phrases haunts all the fields and groves of our fine literature.

It is not only to the theologians and the sermon-makers that we look for Biblical allusions and quotations. We often find the very best and most vivid of them in writers professedly secular. Poets like Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth; novelists like Scott and romancers like Hawthorne; essayists like Bacon, Steele, and Addison; critics of life, unsystematic philosophers, like Carlyle and Ruskin,—all draw upon the Bible as a treasury of illustrations, and use it as a book equally familiar to themselves and to their readers. It is impossible to put too high a value upon such a universal volume, even as a mere literary possession. It forms a bond of sympathy between the most cultivated and the simplest of the people. The same book lies upon the desk of the scholar and in the cupboard of the peasant. If you

touch upon one of its narratives, every one knows what you mean. If you allude to one of its characters or scenes, your reader's memory supplies an instant picture to illuminate your point. And so long as its words are studied by little children at their mothers' knees and recognised by high critics as the model of pure English, we may be sure that neither the jargon of science nor the slang of ignorance will be able to create a verbal barrier to divide the people of our common race. There will be a medium of communication in the language and imagery of the English Bible.

This much, by way of introduction, I have felt it necessary to say, in order to mark the spirit of this essay. For the poet whose works we are to study is at once one of the most scholarly and one of the most widely popular of English writers. At least one cause of his popularity is that there is so much of the Bible in Tennyson. How much, few even of his ardent lovers begin to understand.

I do not know that the attempt has ever been made before to collect and collate all the Scriptural allusions and quotations in his works, and to trace the golden threads which he has woven from that source into the woof of his poetry. The delight of "fresh woods and pas-

tures new"—so rare in this over-explored age—has thus been mine. I have found more than four hundred direct references to the Bible in the poems of Tennyson; and have given a list of them in the appendix to this book. This may have some value for professed Tennysonians, and for them alone it is given. The general reader would find it rather dry pasturage. But there is an aspect of the subject which has a wider interest. And in this essay I want to show how closely Tennyson has read the Bible, how well he understands it, how much he owes to it, and how clearly he stands out as, in the best sense, a defender of the faith.

I

On my table lies the first publication which bears the name of Alfred Tennyson; a thin pamphlet, in faded gray paper, containing the *Prolusiones Academicæ*, recited at the University of Cambridge in 1829. Among them is one with the title: *Timbuctoo;* A Poem which obtained the Chancellor's Medal, etc., by A. Tennyson, of Trinity College.

On the eleventh page, in a passage describing the spirit of poetry which fills the branches of the "great vine of Fable," we find these lines:—

There is no mightier Spirit than I to sway
The heart of man; and teach him to attain
By shadowing forth the Unattainable;
And step by step to scale the mighty stair
Whose landing place is wrapped about with clouds
Of glory of Heaven.

And at the bottom of the page stands this footnote: *Be ye perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect.*

This is the earliest Biblical allusion that we can identify in the writings of Tennyson. Even the most superficial glance will detect its beauty. There are few who have not felt the lofty attraction of the teachings of Christ, in which the ideal of holiness shines so far above our reach, while we are continually called to climb towards it. Especially these very words about perfection, which He spoke in the Sermon on the Mount, have often lifted us upward just because they point our aspirations to a goal so high that it seems inaccessible. The young poet who sets a jewel like this in his early work shows not only that he has understood the moral sublimity of the doctrine of Christ, but also that he has rightly conceived the mission of noble poetry,—to idealise human life. Once and again in his later writings we see the same picture of the soul rising step by step

To higher things;

and catch a glimpse of those vast altar-stairs

That slope through darkness up to God.

In the poem entitled "Isabel"—one of the best in the slender volume of 1830—there is a line which reminds us that Tennyson must have known his New Testament in the original language. He says that all the fairest forms of nature are types of the noble woman whom he is describing,—

And thou of God in thy great charity.

No one who was not familiar with the Greek of St. Paul and St. John would have been bold enough to speak of the "charity of God." It is a phrase which throws a golden light upon the thirteenth chapter of the *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, and brings the human love into harmony and union with the divine.

"The May Queen" is a poem which has sung itself into the hearts of people everywhere. The tenderness of its sentiment and the cadence of its music have made it beloved in spite of its many faults. Yet I suppose that the majority of readers have read it again and again, without recognising that one of its most melodious verses is a direct quotation from the third chapter of *Job*.

And the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.

This is one of the instances—by no means rare—in which the translators of our English Bible have fallen unconsciously into the rhythm of perfect poetry; and it is perhaps the best illustration of Tennyson's felicitous use of the very words of Scripture.

There are others, hardly less perfect, in the fine sermon which the Rector in "Aylmer's Field" delivers after the death of Edith and Leolin. It is a mosaic of Bible language, most curiously wrought, and fused into one living whole by the passion of an intense sorrow. How like a heavy, dull refrain of prophetic grief and indignation recurs the dreadful text,

Your house is left unto you desolate!

The solemn association of the words lends the force of a superhuman and impersonal wrath to the preacher's language, and the passage stands as a monumental denunciation of

The social wants that sin against the strength of youth.

Enoch Arden's parting words to his wife contain some beautiful fragments of Scripture embedded in the verse.

Cast all your cares on God; that anchor holds.
Is He not yonder in the uttermost
Parts of the morning? If I flee to these

Can I go from Him? and the sea is His,
The sea is His: He made it.

The *Idylls of the King* are full of allusions to the Bible. Take for instance the lines from "The Holy Grail":—

When the Lord of all things made Himself
Naked of glory for His mortal change.

Here is a commentary, most illuminative, on the fifth and sixth verses of the second chapter of *Philippians.* Again, in the same Idyll, where the hermit says to Sir Percivale, after his unsuccessful quest,—

Thou hast not lost thyself to find thyself,

we are reminded of the words of Christ and the secret of all victory in spiritual things: *He that loseth his life shall find it.*

In "The Coming of Arthur," while the trumpet blows and the city seems on fire with sunlight dazzling on cloth of gold, the long procession of knights pass before the King, singing their great song of allegiance. It is full of warrior's pride and delight of battle, clanging battle-axe and flashing brand,—a true song for the heavy fighters of the days of chivalry. But it has also a higher touch, a strain of spiritual grandeur, which, although it may have no justi-

fication in an historical picture of the Round Table, yet serves to lift these knights of the poet's imagination into an ideal realm and set them marching as ghostly heroes of faith and loyalty through all ages.

The King will follow Christ, and we the King.

Compare this line with the words of St. Paul: *Be ye followers of me even as I also am of Christ.* They teach us that the lasting devotion of men is rendered not to the human, but to the divine, in their heroes. He who would lead others must first learn to follow One who is higher than himself. Without faith it is not only impossible to please God, but also impossible to rule men. King Arthur is the ideal of one who has heard a secret word of promise and seen a vision of more than earthly glory, by virtue of which he becomes the leader and master of his knights, able to inspire their hopes and unite their aspirations and bind their service to himself in the fellowship of the Round Table.

And now turn to one of the later poems of Tennyson: "Locksley Hall, Sixty Years After." Sad enough in its lament for broken dreams, dark with the gloom of declining years, when the grasshopper has become a burden and desire has failed and the weary heart has grown

afraid of that which is high; but at the close the old man rises again to the sacred strain:—

Follow you the star that lights a desert pathway, yours or mine,
Forward, till you see the highest Human Nature is divine.

Follow Light and do the Right—for man can half control his doom—
Till you see the deathless angel seated in the vacant tomb.

II

When we come to speak of the Biblical scenes and characters to which Tennyson refers, we find so many that the difficulty is to choose. He has recognised the fact that an allusion wins half its power from its connection with the reader's memory and previous thought. In order to be forcible and effective it must be at least so familiar as to awaken a train of associations. An allusion to something which is entirely strange and unknown may make an author appear more learned, but it does not make him seem more delightful. Curiosity may be a good atmosphere for the man of science to speak in, but the poet requires a sympathetic medium. He should endeavour to touch the first notes of well-known airs, and then memory will supply the accompaniment to enrich his

music. This is what Tennyson has done with the instinct of genius in his references to the stories and personages of the Bible.

His favourite allusion is to Eden and the mystical story of Adam and Eve. This occurs again and again, in "The Day-Dream," *Maud*, *In Memoriam*, "The Gardener's Daughter," *The Princess*, "Milton," "Enid," and "Lady Clara Vere de Vere." The last instance is perhaps the most interesting, on account of a double change which has been made in the form of the allusion. In the edition of 1842 (the first in which the poem appeared) the self-assertive peasant who refuses to fall in love with the lady of high degree, says to her,—

> *Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,*
> *From yon blue heavens above us bent,*
> *The gardener Adam and his wife*
> *Smile at the claims of long descent.*

In later editions this was altered to "the grand old gardener and his wife." But in this form the reference was open to misunderstanding. I remember a pretty young woman, who once told me she had always thought the lines referred to some particularly pious old man who had formerly taken care of Lady Clara's flower-beds, and who now smiled from heaven at the

foolish pride of his mistress. Perhaps it is just as well that Tennyson restored the line, in 1875, to its original form, and gave us "the gardener Adam" again, to remind us of the quaint distich—

"When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?"

The story of Jephtha's daughter is another of the Old Testament narratives for which the poet seems to have a predilection. It is told with great beauty and freedom in the "Dream of Fair Women"; "Aylmer's Field" touches upon it; and it recurs in "The Flight."

In *The Princess* we find allusions to the Queen of Sheba, Vashti, Miriam, Jael, Lot's wife, Jonah's gourd, and the Tower of Babel. And if your copy of the Bible has the Apocrypha in it, you may add the story of Judith and Holofernes.

Esther appears in "Enid," and Rahab in *Queen Mary*. In "Godiva" we read of the Earl's heart,—

As rough as Esau's hand;

and in "Locksley Hall" we see the picture of the earth standing

At gaze, like Joshua's moon in Ajalon.

The "Sonnet to Buonaparte" recalls to our memory

Those whom Gideon school'd with briers.

In "The Palace of Art" we behold the handwriting on the wall at Belshazzar's Feast.

It would be impossible even to enumerate Tennyson's allusions to the life of Christ, from the visit of the Magi, which is referred to in "Morte d'Arthur" and "The Holy Grail," down to the line in "Balin and Balan" which tells of

That same spear
Wherewith the Roman pierced the side of Christ.

But to my mind the most beautiful of all the references to the New Testament is the passage in *In Memoriam* which describes the reunion of Mary and Lazarus after his return from the grave. With what a human interest does the poet clothe the familiar story! How reverently and yet with what natural and simple pathos does he touch upon the more intimate relations of the three persons who are the chief actors! The question which has come a thousand times to every one that has lost a dear friend,—the question whether love survives in the other world, whether those who

have gone before miss those who are left behind and have any knowledge of their grief,—this is the suggestion which brings the story home to us and makes it seem real and living.

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
And home to Mary's house return'd
Was this demanded,—if he yearn'd
To hear her weeping by his grave?

"Where wert thou, brother, those four days?"
There lives no record of reply,
Which telling what it is to die,
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbours met,
The streets were fill'd with joyful sound,
A solemn gladness even crown'd
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unreveal'd;
He told it not; or something seal'd
The lips of that Evangelist.

Then follows the description of Mary,—a passage which seems to me to prove the superiority of poetry, as an art, over painting and sculpture. For surely neither marble nor canvas ever held such a beautiful figure of devotion as that which breathes in these verses:—

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
No other thought her mind admits

But, he was dead, and there he sits,
And He that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's face
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
Borne down by gladness so complete,
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,
Whose loves in higher love endure;
What souls possess themselves so pure,
Or is there blessedness like theirs?

It does not seem possible that the changing fashions of poetic art should ever make verses like these seem less perfect, or that Time should ever outwear the sweet and simple power of this conception of religion.

There is no passage in literature which expresses better the mystery of death, or shows more attractively the happiness of an unquestioning personal faith in Him who has solved it and knows the answer.

The poem of "Rizpah," which was first published in the volume of *Ballads* in 1880, is an illustration of dramatic paraphrase from the Bible. The story of the Hebrew mother watch-

ing beside the dead bodies of her sons whom the Gibeonites had hanged upon the hill, and defending them night and day for six months from the wild beasts and birds of prey, is transformed into the story of an English mother, whose son has been executed for robbery and hung in chains upon the gibbet. She is driven wild by her grief; hears her boy's voice wailing through the wind, "O mother, come out to me"; creeps through the rain and the darkness to the place where the chains are creaking and groaning with their burden; gropes and gathers all that is left of what was once her child and carries him home to bury him beside the churchyard wall. And then, when she is accused of theft, she breaks out in a passion of defence. It is a mother's love justifying itself against a cruel law. Those poor fragments which the wind and the rain had spared were hers, by a right divine,—bone of her bone,—she had nursed and cradled her baby, and all that was left belonged to her; justice had no claim which could stand against hers.

Theirs? O no! they are mine,—not theirs,—they had moved in my side!

