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TENNYSON:
SELECT
POEMS
TENNYSON: SELECT POEMS

CONTAINING THE

SELECTIONS PRESCRIBED FOR THE JUNIOR MATRICULATION AND JUNIOR LEAVING EXaminations,

1904.

EDITED WITH

INTRODUCTION AND NOTES.

BY

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N.B.—Of the poems contained in this volume, "Recollections of the Arabian Nights" is not prescribed for the examinations of the year 1904.
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INTRODUCTION.

THE STUDY OF LITERATURE.

I.

Peculiarities of the Study of Literature.

Literature in its Widest Sense.—Literature in its widest sense is thought recorded in language. It includes, therefore, all written thought,—not only poems, essays, novels, but also scientific treatises, letters, inscriptions. Euclid's Elements, Mill's Logic, Cowper's correspondence with his friends (whose publication the writer never contemplated), fall within the province of literature as well as Shakespeare's dramas and Tennyson's poems. Literature also includes thought which is not written down but registered in some fixed form of words upon the memories of men: such was the case originally with ballads and popular songs—with the poems ascribed to Homer, for example—which were registered not in written characters but in the tablets of the brain, and were transmitted by word of mouth.

The Goal of Literary Study.—The immense mass of material included under the definition just given, is the material for literary study, and the aim of the study is simply to understand this record. Setting out from the basis of the language employed, it is the work of the student of literature to attain to the state of mind which the writer intended to embody. The writer had certain thoughts, feelings, definite or vague sensations, to which he desired to give utterance; he sought for the proper vocabulary, sentence forms, imagery, etc., to afford adequate expression to these mental conditions, and having found them recorded them by writing or by other means. The
literary student reverses the process; he takes the recorded language, and by the use of reason, imagination and so forth, interprets this record and sets up within himself, as nearly as may be, the original state of mind of the author.

Difference between the Study of Literature, and the Study of Books for other than Literary Purposes.—If literature includes all sorts of books, as our definition indicates,—even such books as Euclid's *Elements* and Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*—it may be asked, in what respect, when these books are our material, does the study of literature differ from the study of mathematics, or of history. It differs by its aim or point of view, and by its range. The whole aim of the student of literature is to understand with the utmost completeness what the author is expressing by his language; on the other hand, for the student of the special department to which the book under consideration belongs, such understanding is only preliminary to a further end, viz., the determination of what are the facts, and to what conclusions they lead. It would not be of much moment to the student of history that he should misinterpret, or inadequately interpret, Gibbon's meaning, provided he arrived at the truth in regard to the decline of Rome; whereas to the student of literature, Gibbon's ideas, feelings, etc., are the main objects, and the Roman Empire is not at all an immediate matter of concern. A second point of difference is, that students in other departments continually go outside of books—the recorded thoughts of men—and study facts existing in material objects and natural phenomena. This is particularly the case in science, where the student continually comes face to face with facts without the intervention of another mind; but the student of literature never investigates, as his subject, anything which has not first passed through the mind of another, and taken form and shape there. The facts with regard to the way in which bodies fall to the earth will never come before him or concern him, as a student of literature, until some other mind has noted and recorded them; and, even then, he does not enquire what is the truth with regard to falling bodies, but what a particular writer has said about them.
"Colour" in Literature.—Facts are sometimes much modified and coloured (as one may say) in this passage through another mind which invariably takes place before they come to be considered by the literary student. The axioms of Euclid represent the bare thought; these truths have not taken on any particular modification or colour from the circumstance that it is a certain man, Euclid, who has given them expression; any other person who grasped them clearly, would express them in much the same way. Such an assertion cannot be made of Carlyle's History of the French Revolution, or Green's History of England; other authors than these might embody the same material, and yet give a wholly different impression to the reader. The matter might have taken a different colour from the mind of the writer. Now as the student of history is in search of the truth,—the substantial facts—he disregards in as far as possible these modifications which are derived from the mind of the author. But, on the other hand, to the student of literature, whose object is not to know the facts, but the exact mental condition of the writer, it is of prime importance to know not merely the assertions made, but the feelings with which they are regarded, in as far as these are embodied in the language. It is this colour, this human element, that interests him most of all.