Swinburne said of this passage, "Nothing more piteous, more passionate, more adorable

for intensity of beauty was ever before this wrought by human cunning into the likeness of such words as words are powerless to praise."

III

In trying to estimate the general influence of the Bible upon the thought and feeling of Tennyson we have a more difficult task. For the teachings of Christianity have become a part of the moral atmosphere of the age; and it is hard for us to tell just what any man would have been without them, or just how far they have made him what he is, while we are looking at him through the very same medium in which we ourselves are breathing. If we could get out of ourselves, if we could divest ourselves of all those views of God and duty and human life which we have learned so early that they seem to us natural and inevitable, we might perhaps be able to arrive at a more exact discrimination. But this would be to sacrifice a position of vital sympathy for one of critical judgment. The loss would be greater than the gain. It is just as well for the critic to recognise that he is hardly able

To sit as God, holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all.

Tennyson himself has described the mental paralysis, the spiritual distress, which follow that attempt. A critic ought to be free from prejudices, but surely not even for the sake of liberty should he make himself naked of convictions. To float on wings above the earth will give one a bird's-eye view; but for a man's-eye view we must have a standing-place on the earth. And after all the latter may be quite as true, even though it is not absolutely colourless.

The effect of Christianity upon the poetry of Tennyson may be felt, first of all, in its general moral quality. By this it is not meant that he is always or often preaching, or drawing pictures

"*To point a moral or adorn a tale.*"

Didactic art sometimes misses its own end by being too instructive. We find in Tennyson's poems many narratives of action and descriptions of character which are simply left to speak for themselves and teach their own lessons. In this they are like the histories in the *Book of Judges* or the *Books of the Kings*. The writer takes it for granted that the reader has a heart and a conscience. Compare in this respect, the perfect simplicity of the domestic idyl of "Dora" with the *Book of Ruth*.

But at the same time the poet can hardly help revealing, more by tone and accent than by definite words, his moral sympathies. Tennyson always speaks from the side of virtue; and not of that new and strange virtue which some of our later poets have exalted, and which when it is stripped of its fine garments turns out to be nothing else than the unrestrained indulgence of every natural impulse; but rather of that old-fashioned virtue whose laws are "Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control," and which finds its highest embodiment in the morality of the New Testament. Read, for example, his poems which deal directly with the subject of marriage: "The Miller's Daughter," "Isobel," "Lady Clare," "The Lord of Burleigh," "Locksley Hall," "Love and Duty," "The Wreck," "Aylmer's Field," "Enoch Arden," the latter part of *The Princess*, and many different passages of the *Idylls*. From whatever side he approaches the subject, whether he is painting with delicate, felicitous touches the happiness of truly-wedded hearts, or denouncing the sins of avarice and pride which corrupt the modern marriage-mart of society, or tracing the secret evil which poisoned the court of Arthur and shamed the golden head of Guinevere, his ideal is always the perfect union of two lives in one,

"which is commended of St. Paul to be honourable among all men." To him woman seems loveliest when she has

The laws of marriage character'd in gold
Upon the blanched tablets of her heart,

and man strongest when he has learned

To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
And worship her by years of noble deeds.

The theology of Tennyson has been accused of a pantheistic tendency; and it cannot be denied that there are expressions in his poems which seem to look in that direction, or at least to look decidedly away from the conception of the universe as a vast machine and its Maker as a supernatural machinist who has constructed the big engine and left it to run on by itself until it wears out. But surely this latter view, which fairly puts God out of the world, is not the view of the Bible. The New Testament teaches us, undoubtedly, to distinguish between Him and His works; but it also teaches that He is in His works, or rather that all His works are in Him,—*in Him*, says St. Paul, *we live and move and have our being.* Light is His garment. Life is His breath.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let us rejoice,
For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice.

But if I wished to prove, against those who doubted, Tennyson's belief in a living, personal, spiritual God, immanent in the universe, yet not confused with it, I should turn to his doctrine of prayer. There are many places in his poems where prayer is, not explained, but simply justified, as the highest activity of a human soul and a real bond between God and man. In these very lines on "The Higher Pantheism," from which I have just quoted, there is a verse which can only be interpreted as the description of a personal intercourse between the divine and the human:—

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet,—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

Of Enoch Arden in the dreadful loneliness of that rich island where he was cast away it is said that

Had not his poor heart
Spoken with That, which being everywhere
Lets none, who speaks with Him, seem all alone
Surely the man had died of solitude.

When he comes back, after the weary years of absence, to find his wife wedded to another, and his home no longer his, it is by prayer that he obtains strength to keep his generous resolve

Not to tell her, never to let her know,

and to bear the burden of his secret to the lonely end. Edith, in the drama of *Harold*, when her last hope breaks and the shadow of gloom begins to darken over her, cries,—

No help but prayer,
A breath that fleets beyond this iron world
And touches Him that made it.

King Arthur, bidding farewell to the last of his faithful knights, says to him,—

Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

But lest any one should say that these passages are merely dramatic, and do not express the personal faith of the poet, turn to the solemn invocation in which he has struck the keynote of his deepest and most personal poem,—

Strong Son of God, immortal Love!

It is the poet's own prayer. No man could have written it save one who believed that

God is Love, and that Love is incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ.

Next to the question of the reality of God, comes the problem of human life and destiny. And this has a twofold aspect. First, in regard to the present world, is man moving upward or downward; is good stronger than evil or evil stronger than good; is life worth living, or is it a cheat and a failure? Second, in regard to the future, is there any hope of personal continuance beyond death? To both of these inquiries Tennyson gives an answer which is in harmony with the teachings of the Bible.

He finds the same difficulties and doubts in the continual conflict between good and evil which are expressed in *Job* and *Ecclesiastes*. Indeed so high an authority as Professor Plumptre has said that "the most suggestive of all commentaries" on the latter book are Tennyson's poems, "The Vision of Sin," "The Palace of Art," and "Two Voices." In the last of these he draws out in the form of a dialogue the strife between hope and despair in the breast of a man who has grown weary of life and yet is not ready to embrace death. For, after all, the sum of the reasons which the first voice urges in favour of suicide is that nothing is worth very much, no man is of any real value

to the world, *il n'y a pas d'homme nécessaire*, no effort produces any lasting result, all things are moving round and round in a tedious circle, —vanity of vanities,—if you are tired why not take your hat and leave the play? The tempted man—tempted to yield to the devil's own philosophy of pessimism—uses all argument to combat the enemy, but in vain, or at least with only half-success; until at last the night is worn away; he flings open his window and looks out upon the Sabbath morn.

The sweet church bells began to peal.

On to God's house the people prest;
Passing the place where each must rest,
Each entered like a welcome guest.

One walked between his wife and child,
With measured footfall firm and mild,
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood
Leaned on him, faithful, gentle, good,
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,
The little maiden walked demure,
Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

These three made unity so sweet,
My frozen heart began to beat,
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wandered on:
I spoke, but answer came there none;
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

And then comes another voice whispering of a secret hope, and bidding the soul "Rejoice! Rejoice!" If we hear in the first part of the poem the echo of the saddest book of the Old Testament, we hear also in the last part the tones of Him who said: *Let not your heart be troubled: in my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you.*

There are many places in the poems of Tennyson where he speaks with bitterness of the falsehood and evil that are in the world, the corruptions of society, the downward tendencies in human nature. But he is not a prophet of despair. He doubts not that

Thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns.

He believes that good

Shall be the final goal of ill.

He rests his faith upon the uplifting power of Christianity:—

For I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian child.

He hears the bells at midnight tolling the death of the old year, and he calls them to

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be!

In regard to the life beyond the grave, he asserts with new force and beauty the old faith in a personal immortality. The dim conception of an unconscious survival through the influence of our thoughts and deeds, which George Eliot has expressed in her poem of "the choir invisible," Tennyson finds to be

A faith as vague as all unsweet.
Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside;
And I shall know him when we meet.

The Christian doctrine of a personal recognition of friends in the other world has never been more distinctly uttered than in these words. It is not, indeed, supported by any metaphysical arguments; nor are we concerned thus to justify it. Our only purpose now is to show—and after these verses who can doubt it—that the poet has kept the faith which he learned in his father's house and at his mother's knee.

So in regard to the future state of those who

have passed through the gate of death: Tennyson may not have accepted all the particular definitions and details of rewards and punishments that are given by the churches, but there is not a line in all his works that is contrary to the teachings of Christ, nor a line that runs beyond the limit of human thought into the mysteries of the unknown and the unknowable. "The wages of sin is death; the gift of God is eternal life." This is the truth which he teaches on higher authority than his own. "The rest," as Hamlet says, "is silence."

But what is the end of all these conflicts, these struggles, these probations? What the final result of this strife between sin and virtue? What the consummation of oppugnancies and interworkings? The poet looks onward through the mists and shadows and sees only 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.

And if any one shall ask what this far-off divine event is, we may answer in the words of St. Paul:—

For he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be abol-

ished is death. For, he put all things in subjection under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put in subjection, it is evident that he is excepted who did subject all things unto him. And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all.

And now, as we bring to a close this brief study of a subject which I trust has proved larger than it promised at first to those who had never looked into it, what are our conclusions? Or if this word seem too exact and formal, what are our impressions in regard to the relations between Tennyson and the Bible?

It seems to me that we cannot help seeing that the poet owes a large debt to the Bible, not only for its formative influence upon his mind and for the purely literary material in the way of illustrations and allusions which it has given him, but also, and more particularly, for the creation of a moral atmosphere, a medium of thought and feeling, in which he can speak freely and with assurance of sympathy to a wide circle of readers. He does not need to be always explaining and defining. There is much that is taken for granted, much

that goes without saying. What a world of unspoken convictions lies behind such poems as "Dora" and "Enoch Arden." Their beauty is not in themselves alone, but in the air that breathes around them, in the light that falls upon them from the faith of the centuries. Christianity is something more than a system of doctrines; it is a tone, a spirit, a great current of memories, beliefs and hopes flowing through millions of hearts. And he who launches his words upon this current finds that they are carried with a strength beyond his own, and freighted often with a meaning which he himself has not fully understood as it passed through him.

But, on the other hand, we cannot help seeing that the Bible gains a wider influence and a new power over men as it flows through the poet's mind upon the world. Its narratives and its teachings clothe themselves in modern forms of speech, and find entrance into many places which otherwise were closed against them. I do not mean by this that poetry is better than the Bible, but only that poetry lends wings to truth. People who would not read a sermon will read a poem. And though its moral and religious teachings may be indirect, though they may proceed by silent as-

sumption rather than by formal assertion, they exercise an influence which is perhaps the more powerful because it is unconscious.

The Bible is in continual danger of being desiccated by an exhaustive (and exhausting) scientific treatment. When it comes to be regarded chiefly as a compendium of exact statements of metaphysical doctrine, the day of its life will be over, and it will be ready for a place in the museum of antiquities. It must be a power in literature if it is to be a force in society. For literature, as a wise critic has suggested, is just "the best that has been thought and said in the world." And if this be true, literature is certain, not only to inspire culture but also to mould conduct.

Is it possible, then, for wise and earnest men to look with indifference upon the course of what is often called, with a slighting accent, "mere *belles lettres*"? We might as well be careless about the air we breathe or the water we drink. Malaria is no less fatal than pestilence. The chief peril which threatens the permanence of Christian faith and morals is none other than the malaria of modern letters, —an atmosphere of dull and cold, or feverish and frivolous, materialism. Into this poisoned air the poetry of Tennyson comes like a pure

wind from a loftier and serener height, bringing life and joy. His face looks out upon these darkening days,—grave, strong, purified by conflict, lighted by the inward glow of faith. He is become as one of the prophets,—a witness for God and for immortality.

X

FRUIT FROM AN OLD TREE

IN the secluded garden of Christ's College, at Cambridge, there is a mulberry-tree of which tradition says that it was planted by John Milton when he was a student there. I remember sitting on the green turf below it, a few years ago, and looking up at the branches, heavy with age and propped on crutches, and wondering to see that the old tree still brought forth fruit. It was not the size nor the quality of the fruit that impressed me. I hardly thought of that. The strange thing, the beautiful thing, was that, after so many years, the tree was yet bearing.

It is this feeling that comes to us when we see the productive power of a poet continued beyond the common term of human life. The thing is so rare that it appears almost miraculous. "Whom the gods love die young" seems to be the law for poets; or, at least, if they chance to live long, the gods, and chiefly Apollo, cease to love them. How few are the instances in which poetic fertility has lasted beyond the

threescore years! Wordsworth, Landor, Victor Hugo, Robert Browning,—among our American singers, Bryant, Longfellow, Whittier, and Lowell,—truly they are not many to whom has been given the double portion of long life and unfailing song. English literature has no parallel, in this respect, to the career of Tennyson. For sixty-six years he was drawing refreshment from the wells of poetry, and still the silver cord was not loosed, nor the golden bowl broken.

This chapter deals with the work of his later life. It has a value of its own, apart from the wonder of its production at such an advanced age. I am quite sure that there is a great deal which belongs to the enduring poetry of Tennyson in the two volumes which he gave to the world in 1886 and 1889, and in the posthumous volume which appeared in the month of his death, October, 1892.

I

"Locksley Hall Sixty Years After" was not received at first with notable applause. The young critics reviled it as the work of an old man, and raised a chorus of "Go up, thou baldhead," which made one regret that since the

days of Elisha the bears have neglected one of their most beneficent functions.

The first "Locksley Hall" was beyond a doubt the most immediately successful thing in the volumes of 1842, which gave Tennyson his place as a popular poet. The swift movement of the verse, the romantic interest of the story, the vigorous spirit of hope and enthusiasm which throbbed through the poem and made it seem alive with the breath of a new age, at once captivated all readers. It was this poem, more than any other, which lifted Tennyson beyond the admiration of a narrow circle and opened to him the heart of the world. And it is worthy of notice that, even in its outward form, this poem is one of the few which his habit of self-correction left almost unchanged. There are but four slight verbal variations between the first and the last text.

Forty-four years had passed when the poet took up the thread of his youthful dream once more and followed it to the end.

The nature of the poem as a dramatic lyric must not be forgotten, for it is this which gives unity to the two parts. They are not disconnected strings of brilliant metaphors, or trochaic remarks upon human life and progress. They are the expression of a character, the lyric his-

tory of a person; they form a complete and rounded whole. They are two acts in the same play. The hero, the scene, remain the same. Only the time is changed by half a century.

It seems that Tennyson was not willing to leave his hero as he stood in the first act. For with all his attractive, not to say "magnetic," qualities, there was something about him that was unlovely, almost absurd. He made too much of himself, talked too loudly and recklessly, was too much inclined to rave and exaggerate. Tennyson doubtless wished to do for him what time really does for every man whose heart is of true metal—make him wiser and kinder and more worthy to be loved. The touches by which this change has been accomplished are admirable.

Compare the rejected lover's jealousy of the baby rival whose lips should laugh him down, and whose hands should push him from the mother's heart, with the old man's prayer beside the marble image of Amy,

Looking still as if she smiled,

sleeping quietly with her little child upon her breast. Or turn from the young man's scornful and unjust description of the richer suitor who had carried off his sweetheart, to the gen-

erous tribute which he lays at last upon the grave of him who

Strove for sixty widow'd years to help his homelier brother man.

Or put his first wild complaint of the worthlessness and desolation of his life beside his later acknowledgment of the joy and strength which had come to him through the larger, deeper love of Edith. Surely, if words have any meaning, the poet means to show by these things that not only youthful jealousy, but also youthful despair, is false, and that, for every one who will receive its discipline and hold fast to its hopes, life is worth the living.

So far, then, as the story of the two poems is concerned, so far as they present to us a picture of human character and trace its development through the experience of joy and sorrow, their lesson is sweet and sound and full of encouragement. It shows the frailty of exaggerated feelings of passion, born in an atmosphere of tropical heat, and unable to endure the cooler air of reality. But it shows also that the garden of life has better and more lasting blossoms, affections which survive all shock and change, a man's love which is stronger than a boy's fancy, a man's reverence for honest worth

which can overcome a boy's resentment for imagined wrongs,

A sober certainty of waking bliss

which makes divine amends for the vanished dreams of boyhood. It reminds us of the story of the "child-wife," Dora, and the woman-wife, Agnes, which Dickens has told in *David Copperfield*, or of Thackeray's history of *Henry Esmond*.

But when we come to consider the sequel of the poem in its other aspect, as a commentary on modern England, as an estimate of the result of those buoyant, bounding hopes which seemed to swing the earlier verses onward in the full tide of exultation toward a near millennium, we find a difference of opinion among critics. There were some who regarded the second "Locksley Hall" as a veritable palinode, a complete recantation of the poet's youthful creed, a shameful desertion from the army of progress to the army of reaction, a betrayal of the standard of hope into the hands of despair. There were others, among them Mr. Gladstone, who thought that, though the poet had not really deserted the good cause, he had at least yielded too far to despondency, and that he was in danger of marring the semi-cen-

tennial jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign with unnecessarily "tragic tones." It seems to me that both of these views were unjust, because they both failed to go far enough beneath the surface. They left out of sight several things which were necessary to a fair judgment of the poem.

First of all is the fact that the poet does not speak for himself, but through the lips of a *persona*, a mask; and what he says must be in character. Mr. Gladstone has, indeed, noted this fact; but he has failed to take fully into account the peculiar and distinctive qualities of the character which the poet has chosen. The hero of "Locksley Hall" is a man in whom emotion is stronger than thought; impulsive, high-strung, supersensitive; one to whom everything that he sees must loom larger than life through the mist of his own overwrought feelings. This is his nature. And if in youth he took too bright a view of the future, it is quite as inevitable that in age he should take too dark a view of the present. If there be any exaggeration in his complaints about the evils of our times, it is but fair to set them down to the idiosyncrasy of the hero, and not to the opinions of the poet.

But suppose we put this plea of dramatic

propriety aside, and make Tennyson answerable for all that his hero says. We shall find that there were some things in the first rhapsody almost as hard and bitter as any in the second. Take the vigourous imprecations against the social wants, the social lies, the sickly forms, by which the young man is oppressed and infuriated. Hear him cry:—

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon days like these?
Every door is barred with gold, and opens but to golden keys.

See his picture of the hungry people, creeping like a lion towards the slothful watcher beside a dying fire. Here, at least, even in the first outflow of hopeful music, are the warning notes. And though there may be more severity in the old man's condemnation of the iniquities and follies of society, in one point at least he has grown milder: he does not indulge in any more "cursing."

Observe also, if we must hold Tennyson responsible for a retraction in the second poem of anything that he taught in the first, just what is the point to which that retraction applies. He does not deny his early hope for the future of England and the world; he denies only the two insufficient grounds on which that hope was based.

One of these grounds was the swift and wonderful march of what is called modern improvement, meaning thereby the steamship, the railway, the telegraph, and the advance of all the industrial arts. Of these he says now:—

Half the marvels of my morning, triumphs over time and space,
Staled by frequence, shrunk by usage into commonest commonplace.

And is not this true? Have we not all felt the shrinkage of the much-vaunted miracles of science into the veriest kitchen utensils of a comfort-worshipping society? Physical powers have been multiplied by an unknown quantity, but it is a serious question whether moral powers have not had their square root extracted. A man can go from New York to London now in five days by ship, in two days by air-plane or dirigible, if he has good luck. But when he arrives he is no better man than if it had taken him a month. He can talk across three thousand miles of ocean, but he has nothing more to say than when he sent his letter by a sailing-packet. All the mechanical inventions in the world will not change man's heart, or

Lift him nearer God-like state.

The other ground of hope in the old "Locksley Hall" was the advance of modern politics,

through the freedom of speech and the extension of suffrage, which seemed to promise at no distant date a sort of universal "Parliament of Man," a "Federation of the World." In the new "Locksley Hall" the poet confesses that this ground also has failed him. He no longer thinks so highly of Parliament that he desires to see it reproduced on a larger scale. The virtues of talk as a panacea for human ills appear to him dubious. He hazards the conjecture that

Old England may go down in babble at last.

And he breaks out in fierce indignation against the "rivals of realm-ruining party," who care more for votes than for truth, and for the preservation of their own power than for the preservation of the Empire.

What is all this but the acknowledgment of the truth which most sober men are beginning to feel? Fifty years ago material science and political theory promised large things. The promise has been kept to the ear and broken to the hope. The world has gone forward—a little—but it has not arrived at a complete millennium, nor even swept at once into a brighter day; far from it. The heavy clouds which gathered in the sky at the close of the Nine-

teenth Century broke, in the Twentieth Century, into a horrible tempest of war which devastated Europe. The moral condition of humanity in general, and of England in particular, is certainly not free from elements of degradation and threats of danger.

Let me quote two sentences, from prose-writers, contemporaries of Tennyson, which will show that the Victorian Age of literature was by no means such a smug, self-complacent period as some recent critics would have us believe.

"British industrial existence seems fast becoming one huge poison-swamp of reeking pestilence, physical and moral; a *living* Golgotha of souls and bodies buried alive; such a Curtius' gulf communicating with the nether deeps as the sun never saw till now." That was what Thomas Carlyle thought. And, after the same fashion, Ruskin wrote: "Remember, for the last twenty years, England and all foreign nations, either tempting her or following her, have blasphemed the name of God deliberately and openly; and have done iniquity by proclamation, every man doing as much injustice to his brother as it is in his power to do."

These utterances, like the darker verses in Tennyson's poem, were not meant to be taken

as complete pictures of the time. They were only earnest and vigourous warnings against the easy-going, self-complacent optimism which talks as if the millennium had already dawned. To reply to them by an enumeration of the scientific discoveries which were made, and the political measures which were passed, would have been quite beside the point. The question which pressed on serious minds in the Nineteenth Century, and which is most urgent in the Twentieth Century, remains the same: *Is human life really higher, holier, happier?*

The answer, if it is thoughtful as well as hopeful, must be, *A little.* But still the strife, the shame, the suffering, endure.

City children soak and blacken soul and sense in city slime;

There among the glooming alleys Progress halts on palsied feet,
Crime and hunger cast our maidens by the thousand on the street.

If we ask when and how these things shall cease, the reply comes, not from the fairy-tales of science nor from the blue-books of politics, but from the heart of Christian justice and charity and from the promise of Christian faith. And this is the reply which Tennyson has given,

in words as clear and musical as he has ever uttered:—

Follow you the Star that lights a desert pathway, yours or mine,
Forward, till you learn the highest Human Nature is divine.

Follow Light, and do the Right—for man can half control his doom—
Till you see the deathless Angel seated in the vacant Tomb.

Forward, let the stormy moment fly and mingle with the Past.
I that loathed, have come to love him. Love will conquer at the last.

The last line recalls us once more to the personal interest of the poem, which, after all, is the strongest. The hero of "Locksley Hall" is bidding us farewell. He has played his part through. The drama of life is ended. In the first act we saw the youth seeking to forget his private sorrow in the largest dreams of public good; turning from the lost embraces of his "faithless Amy," to lay his head upon the vast bosom of the age, and listen to the deep throbbing of cosmic hopes. In the second act we see the old man seeking to forget his public disappointments in his private affections; turning back from that hard and unrestful world-

bosom, where he has heard nothing better than the clank of machinery and the words of windy oratory, to find rest in the tender memories of Amy and Edith, and the man whom time had changed from his enemy into his friend; and looking forward to the future for the fulfilment of his hopes in an age not yet revealed.

Who that understands anything of a young man's, or an old man's, heart can question the truth of these two pictures? And who will venture to say that the best philosophy of life does not lie somewhere between optimism and pessimism, in that steadfast and chastened meliorism to which Christianity makes its appeal and gives its promise?

II

The volume entitled *Demeter, and Other Poems*, which appeared at the close of the year 1889, does not contain any one poem of equal interest to the second "Locksley Hall"; but it contains several of more perfect workmanship, and in its wide range of subject and style it shows some of the finest qualities of Tennyson's poetry.

Take, first, his sympathetic interpretation of Nature. Wordsworth was the leader here; he

was the first to bring Nature close to man, and utter in human language her most intimate meanings; but Tennyson has added something to the scope and beauty of this kind of poetry. He has caught more of the throbbing and passionate and joyous voices of the world; he has not entered so deeply into the silence and solemnity of guardian mountains and sleeping lakes and broad, bare skies; but he has felt more keenly the thrills and flushes of Nature—the strange, sudden, perplexed, triumphant impulses of that eager seeking and tremulous welcoming of love which flows like life-blood through all animate things. And so he is at his best with Nature when he comes to the springtime. The lines on "The Oak" are Wordsworthian in their simplicity; the last stanza is a model of austere expression:—

All his leaves
Fall'n at length,
Look, he stands,
Trunk and bough,
Naked strength.

But in "The Throstle" we have something that none but Tennyson could have written. Immortal youth throbs and pulses in this old man's song. The simple music of joy, so swift and free that its cadences break through and

through one another and overflow the edges of the verse:—

Summer is coming, summer is coming,
I know it, I know it, I know it.
Light again, leaf again, life again, love again,
Yes, my wild little poet.

That sings itself.

The poem of "Demeter," which gives its name to the volume, is valuable for several qualities. It is an example of that opulent, stately, and musical blank-verse in which Tennyson was a great master. It shows also his power of reanimating an old-world legend with the vivid feeling of present life. The ancient myth of the earth-goddess, whose daughter has been snatched away into the shadowy underworld, is quickened by the poet's genius into an impassioned utterance of the sharp contrast between the spectral existence of Hades and the sweet, homely familiarities of the earth, the clinging of the heart to simple mortal life, and the preference of its joys and sorrows to all the "hard eternities" of passionless gods. But to my apprehension the best quality in this poem, and the most vital, is its revelation of the depth and power of the poet's human sympathy.