Two Kinds of Interpretation in Literature.—In the first place, then, in interpretation, the student of literature has to get at the substantial meaning which the work conveys,—and here he is on common ground with the specialist in the department to which the book belongs,—history, or science, or whatever that department may be. But, in the second place, there may be, beyond this substantial meaning, modifications and colouring imparted by the writer; these, too, the student of literature must understand; and here he parts company with the specialist, who gives little heed to such matters. The first stage of interpretation is usually either very simple, or, if difficult, the difficulty arises from the nature of the subject, and can therefore be overcome only by one who possesses knowledge of that particular subject, i.e.,
by the specialist. The second stage of interpretation is a much more subtle matter; the difficulties which may arise in various departments are of the same general character, for they lie, not in the matter, but in the form,—in the manner of expression—and it is in this part of the work that the student of literature finds his special function.

**Manner of Expression the Source of Literary Colour.**—This modification or colouring is not conveyed by assertions. We are supposing for the moment that the facts—the substantial thought—are given and fixed; yet different writers will cause a different impression as to these facts by the way in which they put them. The difference may be illustrated in a slightly different sphere: we can easily imagine a machine made so as successfully to articulate words when air is forced through it; thus the operator might convey thought from his mind to ours. But the effect would be very unlike that produced by the human voice speaking in the ordinary way. In the first case, bare thought would be given; in the second, the same thought modified, illuminated, vivified by the expression, gesture, tones of the living speaker. Now, some recorded thought, a large portion of literature in the wide sense, resembles the utterances of this machine: it conveys ideas—dry statements of facts, as we say: for example, the definitions in *Euclid* or in any other scientific work, are of this character. In these cases, when the substantial meaning of the assertion has been mastered, the work of interpretation is complete. But language may have, in the hands of a skilful writer, a wonderful power of conveying to the reader such modifications and emotional accompaniments as, in ordinary conversation, are given by tone, gesture and play of feature. These effects are not imparted by the actual statements made by the sentences; they are not the substantial thought; they are the modifications and accompaniments of the thought through the form and manner of the expression. Literary study, therefore, is specially concerned with manner or form; just as literature itself consists not of a body of facts—truths transmitted through the minds of living men (as might be the case with science), but of ideas as recorded in *fixed forms of language*. 
Literature in its Narrower Sense.—An English translation of the original Greek work of Euclid may serve a mathematician quite as well as the Euclid's own words. No translation of Homer can to the same extent suffice the student of literature. The philosophical import of Plato's writings may be represented in English; but its literary import only in a very inadequate fashion. A chapter in Gibbon's history might be reproduced in the words of another man without sacrificing anything of prime importance in the original; no one could re-write in his own language Morte D'Arthur, or Crossing the Bar, without sacrificing a great deal, or producing something of an altogether different character. The student of literature will therefore find much to engage his interest in the latter cases, and comparatively little in the former. With works made up of bare, dry, unemotional, impersonal statements, the student of literature has but little concern; with works impregnated by the characteristics of the writer, coloured by his personality and his mood, a great deal. While literature may, then, be said to include all recorded thought, the word is used more properly and frequently of recorded thought to which colour is lent from the form or character of the language employed; and these peculiarities of form or expression which serve to carry certain impressions to the mind of the reader in addition to the substantial assertions, are comprised under the name Style.