Somehow or other Demeter's divinity is for-

gotten and lost in her motherhood. Take that passage which begins:—

Child, when thou wert gone
I envied human wives and nested birds.

It would be impossible to express more directly and vividly the dependence of the mother upon the babe who is dependent upon her, the yearning of the maternal breast towards the child who has been taken from it. It is the same generous love which is set to music in the song in "Romney's Remorse"; but there the love is not robbed and disappointed, but satisfied in the outpouring of its riches:—

Beat, little heart, I give you this and this.

That is the fragrance, the melody, the mystery of the passion of motherhood—profound, simple, elemental. And when a poet can feel and interpret that for us, and at the same time express the rude and massive emotions of the stolid peasant in a poem like "Owd Roä," and the troubled, sensitive penitence of a vain, weak artist in a poem like "Romney's Remorse," he proves that nothing human is foreign to him.

Tennyson's most distinctive trait—that by which he is best known to those who know him

best—is the power of uttering a delicate, vague, yet potent emotion, one of those feelings which belong to the twilight of the heart, where the light of love and the shadow of regret are mingled, in a lyric which defines nothing and yet makes everything clear. To this class belong such songs as "Tears, idle tears," "Blow, bugle, blow," and "Break, break, break." And this volume gives us another lyric with the same mystical and musical charm, "Far—far—away." This is a melody that haunts youth and age; the attraction of distance, the strange magic of the dim horizon, the enchantment of evening bells ringing beyond the bounds of sight; these are things so aërial and evanescent that they seem to elude words; but Tennyson has somehow caught them in his song.

But there is something still nobler and greater in his poetry. There is a spiritual courage in his work, a force of faith which conquers doubt and darkness, a light of inward hope which burns dauntless under the shadow of death. Tennyson is the poet of faith; faith, as distinguished from cold dogmatism and the acceptance of traditional creeds; faith, which does not ignore doubt and mystery, but triumphs over them and faces the unknown with fearless heart. The poem entitled "Vastness" is an ex-

pression of this faith. But there is even a finer quality, a loftier, because a serener, power in the poem with which the book closes. Nothing that Tennyson has ever written is more beautiful in body and soul than "Crossing the Bar."

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face,
When I have crost the bar.

That is high poetry—simple even to the verge of austerity, yet rich with all the suggestions of wide ocean and waning light and vesper bells; easy to understand and full of music, yet opening inward to a truth which has no words, and pointing onward to a vision which transcends all forms; it is a delight and a consolation, a

song for mortal ears, and a prelude to the larger music of immortality.

It was his wish that this lyric should always stand at the close of every future edition of his poems.

III

The Death of Œnone, Akbar's Dream, and Other Poems, came out immediately after Tennyson's death. He was at work correcting the proofs, with the loving care which he gave to all the details of his art, when I was his guest at Aldworth in the last week of August, 1892.

The volume, while it is in some respects the slightest of all that Tennyson published, containing no poem that can be ranked with his best, and making no real increment to his fame, is certainly an extraordinary piece of work for a man of eighty-three years, and does not fall far below the general level of his poetry.

In "The Death of Œnone" he returns to one of the classical subjects which charmed him in his youth. In "St. Telemachus" he takes a familiar story from the ecclesiastical history of Theodoret—the story of that first deed of monkish chivalry by which the gladiatorial shows at Rome were broken up—and turns it into verse. In "Akbar's Dream" he touches the character

of the famous Mogul emperor whose name was the symbol of religious tolerance and breadth of mind, and whose endeavour was to rule with fairness and an even hand over all the people of different creeds in his vast dominion. The subject is one which had strong attractions for Tennyson, and he has handled it with warm sympathy. The poem closes with a brief, splendid hymn to the Sun:—

I

Once again thou flamest heavenward, once again we see thee rise.
Every morning is thy birthday, gladdening human hearts and eyes.
Every morning here we greet it, bowing lowly down before thee,
Thee the God-like, thee the changeless in thine ever-changing skies.

II

Shadow-maker, shadow-slayer, arrowing light from clime to clime,
Hear thy myriad laureates hail thee monarch in their wood-land rhyme.
Warble bird, and open flower, and men below the dome of azure,
Kneel adoring Him the Timeless in the flame that measures Time!

But of still greater interest are a few short poems—"The Making of Man," "Doubt and

Prayer," "Faith," "The Silent Voices," "God and the Universe"—in which the poet has given utterance once more to the deepest faith that was in him:—

Spirit, nearing yon dark portal at the limit of thy human state,
Fear not thou the hidden purpose of that Power which alone is great,
Nor the myriad world, His shadow, nor the silent Opener of the Gate.

Men were saying, at the close of the Nineteenth Century, that faith and art had parted company; that faith was dead, and art must live for itself alone. But while they were saying these things in melancholy essays and trivial verses, which denied a spiritual immortality and had small prospect of a literary one, the two great poets of the age, Tennyson and Browning, were setting their music to the keynote of an endless life, and prophesying with the harp, according as it is written: *I believe, and therefore sing.*

APPENDIX

I

A LIST OF BIBLICAL REFERENCES AND ALLUSIONS FOUND IN THE WORKS OF TENNYSON

*** The author wishes to thank the many correspondents, in Canada, in England, and in the United States, who have kindly sent him additions to this list since it was first printed, in 1889. It might be enlarged almost indefinitely. On the other hand, perhaps it includes already some references in which the connection with Scripture is fanciful. The line is hard to draw. But at least the list may serve to show how deeply the poetry of Tennyson is saturated with the influence of the Book which is at once "a well of English undefiled" and "a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

A LIST OF BIBLICAL REFERENCES AND ALLUSIONS FOUND IN THE WORKS OF TENNYSON

TIMBUCTOO. "And teach him to attain
By shadowing forth the Unattainable." * *Matt.* 5 : 48.

* Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS. "My sin was as a thorn
Among the thorns that girt Thy brow." *Matt.* 27 : 29.

"In this extremest misery
Of ignorance I should require
A sign." 1 *Cor.* 1 : 22.

"That happy morn
When angels spake to men aloud,
And thou and peace to earth were born." *Luke* 2 : 10.

"Brothers in Christ." *Matt.* 12 : 50; *Col.* 1 : 2.

"To reconcile me with thy God." 2 *Cor.* 5 : 20.

"Bring back this lamb into thy fold." *Luke* 15 : 4.

"Pride, the sin of Devils." 1 *Tim.* 3 : 6.

"These little motes and grains shall be
Clothed on with immortality." 1 *Cor.* 15 : 53.

"As manna on my wilderness." *Ex.* 16 : 15.

"That God would move
And strike the hard, hard rock, and thence,
Sweet in their utmost bitterness,
Would issue tears of penitence." *Num.* 20 : 11.

THE KRAKEN. "Until the latter fire shall heat the deep."
Rev. 8 : 8; 2 *Pet.* 3 : 10.

ISABEL. "The laws of marriage charactered in gold
Upon the blanched tablets of her heart."
Ps. 37 : 31; 2 *Cor.* 3 : 3.

"And thou of God in thy great *charity*." 1 *John* 4 : 11.

APPENDIX

To ——. "Like that strange angel which of old
Until the breaking of the light
Wrestled with wandering Israel." *Gen.* 32 : 24.

The Deserted House.
"A mansion incorruptible." 2 *Cor.* 5 : 1.
"The house was builded of the earth." 1 *Cor.* 15 : 47.

Adeline. "Sabæan spice." *Is.* 45 : 11.

To J. M. Kemble. "Arrows of lightnings." *Zech.* 9 : 14.

Buonaparte. "Late he learned humility
Perforce, like those whom Gideon schooled with briers."
Judges 8 : 16.

Early Sonnets—Poland. "Lord, how long." *Ps.* 6 : 3.

Sonnet X. "The deluge." *Gen.* 7 : 11.

Two Voices. "A still small voice." 1 *Kings* 19 : 12.
"Wonderfully made." *Ps.* 139 : 14.
"When first the world began
Young Nature through five cycles ran
And in the sixth she moulded man." *Gen.* 1 : 26.
"A little lower than angels." *Ps.* 8 : 5.
"Like Stephen." *Acts* 7 : 55.
"I toil beneath the curse." *Gen.* 3 : 17–19.
"Naked I go." *Eccl.* 5 : 15.
"Though one should smite him on the cheek." *Luke* 6 : 29.
"His sons grow up that bear his name,
Some grow to honour, some to shame." *Job* 14 : 26.
"The place he knew forgetteth him." *Ps.* 103 : 16.
" 'Omega! Thou art Lord,' they said." *Rev.* 1 : 8.
"He may not do the thing he would." *Gal.* 5 : 17.
"Rejoice! Rejoice!" *Phil.* 4 : 4.

Will Waterproof (1842).
"Like Hezekiah's backward runs
The shadow of my days." *Is.* 38 : 8.
"If old things, there are new." *Matt.* 13 : 52.

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"Who shall say me nay?" 1 *Kings* 2 : 20.

"All in all." 1 *Cor.* 15: 28.

THE PALACE OF ART.

"I built myself a lordly pleasure-house,
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.
I said, 'O Soul, make merry and carouse,
Dear Soul, for all is well.' " *Luke* 12 : 18, 19.

"Howling in outer darkness." *Matt.* 8 : 12.

"Common clay taken from the common earth
Moulded by God." *Gen.* 2 : 7.

"Angels rising and descending." *Gen.* 28 : 12.

"And oft some brainless devil enters in
And drives them to the deep." *Luke* 8 : 33.

"Like Herod when the shout was in his ears,
Struck through with pangs of hell." *Acts* 12 : 21–23.

"God before whom ever lie bare
The abysmal deeps of Personality." *Heb.* 4 : 13.

"Wrote 'Mene, mene,' and divided quite
The kingdom of her thought." *Dan.* 5 : 25.

THE PALACE OF ART (Edition of 1833: note, p. 73).

"One was the Tishbite whom the raven fed,
As when he stood on Carmel-steeps,
With one arm stretched out bare, and mocked and said,
'Come cry aloud—he sleeps.'

"Tall, eager, lean, and strong, his cloak windborne
Behind, his forehead heavenly-bright
From the clear marble pouring glorious scorn,
Lit as with inner light." 1 *Kings* 18 : 27.

"Robed David touching holy strings." 2 *Sam.* 6 : 5.

"Isaiah with fierce Ezekiel,
Swarth Moses by the Coptic sea."

"As power and might
Abode in Samson's hair." *Judges* 16 : 17.

"Far off she seem'd to hear the dully sound
Of human footsteps fall,
As in strange lands a traveller walking slow,
In doubt and great perplexity,

APPENDIX

A little before moonrise hears the low
Moan of an unknown sea,
And knows not if it be thunder, or a sound
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry
Of great wild beasts."
Wisdom of Solomon, 17 : 19 *et seq.*, *Apocrypha.*

LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE.
"The gardener Adam and his wife." *Gen.* 2 : 15.

THE MAY QUEEN. Conclusion.
"His will be done." *Matt.* 6 : 10.

"He taught me all the mercy, for he showed me all the sin.
Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late, there's One will let me in."
Matt. 25 : 1.

"And the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."
Job 3 : 17.

THE TALKING OAK.
"Thy leaf shall never fail." *Ps.* 1 : 3.

THE LOTUS EATERS.
"The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades and falls, and hath no toil."
Matt. 6 : 28.

A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN.
"The end of Time." *Rev.* 10 : 6.

"The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,
A maiden pure; as when she went along
From Mizpeh's towered gate with welcome light,
With timbrel and with song." *Judges* 11 : 34.

"A threefold cord." *Eccl.* 4 : 12.

"The everlasting hills." *Gen.* 49 : 26.

"Gross darkness." *Is.* 60 : 2.

"Moreover it is written that my race
Hewed Ammon hip and thigh from Aroer
On Arnon unto Minneth." *Judges* 11 : 33.

"Love can vanquish death." *Cant.* 8 : 6.

MORTE D'ARTHUR.
"Chaff . . . much better burnt." (In "The Epic.")
Luke 3 : 17.

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"Such times have not been since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh." *Matt.* 2 : 2, 3.

"War shall be no more." *Is.* 2 : 4.

THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER. "Eden." *Gen.* 2 : 8.

"Like the covenant of a God, to hold
From thence thro' all the worlds." *Is.* 55 : 3.

EDWIN MORRIS. "Built . . . upon a rock." *Matt.* 7 : 24.

"God made the woman for the man."
1 *Cor.* 11 : 9; *Gen.* 2 : 18.

ST. SIMEON STYLITES.
"The meed of saints, the white robe and the palm." *Rev.* 7 : 9.

"This home
Of sin, my flesh." 2 *Cor.* 5 : 6.

"Cover all my sin." *Ps.* 32 : 1; 85 : 2.

"O mercy, mercy! Wash away my sin."
Ps. 51 : 1, 2.

"They think that I am somewhat." *Gal.* 2 : 6.

"Can I work miracles and not be saved?" 1 *Cor.* 13 : 2.

"Pontius and Iscariot." *Matt.* 26 : 14.

"A sinful man, conceived and born in sin." *Ps.* 51 : 5.

"Abaddon and Asmodeus."
Rev. 9 : 11; *Tobit* 3 : 8.

"Mortify your flesh." *Col.* 3 : 5.

"Yield not me the praise,
God only." *Ps.* 115 : 1.

"A man of God." 2 *Tim.* 3 : 17.

THE GOLDEN YEAR.
"Cry like the daughters of the horse-leech, Give!"
Prov. 30 : 15.

LOCKSLEY HALL. "Joshua's moon in Ajalon." *Josh.* 10 : 12.

"But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian child."
Matt. 11 : 11.

"Summer isles of Eden." *Gen.* 2 : 8.

GODIVA. "A heart as rough as Esau's hand." *Gen.* 27 : 23.

"An everlasting name." *Is.* 56 : 5.

APPENDIX

THE DAY DREAM. L'ENVOI.

"For since the time when Adam first
Embraced his Eve in happy hour,
And every bird of Eden burst
In carol, every bud to flower." *Gen.* 2 : 23.

ST. AGNES' EVE. "So shows my soul before the lamb."
Rev. 7 : 9; 5 : 8.

"So in my earthly house I am
To that I hope to be." 2 *Cor.* 5 : 1.

"Draw me, thy bride, . . .
In raiment white and clean." *Rev.* 3 : 5.

"The Heavenly bridegroom waits
To make me pure of sin." *Is.* 62 : 5.

"The Sabbaths of Eternity,
One Sabbath deep and wide." *Heb.* 4 : 9.

"The shining sea." *Rev.* 15 : 2.

THE VISION OF SIN.

"Thou shalt not be saved by works." *Gal.* 2 : 16.

"God's likeness." *Gen.* 1 : 26.

"Far too naked to be shamed." *Gen.* 2 : 25.

TO ——. "The many-headed beast." *Rev.* 13 : 1.

ENOCH ARDEN. "Cast all your cares on God." 1 *Pet.* 5 : 7.

"That anchor holds." *Heb.* 6 : 19.

"The uttermost parts of the morning." *Ps.* 139 : 9.

"The sea is His: He made it." *Ps.* 95 : 5.

"Under the palm-tree." *Judges* 4 : 5.

"The Sun of Righteousness." *Mal.* 4 : 2.

"These be palms
Whereof the happy people strowing cried,
'Hosanna in the highest.'" *John* 12 : 13.

"Set in this Eden of all plenteousness." *Gen.* 2 : 9.

"The blast of doom." 1 *Thess.* 4 : 16.

AYLMER'S FIELD. "Dust are our frames." *Gen.* 3 : 19.

"Sons of men, daughters of God." *Gen.* 6 : 2.

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"Pale as the Jephtha's daughter." *Judges* 11 : 34.

"Stumbling blocks." 1 *Cor.* 1 : 23.

"Almost all that is, hurting the hurt,
Save Christ as we believe him." *Matt.* 12 : 20.

"Behold
Your house is left unto you desolate." *Luke* 13 : 35.

"Never since our bad earth became one sea." *Gen.* 7.

"Gash thyself, priest, and honour thy brute Baal."
1 *Kings* 18 : 28.

"The babe shall lead the lion." *Is.* 11 : 6.

"The wilderness shall blossom as the rose." *Is.* 35 : 1.

"Fares richly in fine linen." *Luke* 16 : 19.

"Leave all and follow me." *Luke* 18 : 22.

"His light about thy feet." *Ps.* 119 : 105.

"Carpenter's son." *Matt.* 13 : 55.

"Wonderful, Prince of Peace, the Mighty God." *Is.* 9 : 6.

"As not passing thro' the fire
Bodies, but souls—thy children's—thro' the smoke."
Lev. 18 : 21.

"The more base idolater." *Col.* 3 : 5.

"Rachel by the palmy well." *Gen.* 29 : 10.

"Ruth amid the fields of corn." *Ruth* 2.

"Fair as the angel that said 'Hail.' " *Luke* 1 : 28.

"She walked,
Wearing the light yoke of that Lord of love
Who stilled the rolling wave of Galilee."
Matt. 8 : 26; 11 : 30.

"O thou that killest, hadst thou known,
O thou that stonest, hadst thou understood
The things belonging to thy peace and ours."
Luke 13 : 34; 19 : 32.

"Is there no prophet but the voice that calls
Doom upon kings, or in the waste 'Repent'?"
Mark 1 : 3, 4.

APPENDIX

"Is not our own child on the narrow way,
Who down to those that saunter in the broad
Cries 'Come up hither,' as a prophet to us?" *Matt.* 7 : 13.

"Poor in spirit." *Matt.* 5 : 3.

"A rushing tempest of the wrath of God." *Ps.* 11 : 6.

"Sent like the twelve-divided concubine
To inflame the tribes." *Judges* 19 : 29.

"Pharaoh's darkness." *Ex.* 10 : 21.

"Folds as dense as those
Which hid the Holiest from the people's eyes."
Matt. 27 : 45.

"Their own gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."
Gen. 42 : 38.

"Knew not what they did." *Luke* 23 : 34.

"Will not another take their heritage?" *Acts* 1 : 20.

"Or one stone
Left on another." *Matt.* 24 : 2; *Mark* 13 : 2.

"Is it a light thing?" *Is.* 7 : 13.

"Those that swore
Not by the Temple, but by the gold." *Matt.* 23 : 16.

"And made
Their own traditions God, and slew the Lord."
Matt. 15 : 3; *Acts* 5 : 30.

SEA DREAMS. "Simple Christ." 1 *Cor.* 2 : 2; 2 *Cor.* 11 : 3.

"The scarlet woman." *Rev.* 17 : 3–5.

"The Apocalyptic millstone." *Rev.* 18 : 21.

"That great Angel: 'Thus with violence
Shall Babylon be cast into the sea.
Then comes the close.' " *Rev.* 18 : 21.

"Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." *Eph.* 4 : 26.

"Dear Lord, who died for all." 2 *Cor.* 5 : 15.

"When the great Books (see Daniel seven and ten)
Were opened." *Dan.* 7 : 10.

"We live by faith." *Gal.* 2 : 20.

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"All things work together for the good
Of those." *Rom.* 8 : 28.

"Never took that useful name in vain." *Ex.* 20 : 7.

"The Cross . . .
And Christ." *John* 19 : 17.

"Boanerges." *Mark* 3 : 17.

THE PRINCESS. "A fountain sealed." *Cant.* 4 : 12.

"A land of promise." *Heb.* 11 : 9.

"A wolf within the fold." *Acts* 20 : 29.

"All those hard things
That Sheba came to ask of Solomon." 1 *Kings* 10 : 1.

"He, the wisest man." 1 *Kings* 4 : 31.

"Feasted the woman wisest then, in halls
Of Lebanonian cedar." 1 *Kings* 10 : 4, 5.

"O Vashti, noble Vashti! Summon'd out,
She kept her state and left the drunken king
To brawl at Shushan underneath the palms." *Esther* 1.

"Let there be light and there was light." *Gen.* 1 : 3.

"But we that are not all
As parts, can see but parts." 1 *Cor.* 13 : 12.

"Their cancell'd Babels."
"A new-world Babel, woman-built
And worse-confounded." *Gen.* 11 : 9.

"They mind us of the time
When we made bricks in Egypt." *Ex.* 1 : 14.

(Judith and Holofernes) *Apoc., Book of Judith.*

"A Jonah's gourd
Up in one night and due to sudden sun." *Jonah* 4 : 6.

"Touch not a hair of his head." *Luke* 21 : 18.

"The old leaven leaven'd all." 1 *Cor.* 5 : 6, 7.

"This Egypt plague." *Ex.* 7–12.

"The fires of Hell." *Matt.* 5 : 22.

"Between a cymball'd Miriam and a Jael."
Ex. 15 : 20; *Judges* 4.

APPENDIX

"Like that great dame of Lapidoth she sang." *Judges* 5 : 1.

"Stiff as Lot's wife." *Gen.* 19 : 26.

"Bond or free." 1 *Cor.* 12 : 13.

"Into the Heaven of Heavens." *Neh.* 9 : 6.

THE GRANDMOTHER. "The tongue is a fire." *James* 3 : 6.

"God, not man, is the judge of us all." *Rom.* 14 : 4.

TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE. "Anathema." 1 *Cor.* 16 : 22.

THE FLOWER. "He that runs may read." *Hab.* 2 : 2.

THE ISLET. "To a sweet little Eden on earth." *Gen.* 2 : 8.

THE SPITEFUL LETTER.

"This faded leaf, our names are as brief." *Is.* 1 : 30.

LITERARY SQUABBLES.

"When one small touch of charity
Could lift them nearer God-like state
Than if the crowded Orb should cry
Like those who cried Diana great." *Acts* 19 : 34.

NORTHERN FARMER.

"I weänt saäy men be loiars thaw summun said it in 'aäste."
Ps. 116 : 11.

ODE ON THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

"The shining table lands
To which our God Himself is moon and sun." *Rev.* 21 : 23.

"Dust to dust." *Gen.* 3 : 9; *Eccl.* 3 : 20.

WAGES. "The wages of sin is death." *Rom.* 6 : 23.

THE HIGHER PANTHEISM.

"The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains—
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?"
Rom. 1 : 20.

"Is not the vision He? tho' He be not that which He seems?
Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in dreams?

"Speak to Him for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."
Ps. 65 : 2; *Rom.* 8 : 16; *Acts* 17 : 27.

"God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let us rejoice,
For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice."
Ps. 77 : 18.

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"Law is God, say some: no God at all, says the fool;
For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in a pool."
Ps. 14 : 1.

"And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see;
But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not He?"
Is. 64 : 4; 1 *Cor.* 2 : 9 (*Rev. Version*).

BOADICEA. "Thou shalt wax and he shall dwindle." *John* 3 : 30.

MILTON. "Angel . . . Gabriel." *Luke* 2 : 1–19.

"The brooks of Eden." *Gen.* 2 : 10.

IN MEMORIAM. Proem.

"Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith and faith alone embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove." 1 *Pet.* 1 : 8.

"Thou madest life in man and brute." *John* 1 : 3.

"For knowledge is of things we see." *Rom.* 8 : 24.

"For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to thee." *Ps.* 143 : 2.

XV

"And but for fancies which aver
That all thy motions gently pass
Athwart a plane of molten glass."
Job 37 : 18; *Rev.* 4 : 6.

XXII

"The shadow fear'd of man." *Ps.* 23 : 4.

XXIV

"Since Adam left his garden." *Gen.* 3 : 23.

XXVIII

"Peace and goodwill to all mankind." *Luke* 2 : 14.

XXX

" 'They rest,' we said; 'their sleep is sweet.' "
1 *Thess.* 4 : 14.

XXXI

"When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
And home to Mary's house returned,
Was this demanded—if he yearned
To hear her weeping by his grave?" *John* 11.

APPENDIX

XXXII

"She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet
With costly spikenard and with tears." *John* 12 : 3.

"The life indeed." *John* 11 : 25.

XXXVI

"And so the Word had breath." *John* 1 : 14.

XXXVII

"Sacred wine." 1 *Cor.* 10 : 16.

LVI

"Who trusted God was love indeed." 1 *John* 4 : 8.

LXXXIV

"What reed was that on which I leant?" *Is.* 36 : 6.

LXXXVII

"The God within him light his face." 2 *Cor.* 6 : 16.

LXXXVIII

"Rings Eden." *Gen.* 2 : 8.

XCV

"Word by word, and line by line." *Is.* 28 : 13.

XCVI

"But in the darkness and the cloud.
As over Sinai's peaks of old.
While Israel made their gods of gold,
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud." *Ex.* 32 : 1–4.

CIII

"The thews of Anakim." *Deut.* 2 : 10.

CVI

"The thousand years of peace." *Rev.* 20 : 2–4.

CVIII

"And vacant yearning, though with might,
To scale the heavens' highest height,
Or dive below the wells of Death." *Rom.* 10 : 6–8.

CXIV

"Who shall fix Her pillars?" (Knowledge.) *Prov.* 9 : 1.

CXX

"Like Paul with beasts I fought with Death." 1 *Cor.* 15 : 32.

CXXXI

"O living will that shalt endure
When all that is shall suffer shock,

Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow through our deeds and make them pure."
1 *John* 2 : 17; 1 *Cor.* 10 : 4.

"To one that with us works."
1 *Cor.* 3 : 9; *Phil.* 2 : 13.

"The moon
Of Eden." *Gen.* 2 : 8.

MAUD. Part I. I. 6
"The spirit of Cain." 1 *John* 3 : 12.

8
"We are ashes and dust." *Gen.* 3 : 19.

"My heart as a millstone." *Job* 41 : 24.

"Set my face as a flint." *Is.* 50 : 7.

9
"When only not all men lie." *Ps.* 116 : 11.

12
"Mammon." *Matt.* 6 : 24.