Style.—Style arises, then, from the nature of the thinking and recording mind. The complex atmosphere with which the literary writer surrounds his ideas is evidently the outcome of his personality—hence it has truly been said that 'The style is the man.' Every one knows that in real life, many men exercise a power through the impression that their individuality makes upon others. In many speakers, it is not so much what they say, or the language in which they say it, but a something conveyed through the actual presence of the man, that gives force. We speak of men of magnetic, or of winning, or of dominating characters. Such men have the power of bringing their personality to bear upon other men. The power of convey-
ing similar impressions through written language is the specific literary gift. Many persons who have communicated thoughts of great worth through written language, have not possessed this power in any high degree; and in the treatment of some subjects this power, or rather the exercise of it, is not desirable. As, when a surgeon is performing a delicate operation, it is a positive advantage that his emotional nature, his sympathy, etc., should for the time be in abeyance, in order that his whole energy may be devoted to observation, judgment, the controlling of the muscles, and that the mind may be undisturbed by anything foreign to the success of the operation; so, the scientific man, dealing with universal abstract truth, is at his best when uninfluenced by his own individual character and feelings, and when his statements of results are also free from these transitory and alien factors. But if such writing is free from the drawbacks, it also lacks the charm, of literary style. There are other writers who, consciously or unconsciously, set an impress on their work through certain peculiarities in expression, and this impress will be recognizable in all their writings, and will serve to differentiate these from the works of others. For example, by such peculiarities persons of literary culture easily determine whether a certain poem is by Tennyson, or by Browning, whether a certain essay is by Macaulay or by Carlyle. Even when a writer of genius treats of themes of widely different character, and employs literary forms far removed from one another, there are almost invariably present in all these productions certain qualities—difficult it may be to seize upon and define—which characterize them all, stamp them as the progeny of a single mind, and differentiate them from the works of all his contemporaries. These idiosyncrasies of style are something from which the person who possesses them cannot escape, provided he writes naturally; but there is a higher power of style than this, the power of shaping language, at will, so as to arouse a desired series of feelings or impressions in the reader. So Gray was able to impose a form upon the Elegy, to give a character to the style, which serves to stimulate certain vague moods or impressions in keeping with the substantial thought. In his Lines to Mr. Walpole's Cat, the style
is of a different character and begets a quite different series of feelings, although it still has certain qualities in common with the former which mark it as the style of Gray.

**Imaginative Literature.**—Now there are not only great differences among different men in the power of thus using language effectively, there are equal differences in the power of feeling and appreciating these effects in language. There are people who have no sense for style, as there are people who have no ear for music. It is quite possible for persons who lack this sense, to profit greatly by reading, but it is by reading those books which convey substantial facts or ideas—like works of science or history; but the more of literary quality a book possesses, the more these readers miss; from certain sorts of writing they may be said to get nothing at all—and this the very sort of writing which most completely deserves the name of literature. For, as we pass from the outlying provinces of literature, from books which contain an almost colourless expression of facts and ideas, towards the central province of literature proper, we find, at the very heart of the latter, books in which there are not merely modifications and colouring given to facts and thoughts by their passage through the mind of the author, but in which the substance itself springs up in his mind, and is not imposed from the outside, as the facts of history or biography are imposed upon the historian and biographer, and must be accepted by them. So that not the style only, but the matter may bear the impress of the writer's mind. Works of this character are called imaginative, being the product of the imagination of the writer; and just because the personal element is here the most important factor, these works are, above all, the special field of the student of literature. The grasping of the substantial thought, of the statements directly conveyed are everything, we may say, in reading *Euclid*, or a text-book on chemistry; and, if not everything, at least the main thing in reading Gibbon's history of the later years of the Roman Empire: but a very small matter, indeed, in reading *Morte D'Arthur* or *Crossing the Bar*. The facts in the life of Cromwell are worth knowing, whatever be the character of the medium through which they are conveyed; one can
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scarcely say as much of the facts of the life of an imaginary Hamlet or Adam Bede.

Imaginative Interpretation.—In order to receive anything of high value from these more purely literary works, we must complete the work of interpretation, and not merely grasp the substantial development of the thought, but also must, in some measure, reproduce within ourselves the emotional and imaginative states of the author. In the case of Crossing the Bar, for example, the reader who possesses adequate literary sense, experiences, through the combined effects of the statements, imagery, suggestion, and rhythm of the poem, the highly complex mental and emotional condition in which the poet contemplates the approach of death—a state of mind noble and beautiful, hence desirable, and even enjoyable. Note that here literature not merely affords us information, and sets us thinking; it also enables us, in a measure, to live through an experience. This is specially the function of that large part of literature which represents imaginary life and character, as the drama, the novel, the epic. The author conceives persons and events,—sees them with the mind's eye, thinks the thoughts of the characters, lives their lives. The things thus conceived he represents through language; and the reader taking the symbols interprets them again into mental pictures, into thoughts, and into feelings; and, thus, as it were, enlarges his own experience. Interpretation of this sort is largely the work of Imagination.