II
"Neither savour nor salt." *Matt.* 5 : 13.

XIII. 3
"That huge scape-goat of the race." *Lev.* 16 : 10.

XVIII. 2
"The gates of Heaven." *Rev.* 21 : 21.

XVIII. 3
(A cedar of Lebanon.) "Thy great
Forefathers of the thornless garden, there
Shadowing the snow-limbed Exe." *Gen.* 2 : 8; 3 : 18.

Part II

II. 6
"An old song vexes my ear;
But that of Lamech is mine." *Gen.* 4 : 23.

V. 4
"I never whispered a private affair
. . . . . .
No, not to myself in the closet alone,
But I heard it shouted at once from the top of the house."
Luke 12 : 3.

APPENDIX

IDYLLS OF THE KING

THE COMING OF ARTHUR. "Elfin Urim." *Ex.* 28 : 30.

"Hath power to walk the waters like our Lord." *Matt.* 14 : 25.

"Dark sayings from of old." *Ps.* 78 : 2.

"The King will follow Christ and we the King." 1 *Cor.* 11 : 1.

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new." *Rev.* 21 : 4, 5.

GARETH AND LYNETTE.

"A stone about his neck to drown him in it." *Matt.* 18 : 6.

"When reviled, hast answered graciously." 1 *Pet.* 2 : 23.

GERAINT AND ENID. "Tho' they sought
Through all the provinces like those of old
That lighted on Queen Esther." *Esther* 2 : 3.

"Here through the feeble twilight of this world
Groping, how many, until we pass and reach
That other where we see as we are seen." 1 *Cor.* 13 : 12.

"Whose souls the old serpent long had drawn
Down." *Rev.* 12 : 9.

"Since high in Paradise
O'er the four rivers." *Gen.* 2 : 10.

"But o'er her meek eyes came a happy mist
Like that which kept the heart of Eden green
Before the useful trouble of the rain." *Gen.* 2 : 6.

"He hears the judgment of the King of Kings." 1 *Tim.* 6 : 15.

BALIN AND BALAN.

"The Lost one Found was greeted as in Heaven." *Luke* 15 : 32.

"Arimathæan Joseph." *Mark* 15 : 43.

"Thorns of the crown." *Matt.* 27 : 29.

"That same spear
Wherewith the Roman pierced the side of Christ." *John* 19 ; 34.

"Arm of flesh." 2 *Chron.* 32 : 8.

"I better prize
The living dog than the dead lion." *Eccl.* 9 : 4.

MERLIN AND VIVIEN.

"As Love, if Love be perfect, casts out fear." 1 *John* 4 : 18.

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"There is no being pure,
My cherub; saith not Holy Writ the same?" *Rom.* 3 : 10.

"But neither marry nor are given
In marriage, angels of our Lord's report." *Matt.* 22 : 30.

"The sin that practice burns into the blood,
And not the one dark hour which brings remorse,
Will brand us, after, of whose fold we be:
Or else were he, the holy king whose hymns
Are chanted in our minster, worse than all." 2 *Sam.* 11.

"Seethed like the kid in its own mother's milk." *Ex.* 23 : 19.

"An enemy that has left
Death in the living waters." 2 *Kings* 4 : 39, 40.

"And stirr'd this vice in you which ruin'd man
Through woman the first hour." *Gen.* 3 : 12; 3 : 1–6.

"Let her tongue rage like a fire." *James* 3 : 6.

"And judge all nature from her feet of clay." *Dan.* 2 : 33.

LANCELOT AND ELAINE.

"His mood was often like a fiend, and rose
And drove him into wastes and solitudes." *Luke* 8 : 29.

"Fire in dry stubble." *Is.* 5 : 24.

"Since man's first fall." *Gen.* 3 : 1–6.

"But loved me with a love beyond all love in women."
2 *Sam.* 1 : 26.

THE HOLY GRAIL.

"The cup, the cup itself, from which our Lord
Drank at the last sad supper with his own." *Matt.* 26 : 29.

"After the day of darkness when the dead
Went wandering o'er Moriah." *Matt.* 27 : 53.

"An adulterous race." *Matt.* 12 : 39.

"Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's doom,
Cried, 'If I lose myself, I save myself!' "
Matt. 10 : 39; 16 : 25.

"When the Lord of all things made Himself
Naked of glory for His mortal change." *Phil.* 2 : 5–7.

"Like a flying star
Led on the gray-hair'd wisdom of the east." *Matt.* 2 : 9.

APPENDIX

"But my time is hard at hand,
And hence I go, and one will crown me King
Far in the spiritual city." *2 Tim.* 4 : 6, 8.

"Arimathæan Joseph." *Matt.* 27 : 57.

"Thou hast not lost thyself to save thyself." *Matt.* 10 : 39.

"For now there is a lion in the way." *Prov.* 22 : 13.

"What go ye into the wilderness to see?" *Matt.* 11 : 7.

"Shoutings of all the sons of God." *Job* 38 : 7.

"Gateways in a glory like one pearl." *Rev.* 21 : 12.

"As ever shepherd knew his sheep." *John* 10 : 14.

"Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy Writ,
Our Arthur kept his best until the last." *John* 2 : 1–10.

"Glory and joy and honour to our Lord." *Rev.* 4 : 11.

"A seven-times heated furnace." *Dan.* 3 : 19.

"Great angels, awful shapes, and wings and eyes."
Ezek. 10 : 12.

"That One
Who rose again." 1 *Cor.* 15 : 20; 2 *Cor.* 5 : 15.

PELLEAS AND ETTARRE. "The flame about a sacrifice
Kindled by fire from heaven." 2 *Chron.* 7 : 1.

"Would they have risen against me in their blood
At the last day? I might have answered them
Even before high God." *Rev.* 6 : 10.

"That own no lust because they have no law." *Rom.* 4 : 15.

"I have no sword,—
Then Lancelot, 'Yea, between thy lips—and sharp.'" *Is.* 49 : 2.

THE LAST TOURNAMENT.
"For I have flung thee pearls and find thee swine." *Matt.* 7 : 6.

"Fear God: honour the King." 1 *Pet.* 2 : 17.

"As the water Moab saw
Come round by the East." 2 *Kings* 3 : 20–23.

"The scorpion-worm that twists in Hell
And stings itself to everlasting death." *Is.* 66 : 24.

"Who marr'd Heaven's image in thee thus?" *Gen.* 1 : 27.

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"That oft I seem as he
Of whom was written, 'a sound is in his ears.'" *Job* 15 : 21.

"The great lake of fire." *Rev.* 20 : 14.

"Conceits himself as God that he can make
Figs out of thistles." *Matt.* 7 : 16.

"Michael trampling Satan." *Rev.* 12 : 7–9.

GUINEVERE.

"Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill." *Matt.* 25 : 1.

"So she did not see the face
Which then was as an angel's." *Acts* 6 : 15.

QUEEN MARY. ACT I, SC. 2

" 'Thou shalt not wed thy brother's wife.'—'T is written,
'They shall be childless.' " *Lev.* 20 : 21.

SC. 3

"From thine own mouth I judge thee." *Luke* 19 : 22.

"The old leaven." 1 *Cor.* 5 : 7.

SC. 5

"The great angel of the church." *Rev.* 2 : 1.

"Whosoever
Looketh after a woman." *Matt.* 5 : 28.

"Him who made Heaven and earth." *Ex.* 20 : 11.

"The living waters of the Faith." *John* 4 : 10.

"The palms of Christ." *John* 12 : 13.

"Many wolves among you." *Acts* 20 : 29.

ACT II, SC. 2

"They go like those old Pharisees in John
Convicted by their conscience, arrant cowards."
John 8 : 1–11.

"Fruit of mine own body." *Ps.* 132 : 11.

SC. 4

"My foes are at my feet . . .
There let them lie, your footstool." *Ps.* 110 : 1.

ACT III, SC. 1

"Not red like Iscariot's." *Matt.* 10 : 4.

"A pale horse for Death." *Rev.* 6 : 8.

APPENDIX

"Thou shalt do no murder." *Matt.* 19 : 18.

"I have ears to hear." *Matt.* 11 : 15.

"*Verbum Dei* . . . Word of God." *Rom.* 10 : 17.

"That cannot spell Esaias from St. Paul." *Rom.* 9 : 27.

Sc. 2

"Ave Maria, gratia plena,
Benedicta tu in mulieribus." *Luke* 1 : 28.

"The scarlet thread of Rahab saved her life." *Joshua* 2 : 18; 6 : 17.

"And marked me ev'n as Cain." *Gen.* 4 : 15.

"Since your Herod's death
How oft hath Peter knocked at Mary's gate,
And Mary would have risen and let him in;
But, Mary, there were those within the house
Who would not have it." *Acts* 12 : 11–17.

"Sit benedictus fructus ventris tui." *Luke* 1 : 42.

"Our little sister of the Song of Songs." *Cant.* 8 : 8.

"Swept and garnished." *Matt.* 12 : 44.

"The devils in the swine." *Matt.* 8 : 28–32.

"Prince of Peace." *Is.* 9 : 6.

"Who will avenge me of mine enemies." *Is.* 1 : 24.

"Open, ye everlasting gates." *Ps.* 24 : 7.

Sc. 3

"The blessed angels who rejoice
Over one saved." *Luke* 15 : 10.

"The Lord who hath redeem'd us
With his own blood and wash'd us from our sins." *Rev.* 5 : 9.

"All her breath should, incenselike,
Rise to the heavens in grateful praise of Him." *Ps.* 141 : 2.

"These are forgiven . . .
And range with . . . offal thrown
Into the blind sea of forgetfulness." *Micah* 7 : 19.

"To purchase for Himself a stainless bride." *Rev.* 19 : 7.

"He whom the Father hath appointed Head
Of all his church." *Eph.* 5 : 23.

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Sc. 4

"Compel them to come in." *Luke* 14 : 23.

"I would they were cut off
That trouble you." *Gal.* 5 : 12.

"Little children,
Love one another." 1 *John* 3 : 18; 4 : 7.

"I come not to bring peace, but a sword." *Matt.* 10 : 34.

"The Church on Peter's rock." *Matt.* 16 : 18.

"When Herod-Henry first
Began to batter at your English Church." *Acts* 12 : 1.

"The spotless bride of Christ." *Eph.* 5 : 27.

"Like Christ himself on Tabor." *Matt.* 17 : 2.

"God's righteous judgment." *Rom.* 2 : 5.

"Ev'n Saint Peter in his time of fear
Denied his Master, ay, and thrice, my Lord."
Matt. 26 : 69–74.

"Burn and blast them root and branch." *Mal.* 4 : 1.

"His fan may thoroughly purge his floor." *Matt.* 3 : 12.

Sc. 5

"The very Truth and very Word are one."
John 14 : 6; 1 : 1.

"Back again into the dust we sprang from." *Gen.* 3 : 19.

Act IV, Sc. 2

"There is more joy in Heaven." *Luke* 15 : 7.

"The trumpet of the dead." 1 *Cor.* 15 : 52.

"How are the mighty fallen." 2 *Sam.* 1 : 19.

"Power hath been given you." *John* 19 : 11.

Sc. 3

"Nunc dimittis." *Luke* 2 : 29.

"It is expedient for one man to die." *John* 11 : 50.

"The penitent thief's award
And be with Christ the Lord in Paradise." *Luke* 23 : 43.

"Remember how God made the fierce fire seem
To those three children like a pleasant dew." *Dan.* 4 : 20–28.

APPENDIX

"Saint Andrew." *Luke* 6 : 14.

"Whither should I flee for any help?" *Is.* 10 : 3; 20 : 6.

"I am ashamed to lift my eyes to heaven." *Luke* 18 : 13.

"Refusing none
That come to Thee for succour." *John* 6 : 37.

"O God the Son . . . when thou becamest
Man in the flesh." *John* 1 : 14.

"O God the Father, not for little sins
Didst thou yield up thy Son to huamn death." *John* 3 : 16.

"Unpardonable. Sin against the light." *Matt.* 12 : 32.

"Forgive me, Father, for no merit of mine,
But that Thy name by man be glorified,
And Thy most blessed Son's who died for man."
John 17 : 1, 2.

"Love of this world is hatred against God." *James* 4 : 4.

"Obey your King and Queen, and not for dread
Of these alone, but from the fear of Him
Whose ministers they be to govern you." 1 *Pet.* 2 : 13, 14.

"But do you good to all
As much as in you lieth." *Gal.* 6 : 10.

"How hard it is
For the rich man to enter Heaven." *Matt.* 19 : 23.

"Give to the poor,
Ye give to God. He is with us in the poor." *Prov.* 19 : 17.

"God's image." *Gen.* 1 : 26.

"Ignorance crying in the streets." *Prov.* 1 : 20, 21.

"Your original Adam-clay." *Gen.* 2 : 7.

"This hath offended,—this unworthy hand." *Matt.* 5 : 30.

ACT V, SC. 1

"She is none of those who loathe the honeycomb."
Prov. 27 : 7.