Imagination.—The highest forms of literature bring into play the imagination even more than the intellect; and it is well that we should have a definite idea of what is meant by imagination, for this word and the related forms are often employed very vaguely in criticism. Fundamentally, imagination is the power of starting, from the interior of the brain, mental conditions which are originally produced by influences from the exterior, acting upon the organs of the senses, or upon the nerves. So, a beautiful landscape presented to the eye produces a certain mental condition: we see it, have feelings and thoughts about it; on a subsequent occasion when the landscape is not present, the
vision and its accompanying thoughts and feelings may, without the external stimulus, be revived in a less definite and intense form. This latter is an imaginative experience. Or an artist may conjure up in his consciousness a scene which is not a copy of any particular landscape, but which is, of course, made up of details drawn from actual experience. This is a higher exercise of imagination. Lady Macbeth in sleep smells blood upon her hand; Macbeth sees, as he thinks, the dead Banquo sitting at the feast; this is a very vivid imaginative experience, but an abnormal one, for it deceives the judgment, and is not under the control of the will. So, by imagination, not merely objects of sight, but of hearing, smelling, etc., may be evoked in the brain; and in like manner, any sort of physical feeling, or any emotional state,—fear, joy, etc. Thus, we may pass through almost all the possible experiences of actual life, though in a vaguer and less intense fashion. The power of imaginatively reviving past experiences is universal; on the other hand, the power of conceiving concrete experiences which possess a high measure of novelty, is a much rarer gift. Persons possessed of imagination in its most striking manifestations, are able to conceive novel characters, scenes, situations, events, with great vividness, and these of a highly interesting and beautiful kind. If to this power of conceiving, the person adds the power of representing his conceptions in some medium,—language, colour, sound,—so that they may be easily reproduced in others, he has the qualifications of a great artist, be it poet, painter or musician. Such is the power which Shakespeare so astonishingly manifests in his plays; and no one has completed the work of understanding those plays—the work of literary interpretation—until he has, not merely grasped the series of events, the ideas expressed and so on, but has also imaginatively entered into them and lived, as it were, through them. Any one can easily comprehend the difference both in kind and in degree between the impression produced upon a comparatively illiterate person through the reading of Hamlet or Macbeth, and the impression produced upon the same person through seeing the same plays well enacted on the stage. In the latter case, the scenery, the personality of the actors, their rendering of their parts contribute
a very large share to the imaginative work required for understanding the text of the drama. Now, there is a difference of the same sort, and quite as great in degree, between the impression produced by the reading of any piece of imaginative literature,—not merely plays and novels, but such pieces as Crossing the Bar, "Tears, idle tears," or Ulysses—upon a person who merely has an intellectual understanding of the piece (such as would be amply sufficient in a passage from most scientific works) and upon the skilful student of literature, who completes the work of interpretation through his imagination.

It may be noted in passing that not merely fiction but reality may be imaginatively treated by writer or reader. Carlyle in his French Revolution narrates the facts in such a way as to stimulate the reader's imagination and to enable him to enter into the life depicted. An historian like Prof. S. R. Gardiner, on the other hand, writes, in the main, to convey accurate information to the intellect, not to quicken his reader's realization of the past as actual. Unfortunately, but naturally enough, the imaginative writer of history is apt to be inaccurate; the very accurate writer, unimaginative; so that the reader encounters either what is false or what is dry. But poets, dramatists, and novelists, who have their facts in their own control, may, without falsifying them, shape them to their own purpose; and that purpose primarily is that the reader should, as fully and intensely as the limits of imagination permit, enter into the experiences depicted.

II.

Results of the Study of Literature.

Three Results of Education.—Any study that has educational value confers Knowledge, Discipline, or Culture. It is desirable that the memory should be stored with facts and ideas,—that is, with Knowledge; that each faculty should be trained to do easily and well that which it is designed to do,—such training is Discipline; that a man should have all his faculties harmoniously developed, so that he shall realize to the fullest extent all the possibilities of his nature—that is
Culture. These three things cannot be definitely separated; they run into one another; particularly between the second and the third no line can be accurately drawn. It is not in their processes that discipline and culture are unlike, but in their aims and their points of view. Discipline regards the man as a means to an end; it seeks to bring a faculty into the highest state of efficiency for the production of some external result—in order that the man may make good watches, or horse-shoes, or may add to the store of human knowledge, or heal disease, or direct and guide large bodies of men, etc.; but in developing him into an extremely efficient artizan, or investigator, or physician, or statesman, his perfection as a man may, quite possibly, be sacrificed. Discipline may produce an extraordinarily useful member of society; yet the individual regarded in and for himself, may be a very limited and monstrous specimen of humanity; whereas culture regards the man in and for himself, not as the producer of something outside of himself.

Knowledge Resulting from the Study of Literature.—Let us consider, then, what is the educational value of the study of literature—especially as it is pursued in schools—in each of these three respects; and first as regards knowledge. Since literature, as we have seen, includes all books, and books are the chief repositories of ascertained knowledge, the study of literature in its widest sense ought to bestow extensive and varied information; this information, however, is likely to be miscellaneous and unsystematic; and such knowledge is not for practical purposes very effective; but it widens one's interests, it enlarges the mental vision, it adds to the happiness and dignity of life—that is it contributes to culture. Knowledge which is to be practically effective should be profound and systematic—knowledge acquired by scientific, not by literary, methods. Indeed, as has been pointed out in considering the nature of literary study, the facts embodied are, to the student of literature, of merely secondary importance. And, if we take literature in its narrower and proper sense, little positive information is gained from familiarity with it. The study of the Selections in this volume will manifestly not give nearly as much positive knowledge as the same amount of mental effort employed on a text-book in science or
history. Definite knowledge is not the strong point in the study of literature; yet as knowledge is the most obvious and easily comprehended result of education, there is a popular tendency to emphasize and make much of it. Hence the undue stress usually put upon the annotation of literary texts, because notes give a definite information. For the genuine study of literature, however, annotation is valuable only in so far as it enables the reader to understand the text better, to enter more completely into the writer's mind. Apart from this service its value is small. Unorganized knowledge,—the disconnected scraps of history, science, biography, etc., which we find in notes—is, compared with systematic knowledge, meaningless and useless, and little likely to be retained by the memory.

But there is a sort of knowledge obtained from the study of literature,—of literature, too, in its most proper and narrow sense,—which though often overlooked, is of great value, viz., the concrete knowledge of human nature and of life. The knowledge which science gives is abstract and generalized; it is derived and artificial, built up upon another sort of knowledge altogether, viz., concrete knowledge,—the knowledge of things as we see them and of experiences as we actually have them. We have never had any experience of 'a triangle' as mathematically defined, nor of 'a German' in the abstract, nor of 'force' in general, but always of certain individual things to which we apply these names. A critic makes, let us say, a true general statement with regard to the style of Tennyson; a reader with a genuine appreciation of literature, but with no tendency or need to analyze his impressions, may be thoroughly familiar with Tennyson's poetry, and hence with this peculiarity of style, and yet never have thought of this general truth. His knowledge is, notwithstanding, really more accurate and fuller than that conveyed by the critic's statement. A writer makes an assertion (as true, let us suppose, as such assertions can be) in regard to the German national character; a keen observer who has lived much in Germany, may have a much more accurate and fuller acquaintance with Germans, and yet be quite incapable of making this generalization for himself. This is not said to disparage
general knowledge,—which is from another point of view the higher,—
but to draw attention to the differences between scientific and concrete
knowledge, and to the fact that, from certain points of view, the latter
is the truer and the more useful. Especially is concrete knowledge
essential, when action is needful. Physicians acquire certain general
principles, but the thing that makes the successful practitioner is the
knowledge that comes from experience,—from having observed keenly
a large number of individual cases. This knowledge directly suggests
the treatment of the new case without the conscious intervention of
any generalization. Could the knowledge of the skilful practitioner be
generalized, it might be transmitted to another physician entire; but
this is not so; the skill dies with the man. So, the teacher whose
dealings with his pupils are based solely on the generalizations of
psychology or of educational experience, can never succeed. Success
depends mainly on the concrete knowledge which enables him to act
upon the spur of the moment, through intuition, not through any
process of general reasoning. "Histories," says Bacon in his pregnant
essay, Of Studies, "make men wise"; and that is because they deal with
men, not abstractly, but as individuals acting as we see them acting in
real life. The best imaginative literature, for a like reason, makes
men wise. The most characteristic knowledge which literature affords
is of the same concrete nature as that which is given by actual contact
with men and things. The person who is familiar with Shakespeare's
dramas gains a direct knowledge of and insight into human nature
such as no scientific treatise can give him—a knowledge which may
supplement the necessarily limited experience of any individual. Hence
the real worth of novels; they widen our limited observation of con-
crete men and women, and the way in which they live. In the best
literature, as has been indicated in what is said of style, we come
almost into personal contact with great men, the writers themselves;
in imaginative literature, we widen our experience of life.