SC. 2

"It was thought we two
Might make one flesh, and cleave unto each other
As man and wife." *Matt.* 19 : 5.

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"Labour in vain." *Ps.* 127 : 1.

"A low voice from the dust." *Is.* 29 : 4.

"They say the gloom of Saul
Was lightened by young David's harp." 1 *Sam.* 16 : 23.

"Bring forth death." *James* 1 : 15.

Sc. 4

"Soft Raiment." *Luke* 7 : 25.

"All things in common as in the days of the first church when Jesus Christ was King." *Acts* 4 : 32.

Sc. 5

"Garner the wheat
And burn the tares with unquenchable fire."
Matt. 3 : 12; 13 : 40.

"The shadow of death." *Ps.* 23 : 4.

"And she loved much; pray God she be forgiven." *Luke* 7 : 47.

HAROLD. "All things make for good." *Rom.* 8 : 28.

ACT I, Sc. 1

"And hold their babies up to it,
I think that they would *Molochize* them too,
To have the heavens clear." *Lev.* 18 : 21.

"In Heaven signs,
Signs upon earth." *Dan.* 6 : 27.

"War in heaven." *Rev.* 12 : 7.

"I have fought the fight and go." 2 *Tim.* 4 : 7.

"Gates of Pearl." *Rev.* 21 : 21.

"To the deaf adder thee, that will not dance
However wisely charm'd." *Ps.* 58 : 4.

"Let brethren dwell together in unity." *Ps.* 133 : 1.

Sc. 2

"Did not heaven speak to men in dreams of old." *Matt.* 2 : 12.

"Scape-goat." *Lev.* 16 : 8.

ACT II, Sc. 1

"Fishers of men." *Matt.* 4 : 19.

"Jonah." *Jonah.*

APPENDIX

Sc. 2

"For having lost myself to save myself." *Matt.* 10 : 39.

"Familiar spirit." 1 *Sam.* 28 : 7.

"The torch . . . among your standing corn."
Judges 15 : 4, 5.

Act III, Sc. 1

"I have built the Lord a house." 1 *Kings* 8 : 20.

"Sing, Asaph! clash
The cymbal, Heman; blow the trumpet, priest."
1 *Chron.* 25 : 1.

"Fall, cloud, and fill the house."
2 *Chron.* 7 : 1; 1 *Kings* 8 : 10.

"Jachin and Boaz." 1 *Kings* 7 : 21.

"Treble denial of the tongue of flesh
Like Peter's when he fell." *Matt.* 26 : 69–74.

"To wail like Peter." *Matt.* 26 : 75.

"Talked with God." *Ex.* 33 : 9.

"Signs in heaven." *Dan.* 6 : 27.

Sc. 2

"That which reigned called itself God." 2 *Thess.* 2 : 4.

"Render unto Cæsar." *Matt.* 22 : 21.

"The Good Shepherd." *John* 10 : 11.

Act IV, Sc. 1

"The kingdoms of this world." *Rev.* 11 : 15.

"A king of men
Not made but born, like the great King of all,
A light among the oxen." *Luke* 2 : 7.

Sc. 3

"A fast of forty days." *Matt.* 4 : 2.

Act V, Sc. 1

"Mock-king, I am the messenger of God,
His Norman Daniel! Mene, Mene, Tekel!" *Dan.* 5 : 25.

"Evil for good." *Rom.* 3 : 8.

"Evil for evil." *Rom.* 12 : 17.

"The peace of God." *Phil.* 4 : 7.

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"Were the great trumpet blowing Doomsday dawn."
1 Thess. 4 : 16.

"Spear into pruning hook." *Joel* 3 : 10.

"God of battles." *Ps.* 24 : 8.

"There is one
Come as Goliath came of yore." 1 *Sam.* 17 : 40.

"Pastor fugator . . . Grex trucidatur." *John* 10 : 12, 13.

"Equus cum equite dejiciatur . . . praecipitatur." *Ex.* 15 : 1.

"Glory to God in the highest." *Luke* 2 : 14.

Sc. 2

"My punishment is more that I can bear." *Gen.* 4 : 13.

THE LOVER'S TALE.

"When the outer lights are darkened." *Eccl.* 12 : 3.

"Till earth and heaven pass." *Matt.* 5 : 18.

"Length of days." *Ps.* 91 : 16.

"The bitterness of death." 1 *Sam.* 15 : 32.

"As that other gazed,
Shading his eyes till all the fiery cloud,
The prophet and the chariot and the steeds,
Sucked into oneness like a little star
Were drunk into the inmost blue." 2 *Kings* 2 : 11, 12.

"A land of promise flowing with the milk
And honey of delicious memories." *Ex.* 3 : 8.

"Exceeding sorrow unto Death." *Matt.* 26 : 38.

"She took the body of my past delight,
Narded and swathed and balmed it for herself.
And laid it in a sepulchre of rock." *John* 19 : 39–41.

"The evil flourish in the world." *Ps.* 37 and 73.

"Like a vain rich man,
That having always prospered in the world,
Folding his hands, deals comfortable words,
To hearts wounded forever." *James.* 2 : 15, 16.

THE LOVER'S TALE. (Original edition.)

"So, bearing on thro' Being limitless
The triumph of this foretaste, I had merged
Glory in glory, without sense of change." 2 *Cor.* 3 : 18.

APPENDIX

RIZPAH.

"Rizpah." *2 Sam.* 21 : 8–10.

"As the tree falls so it must lie." *Eccl.* 11 : 3.

"Flesh of my flesh—bone of my bone." *Gen.* 2 : 23.

"My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the trumpet of judgment 'ill sound." *1 Thess.* 4 : 16.

"Full of compassion and mercy." *Ps.* 86 : 15.

THE NORTHERN COBBLER.

"A beäst of the feäld." *Ex.* 23 : 11.

"Like Saätan as fell
Down out o' heaven in Hell-fire." *Luke* 10 : 18.

IN THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.

"Ye do it to me when ye do it to these." *Matt.* 25 : 40.

"Spirits in prison." *1 Pet.* 3 : 19.

"Little children should come to me." *Matt.* 19 : 14.

SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE.

"Not least art thou, little Bethlehem
In Judah, for in thee the Lord was born." *Micah* 5 : 2.

"Hereafter thou, fulfilling Pentecost,
Must learn to speak the tongues of all the world." *Acts* 2 : 1–4.

"Thou bringest
Not peace, a sword." *Matt.* 10 : 34.

"Antichrist." *1 John* 2 : 18.

"The kingdoms of this world." *Rev.* 11 : 15.

"Lord, give thou power to thy two witnesses." *Rev.* 11 : 3.

"Persecute the Lord,
And play the Saul that never will be Paul." *Acts* 9 : 4.

"Or such crimes
As holy Paul—a shame to speak of them—
Among the heathen." *Eph.* 5 : 12.

"The Gospel, the Priest's pearl, flung down to swine." *Matt.* 7 : 6.

"Thy Gospel meant
To course and range thro' all the world." *Matt.* 24 : 14.

"Babylon." *Rev.* 17 : 5.

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"How long, O Lord, how long." *Rev.* 6 : 10.

"Thou living water." *John* 4 : 10.

"He that thirsteth, come and drink." *Rev.* 22 : 17.

"Power of the keys." *Matt.* 16 : 19.

"Those three! the fourth
Was like the Son of God! Not burnt were they." *Dan.* 3 : 25.

"Caiaphas." *Matt.* 26 : 57.

COLUMBUS.

"The crowd's roar fell as at the 'Peace, be still.' " *Mark* 4 : 39.

"For him who gave a new heaven, a new earth,
As holy John had prophesied of me." *Rev.* 21 : 1.

"And saw the rivers roll from Paradise." *Gen.* 2 : 10.

"King David called the heavens a hide, a tent,
Spread over earth." *Ps.* 104 : 2.

"Moriah with Jerusalem." 2 *Chron.* 3 : 1.

"And I saw
The glory of the Lord flash up." *Rev.* 21 : 19–27.

"From Solomon's now-recover'd Ophir, all
The gold that Solomon's navies carried home."
1 *Kings* 9 : 26–28.

"O soul of little faith, slow to believe."
Matt. 14 : 31; *Luke* 24 : 25.

"Time shall be no more." *Rev.* 10 : 6.

"Endure! thou hast done so well for man, that men
Cry out against thee; was it otherwise
With mine own son?" *Matt.* 10 : 24, 25.

"Be not cast down. I lead thee by the hand,
Fear not." *Deut.* 31 : 8; *Is.* 41 : 13.

THE VOYAGE OF MAELDUNE.

"Remember the words of the Lord when he told us
'Vengeance is mine.' " *Rom.* 12 : 19.

DE PROFUNDIS.

"From that great deep, before our world begins,
Whereon the spirit of God moves as he will." *Gen.* 1 : 2.

"Let us make man." *Gen.* 1 : 26.

"That one light no man can look upon." 1 *Tim.* 6 : 16.

APPENDIX

"Hallowed be Thy Name." *Matt.* 6 : 9.

BECKET.

PROLOGUE.

"The spiritual body." 1 *Cor.* 15 : 44.

"Let her eat dust like the serpent, and be driven out of her Paradise." *Gen.* 3 : 14.

ACT I, SC. 1

"King of Kings." 1 *Tim.* 6 : 15.

"The twelve Apostles." *Matt.* 10 : 2.

"Let them be Anathema." 1 *Cor.* 16 : 22.

SC. 3

"The Lord be judged again by Pilate." *Matt.* 27 : 2.

"When murder, common
As Nature's death, like Egypt's plague, had filled
All things with blood,—when every doorway blushed,
Dash'd red with that unhallow'd passover." *Ex.* 7 : 19; 12 : 22.

"Peter's rock." *Matt.* 16 : 18.

"Life for a life." *Ex.* 21 : 23.

"Thou, the shepherd, hast betrayed the sheep." *John* 10 : 12.

"Mortify thy flesh." *Gal.* 5 : 24; *Col.* 3 : 5.

"Reeds that sway . . . to the wind." *Matt.* 11 : 7.

"Who but the bridegroom dares to judge the bride?" *John* 3 : 29.

"As gold outvalues dross; light, darkness; Abel, Cain." *Heb.* 11 : 4, 5, 8.

"Saint Lazarus." *John* 11.

"Deal gently with the young man Absalom." 2 *Sam.* 18 : 5.

"Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." *Ps.* 118 : 26.

SC. 4

"Ye have drunken of my cup." *Matt.* 20 : 23.

"Bidden to our supper." *Luke* 14 : 7–24.

"Steams . . . like the altar at Jerusalem." 2 *Sam.* 24 : 18.

"Call in the poor." *Matt.* 22 : 9.

"The princess sat in judgment against me." *Ps.* 119 : 23.

"The Lord hath prepared your table." *Ps.* 23 : 5.

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"Sheep without the shepherd." *Matt.* 9 : 36.

"With Cain's answer; my Lord. Am I his keeper?"
"The Lord hath set his mark upon him that no man should murder him." *Gen.* 4 : 9–15.

"With Cain . . . in the land of Nod." *Gen.* 4 : 16.

"Smite him with the edge of the sword." *Deut.* 13 : 15.

"Smite the shepherd, and the sheep are scattered." *Zech.* 13 : 7.

"His Lord and Master in Christ." *Matt.* 20 : 27.

"Who fed you in the wilderness." *Deut.* 8 : 16.

ACT II, SC. 1

"The voice of the deep." *Hab.* 3 : 10.

"Turn the world upside down." *Acts* 17 : 6.

SC. 2

"Thief-like fled . . . no man pursuing." *Prov.* 28 : 1.

"Take heed he do not turn and rend you." *Matt.* 7 : 6.

"None other God but me." *Ex.* 20 : 3.

"Nay, if they were defective as Saint Peter
Denying Christ, who yet defied the tyrant,
We held by his defiance, not by his defect."
Matt. 26 : 70; *Acts* 4 : 19.

"What manner of man he was." *James* 1 : 24.

"Yea, let a stranger spoil his heritage,
And let another take his bishoprick." *Acts* 1 : 20.

"Withstood . . . to their faces." *Gal.* 2 : 11.

"Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings praise." *Ps.* 8 : 2.

"A fisher of men." *Matt.* 4 : 19.

"Agree with him quickly." *Matt.* 5 : 25.

"Still choose Barabbas rather than the Christ." *Matt.* 27 : 21.

"Absolve the left-hand thief and damn the right." *Luke* 23 : 43.

"On mine own self . . . had had no power except." *John* 19 : 11.

"Thou art no prophet
Nor yet a prophet's son." *Amos* 7 : 14.

APPENDIX

ACT III, SC. 1

"Solomon-shaming flowers." *Matt.* 6 : 29.

"If I had been Eve in the garden, I shouldn't have minded the apple.
For what's an apple?" *Gen.* 3 : 6.

"The seventh Commandment." *Ex.* 20 : 14.

SC. 3

"A house on sand." *Matt.* 7 : 26, 27.