The Discipline Imparted by Literature.—As to discipline: the study
of literature of course disciplines many faculties, but this discipline
has its value from the point of view of culture, rather than because it
leads up directly to any external end. There are, however, one or two valuable results for practical purposes arising from the discipline afforded by the study of literature. In the first place, this study, above any other, teaches us how to read, familiarizes us with books, enables us to grasp their meaning accurately, fully, and readily; and this is one of the best practical preparations for after life, because through books is one of the chief and most accessible avenues to knowledge. Everyone has noted the disadvantage under which the ill-taught reader labours, who painfully plods his way along the printed page with finger following each word. But it is not so often noted how people with a fair amount of education labour under a similar disadvantage to a smaller degree; they find the reading of anything but the lightest literature a heavy task; and when they do read, fail to grasp adequately the import of the passage. Such people may follow a lecturer with ease and pleasure; they are accustomed to oral communications; the speaker's personality, his tone, give light and vividness to the subject. But, as we have seen, the personality of the writer may be felt through the written word also by him whose literary faculty has been trained. The study of literature properly pursued affords the specific training needful for facility in the mastering of written thought, forms the habit of reading, and instils a taste for books. It is this power and taste which alone, in most cases, render it possible that the mental culture begun at school may be continued in later life, and that the narrow limits of acquired knowledge may be widened. It need scarcely be added that the study of literature is an important instrument for the highly practical purpose of developing the power of expression: furnishing, as it does, a wide vocabulary, a store of phrases and sentence-forms, an accurate appreciation of the meaning and uses of words which are essential to the clear and effective utterance of one's own thoughts in speaking and writing.

Literature as an Instrument of Culture.—But it is above all as an instrument and source of culture, that literature is eminent among the studies of a school curriculum. Its especial value is not practical; it does not contribute so directly as many other studies towards enabling
a man to make a livelihood; its value lies in the fact that it tends to elevate and broaden the inner life: to give wider interests, breadth of view, openness of mind, loftier sources of pleasure. It is such qualities as these that we connect with culture; as we connect the ideas of narrowness, one-sidedness, smallness and pettiness, and lack of internal resource with its opposite. Imagine a man who has spent his whole life in some small, secluded, and backward community, who has never travelled or seen other phases of life, whose intercourse has been confined to persons hedged in by the same limitations as himself, whose education has been elementary, and who is unfamiliar with books. Such a man may naturally possess good ability, certain parts of his nature may have been disciplined by the practical work of life. He may be very skilful in his business, and a very useful member of society; but his knowledge will inevitably be small, his basis for forming judgments of men and events outside his small familiar sphere utterly inadequate, his sympathies contracted, his inner resources few, his whole life and nature dwarfed. In short, he will not be a man of culture. Imagine a man of similar endowments whose life has brought him into close contact with a great many different social conditions, who has seen and mingled with the world, with all sorts and conditions of men, who has lived on terms of familiarity with many great minds. Such a man could scarcely escape that general stimulation of his whole nature which we call culture. Now, observe that the man who has a taste for literature, as literature, and possesses a wide familiarity with books, is in much the same position as this second imaginary individual. He is familiar with a great range of ideas—not limited to any one department of thought but belonging to many, especially to those which treat most directly of human life. He has come into contact with a number of the greatest men who have ever lived, the great writers, namely; has not merely learned what they have thought, but through the power of style has come under the influence of their personality. He has become acquainted with the life and manner of thinking in communities unlike his own—in distant ages and countries. In imaginative literature he has lived through a vast range of emotional experiences, has entered
sympathetically into characters and lives remote from his own—has, in a fashion at least, passed through numberless possibilities of human experience. All this must inevitably give culture. The lives of the majority of men are narrow; in new countries like our own, the variety and range of interest in most communities is small; but in literature we have an instrument within the reach of every one who has received an elementary literary training at school, and an instrument for developing every side of our nature, moral, emotional, intellectual.
TENNYSON.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS.

When the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free
In the silken sail of infancy,
The tide of time flow'd back with me,
   The forward-flowing tide of time;
And many a sheeny summer-morn,
Adown the Tigris I was borne,
By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,
High-walled gardens green and old;
True Mussulman was I and sworn,
   For it was in the golden prime
   Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'
The low and bloomed foliage, drove
The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove
The citron-shadows in the blue:
By garden porches on the brim,
The costly doors flung open wide,
Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,
And broider'd sofas on each side:
   In sooth it was a goodly time,
   For it was in the golden prime
   Of good Haroun Alraschid.

[21]
Often, where clear-stemm'd platans guard
The outlet, did I turn away
The boat-head down a broad canal
From the main river sluiced, where all
The sloping of the moon-lit sward
Was damask-work, and deep inlay
Of braided blooms unmown, which crept
Adown to where the water slept.

A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won
Ridged the smooth level, bearing on
My shallop thro' the star-strown calm,
Until another night in night
I enter'd, from the clearer light,
Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,
Imprisoning sweets, which, as they clomb
Heavenward were stay'd beneath the dome
Of hollow boughs.—A goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward; and the clear canal
Is rounded to as clear a lake.
From the green rivage many a fall
Of diamond rillets musical,
Thro' little crystal arches low
Down from the central fountain's flow
Fall'n silver-chiming, seemed to shake
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.

A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.
Above thro' many a bowery turn
A walk with vary-colour'd shells
Wander'd engrain'd. On either side
All round about the fragrant marge
From fluted vase, and brazen urn
In order, eastern flowers large,
Some dropping low their crimson bells
Half-closed, and others studded wide
  With disks and tiars, fed the time
  With odour in the golden prime
    Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon grove
In closest coverture upsprung,
The living airs of middle night
Died round the bulbul as he sung;
Not he: but something which possess'd
The darkness of the world, delight,
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepress'd,
    Apart from place, withholding time,
    But flattering the golden prime
      Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grots
Slumber'd: the solemn palms were ranged
Above, unwoo'd of summer wind:
A sudden splendour from behind
Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-green,
And, flowing rapidly between
Their interspaces, counterchanged
The level lake with diamond-plots
    Of dark and bright. A lovely time,
For it was in the golden prime
      Of good Haroun Alraschid.
Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,
Grew darker from that under-flame:
So, leaping lightly from the boat,
With silver anchor left afloat,
In marvel whence that glory came
Upon me, as in sleep I sank
In cool soft turf upon the bank,
   Entranced with that place and time,
   So worthy of the golden prime
   Of good Haroun Alraschid.

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.
The fourscore windows all alight
As with the quintessence of flame,
A million tapers flaring bright
From twisted silvers look'd to shame
The hollow-vaulted dark, and stream'd
Upon the mooned domes aloof
In inmost Bagdat, till there seem'd
Hundreds of crescents on the roof
Of night new-risen, that marvellous time
To celebrate the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly
Gazed on the Persian girl alone,
Serene with argent-lidded eyes
Amorous, and lashes like to rays
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl
Tressed with redolent ebony,
In many a dark delicious curl,
Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone;
The sweetest lady of the time,
Well worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,
Pure silver, underpropt a rich
Throne of the massive ore, from which
Down-droop'd, in many a floating fold,
Engarlanded and diaper'd
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.
Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd
With merriment of kingly pride,
Sole star of all that place and time,
I saw him—in his golden prime,

The Good Haroun Alraschid.
THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

PART I.

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowering down to Camelot.

Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot;

But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?
Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
    Down to tower'd Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers 'Tis the fairy
    Lady of Shalott.'

PART II.

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
    To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
    The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
    Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
    Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
   Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
   And music, went to Camelot.
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
' I am half sick of shadows,' said
The Lady of Shalott.

PART III.