"Pulled . . . the church . . . down upon his own head." *Judges* 16 : 29.

"A thief at night . . . hears a door open, . . .
And thinks, 'The master.' " *Matt.* 24 : 43.

"The thunder of the captains and the shouting." *Job* 39 : 25.

"The miraculous draught." *Luke* 5 : 6.

"Goliathizing." 1 *Sam.* 17 : 4.

"A whole Peter's sheet." *Acts* 10 : 11.

"Magdalen." *Luke* 8 : 2.

"The spouse of the great king." *Rev.* 21 : 9.

"The daughter of Zion lies beside the way." *Is.* 1 : 8.

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"The kiss of peace." 1 *Thess.* 5 : 26.

"Ay, if this if be like the Devil's *if*,
Thou wilt fall down and worship me." *Matt.* 4 : 9.

"Thou hast trodden this winepress alone." *Is.* 63 : 3.

"The drop may hollow out the dead stone." *Job* 14 : 19.

"My visions in the Lord." 2 *Cor.* 12 : 1.

"Murder her one shepherd, that the sheep." *Matt.* 26 : 31.

ACT IV, SC. 2

"The Judas-lover of our passion-play." *Matt.* 26 : 47.

"Our great high-priest." *Heb.* 4 : 14.

ACT V, SC. 1

"The Decalogue." *Ex.* 20.

SC. 2

"My kingdom is not of this world." *John* 18 : 36.

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"A policy of wise pardon,
Wins here, as there, to bless thine enemies." *Matt.* 5 : 44, 45.

"This world's leaven." 1 *Cor.* 5 : 7.

"These wells of Marah." *Ex.* 15 : 23.

"In this life and in the life to come." 1 *Tim.* 4 : 8.

"They spread their raiment down." *Matt.* 21 : 8.

"Give to the King the things that are the King's,
And those of God to God." *Matt.* 22 : 21.

"Mailed in the perfect panoply of faith." *Eph.* 6 : 13.

"The great day
When God makes up his jewels." *Mal.* 3 : 17.

"Would that I could bear thy cross." *Matt.* 27 : 32.

"They seek occasion for your death." *Mark* 14 : 55.

"Why do the heathen rage?" *Ps.* 2 : 1.

Sc. 3

"Die with him and be glorified together." *Rom.* 8 : 17.

"Though . . . the great deeps were broken up again." *Gen.* 7 : 11.

"Knock and it shall be opened." *Matt.* 7 : 7.

"Not tho' it be their hour, the power of darkness." *Luke* 22 : 53.

"He is not yet ascended to the Father." *John* 20 : 17.

"Fight out the good fight, die conqueror." 2 *Tim.* 4 : 7.

"At the right hand of Power
Power and great glory—for thy Church, O Lord—
Into thy hands, O Lord, into thy hands!" *Luke* 22 : 69; 23 : 46.

"Will the earth gape and swallow us?" *Num.* 16 : 32.

ACHILLES. "Smoke from a city goes to heaven." *Josh.* 8 : 20.

TO E. FITZGERALD. "As if they knew your diet spares
Whatever moved in that full sheet
Let down to Peter at his prayers." *Acts* 10 : 11.

"Grapes of Eshcol hugeness." *Num.* 13 : 23.

THE WRECK. "The wages of sin is death." *Rom.* 6 : 23.

"I am the Jonah; the crew should cast me into the deep."
Jonah 1 : 15.

APPENDIX

"Was it well with the child?" *2 Kings* 4 : 26.

DESPAIR.

"He is only a cloud and a smoke who was once a pillar of fire."
Ex. 13 : 21.

"Ah God . . . I was taking the name in vain." *Ex.* 20 : 7.

"Till the sun and moon of our Science are both of them turned into blood." *Joel* 2 : 31.

"Does what he will with his own." *Matt.* 20 : 15.

THE FLIGHT. "The godless Jephtha vows his child . . .
To one cast of the dice." *Judges* 11 : 30.

EARLY SPRING. "Makes all things new." *Rev.* 21 : 15.

"A Jacob's ladder falls." *Gen.* 28 : 12.

LOCKSLEY HALL, SIXTY YEARS AFTER.

"Love your enemy, bless your haters, said the Greatest of the great."
Matt. 5 : 44.

"Have we grown at last beyond the passions of the primal clan,
Kill your enemy, for you hate him." *Matt.* 5 : 43.

"Dust to dust." *Eccl.* 3 : 20; *Job* 34 : 15.

"What are men that he should heed us? cried the king of sacred song." *Ps.* 8 : 4.

"The trampled serpent." *Gen.* 3 : 15.

"Follow you the star that lights a desert pathway, yours or mine,
Forward till you see the highest Human Nature is divine."
Matt. 2 : 2.

"Follow Light and do the Right—for man can half control his doom—
Till you find the deathless Angel seated in the vacant tomb."
John 20 : 12.

THE CHARGE OF THE HEAVY BRIGADE.

EPILOGUE

"Though carved in harder stone
The falling drop will make his name
As mortal as my own." *Job* 14 : 19.

THE FALCON. "Happy was the prodigal son." *Luke* 15 : 20–23.

THE PROMISE OF MAY. ACT I

"Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die."
Is. 22 : 13; 1 *Cor.* 15 : 32.

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"Yes, tho' the fire should run along the ground,
As it once did in Egypt." *Ex.* 9 : 23.

ACT II

"As long as the man sarved for 'is sweet'art i' Scripture."
Gen. 29 : 20.

ACT III

"Forgive him seventy times and seven." *Matt.* 18 : 22.

"This valley of tears." *Ps.* 84 : 6.

VASTNESS. "Innocence seethed in her mother's milk." *Ex.* 34 : 26.

"He that has nail'd all flesh to the Cross." *Gal.* 5 : 24.

"The dead are not dead, but alive."
Matt. 22 : 32; *Mark* 12 : 27; *Luke* 10 : 38.

OWD ROA.

"Faäithful an' True—them words be i' Scriptur'." *Rev.* 22 : 6.

"Or like t'other Hangel i' Scriptur' at summun seed i' the flaäme,
When summun 'ed hax'd fur a son, an' 'e promised a' son to she."
Judges 13 : 19–21.

"Judgment daäy." *Matt.* 12 : 36.

THE RING. "Father's fault visited on the children." *Ex.* 20 : 5.

"The veil is rending." *Matt.* 27 : 51.

FORLORN. "Daughter of the seed of Cain." *Gen.* 4.

HAPPY. "My soldier of the cross." 2 *Tim.* 2 : 3.

"A crueller mark than Cain's." *Gen.* 4 : 15.

"Creature which in Eden was divine." *Gen.* 1 : 27.

"When we shall stand transfigured, like Christ on Hermon hill."
Matt. 17 : 1, 2.

"Clove the Moslem . . . moon . . . and changed it into blood."
Joel 2 : 31.

" 'Libera me, Domine!' you sang the Psalm." *Ps.* 6.

"If man and wife be but one flesh." *Matt.* 19 : 6.

TO MARY BOYLE. "Dives and Lazarus." *Luke* 16 : 19–31.

MERLIN AND THE GLEAM. "Drew to the valley
Named of the shadow." *Ps.* 23 : 4.

ROMNEY'S REMORSE. "Ay, but when the shout
Of his descending peals from heaven." 1 *Thess.* 4 : 16.

APPENDIX

"Why left you wife and children? for my sake?
According to my word?" *Mark* 10 : 29.

"The coals of fire you heap upon my head
Have crazed me." *Rom.* 12 : 20.

CROSSING THE BAR. "I hope to see my Pilot face to face,
When I have crost the bar."
1 *John* 3 : 2; 1 *Cor.* 13 : 12.

THE FORESTERS. ACT I, SC. 1
"Sufficient for the day." *Matt.* 6 : 34.

ACT II, SC. 1
"The serpent that had crept into the garden." *Gen.* 3 : 1.

"The palms of Paradise." *Rev.* 7 : 9.

ACT III, SC. 1
"Sell all thou hast and give it to the poor." *Matt.* 19 : 21.

ACT IV, SC. 1
"The King of Kings." *Rev.* 17 : 14.

"Will hang as high as Haman." *Esth.* 7 : 9, 10.

"Beelzebub." *Matt.* 10 : 25.

"I am like the man
In Holy Writ, who brought his talent back." *Matt.* 25 : 25.

AKBAR'S DREAM.
"Allah, says their sacred book, is Love." 1 *John* 4 : 16.

"Love one another, little ones." *John* 13 : 33, 34.

"Bless your persecutors." *Rom.* 12 : 14.

"The Sun of Righteousness." *Mal.* 4 : 2.

"Bear false witness." *Ex.* 20 : 16.

THE CHURCH WARDEN. "The narra gäate." *Matt.* 7 : 14.

"The tongue's sit afire o' Hell." *James* 3 : 6.

"By the Graäce o' the Lord—I have wot I have."
1 *Cor.* 15 : 10.

"The Kingdom o' Heaven." *Matt.* 3 : 2.

CHARITY. "For a woman ruined the world,
As God's own Scriptures tell." *Gen.* 3 : 1–6.

"I had cursed—the day I was born." *Job* 3 : 3.

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	"Face to face with her Lord."	1 *Cor.* 13 : 12.
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THE DREAMER.	"The meek shall inherit the earth."	*Matt.* 5 : 5.
RIFLEMEN FORM.	"Are figs of thistles? Or grapes of thorns?"	*Matt.* 7 : 16.

APPENDIX

II

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Mr. John Hall Wheelock has put me under great obligations by his careful revision and completion of the bibliography which I made in 1898, particularly with reference to translations and books published since 1892.

H. v. D.

December, 1919.

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In Memoriam: Collana di poesie, recate in versi da Saladino Saladini Pilastri, sonetti al padre ed altri versi. Cesena: Vignuzzi, 1901. pp. xxx–323.

Due Poemati: Tradotti da Carlo Sormani. Milano: Martinelli, 1902. pp. 115.

Tiresia: Traduzione di Em. Teza. Padova: Gallina, 1905. pp. 43.

Ulisse: Traduzione di Em. Teza. Padova: Randi, 1907. pp. 16.

Enone: Poemetto tradotto da Em. Teza. Padova: Randi, 1908. pp. 21.

Italian translations, in verse and prose, from Tennyson's poems are to be found in the following articles:—

"Poeti Stranieri Moderni—Alfredo Tennyson:" di Eugenio Camerini. Nella *Nuova Antologia.* Firenze, Febbraio, 1870. Vol. xiii. pp. 229–249. Frammenti di traduzione in prosa.

"Alfredo Tennyson e le sue nuove poesie." (Ballads and other Poems, 1881.) Articolo

* It is an Italian custom at a wedding to have some little book printed, containing an original poem, a new translation, or something of literary novelty and appropriateness, to be presented to the bride and groom and their friends as a memorial of the marriage. The note indicates that Signore Saggioni had his translation of Enoch Arden printed as a gift for the wedding of his friends of the families of Scopoli and Naccari.

APPENDIX

critico di Enrico Nencioni, nel *Fanfulla della Domenica*, Roma, 10 Aprile, 1881. Traduzione in prosa della poesia *Rizpah*.

"*Maud.*" Articolo critico di Enrico Nencioni nella *Domenico Letteraria*. Roma, 19 Marzo, 1882. Frammenti di traduzione in prosa.

"Gli *Idilli del Re*." Art. crit. di Enrico Nencioni, nel *Fanfulla della Domenica*, Roma, 9 Settembre, 1883. Traduzione in prosa di un frammento della *Ginevra*.

"Lord Tennyson: Alcuni suoi scritti minori." Art. crit. di F. Rodriguez, nella *Nuova Antologia*, Roma, 16 Luglio, 1890, Serie III, vol. xxviii, pp. 318–340. Traduzioni in versi dell' idillio *Il Ruscello*, della ballata *Rizpah*, e *La Diga Estrema*.

FRENCH

Elaine, Genièvre, Viviane, Enide. Trad. par Francisque Michel. Ill. par Gustave Doré. Paris. Hachette et Cie. 1867–1869.

Enoch Arden. Trad. par M. de la Rive. 1870.

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Idylles et Poèmes: Enoch Arden: Locksley Hall. Trad. par A. Buisson du Berger. 1888.

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NORWEGIAN AND DANISH

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"*The May Queen:*" oversat af A. Falck. Christiania. 1875. (1855?)

Idyller om Kong Arthur: oversat af A. Munch. Copenhagen. 1876.

Anna og Locksley Slot: oversat af A. Hansen. 1872.

"*Sea Dreams:*" "*Aylmer's Field:*" oversat af F. L. Mynster. 1877.

SPANISH

Enid and Elaine: translated by Lope Gisbert. 1875.

Poemes de Alfredo Tennyson: Enoch Arden, Gareth y Lynette, Merlin y Bibiana, etc. Tr. by D. Vicente de Arana. Barcelona. 1883.

NOTE.—The difficulty of making this list perfect in the present state of bibliography is immense. It is only in the German and the Italian that it approaches completeness and accuracy.

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