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
   Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
   Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
   As he rode down to Camelot:
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.

As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.

From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
'Tirra lirra,' by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
'The curse is come upon me,' cried
The Lady of Shalott.
PART IV.

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
    Over tower'd Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote

    The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
    Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
    The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night
    She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
    The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
    Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they crossed themselves for fear,
    All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, 'She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott.'
There lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
The swimming vapour slopes athwart the glen,
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars
The long brook falling thro' the clov'n ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus
Stands up and takes the morning: but in front
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon
Mournful Ænone, wandering forlorn
Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck
Floates her hair or seemed to float in rest.
She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
For now the noon-day quiet holds the hill:
The grasshopper is silent in the grass:
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,
Rests like a shadow, and the cicala sleeps.*
The purple flowers droop: the golden bee
Is lily-cradled: I alone awake.

* See note on this line.
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,
And I am all aweary of my life.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills, O Caves
That house the cold crown'd snake! O mountain brooks,
I am the daughter of a River-God,
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,
A cloud that gather'd shape: for it may be
That, while I speak of it, a little while
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
I waited underneath the dawning hills,
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,
And dewy dark aloft the mountain pine:
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd, white-hooved,
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Far-off the torrent call'd me from the cleft:
Far up the solitary morning smote
The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropt eyes
I sat alone: white-breasted like a star
Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard skin
Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny hair
Cluster'd about his temples like a God's:
And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow brightens
When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart
Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm
Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,
That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd
And listen'd, the full-flowing river of speech
Came down upon my heart.

"By my own Ænone,
Beautiful-brow'd Ænone, my own soul,
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingrav'n
'For the most fair,' would seem to award it thine,
As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
Of movement, and the charm of married brows."

Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,
And added "This was cast upon the board,
When all the full-faced presence of the Gods
Ranged in the halls of Peleus; whereupon
Rose feud, with question unto whom 'twere due:
But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,
Delivering, that to me, by common voice
Elected umpire, Here comes to-day,
Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each
This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave
Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,
Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods."

Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
It was the deep midnoon: one silvery cloud
Had lost his way between the piney sides
Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,
Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,
And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,  
Lotus and lilies: and a wind arose,  
And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,  
This way and that, in many a wild festoon  
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs  
With bunch and berry and flower thro' and thro'.

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,  
And o'er him flowed a golden cloud, and lean'd  
Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.  
Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom  
Coming thro' Heaven, like a light that grows  
Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods  
Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made  
Proffer of royal power, ample rule  
Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue  
Wherewith to embellish state, "from many a vale  
And river-sunder'd champaign clothed with corn,  
Or labour'd mine undrainable of ore.  
Honour," she said, "and homage, tax and toll,  
From many an inland town and haven large,  
Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing citadel  
In glassy bays among her tallest towers."

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Still she spake on and still she spake of power,  
"Which in all action is the end of all;  
Power fitted to the season; wisdom-bred  
And throned of wisdom—from all neighbour crowns  
Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand  
Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,  
From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee king-born,  
A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,  
Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power
Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd
Rest in a happy place, and quiet seats
Above the thunder, with undying bliss
In knowledge of their own supremacy."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit
Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of power
Flatter'd his spirit; but Pallas where she stood
Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
The while, above, her full and earnest eye
Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek
Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
Yet not for power (power of herself
Would come uncall'd for) but to live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear;
And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Again she said: "I woo thee not with gifts.
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,
So shalt thou find me fairest.
Yet, indeed,
If gazing on divinity disrobed
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,
Unbias'd by self-profit, oh! rest thee sure
That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,
So that my vigour, wedded to thy blood,
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,
To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks,
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow
Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown will,
Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,
Commeasure perfect freedom."

'Here she ceas'd,
And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, "O Paris,
Give it to Pallas!" but he heard me not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me!

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,
With rosy slender fingers backward drew
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
And shoulder: from the violets her light foot
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh,
Half-whisper'd in his ear, "I promise thee
The fairest and most loving wife in Greece,"
She spoke and laugh'd: I shut my sight for fear:
But when I look'd, Paris had raised his arm,
And I beheld great Herë's angry eyes,
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
And I was left alone within the bower;
And from that time to this I am alone,
And I shall be alone until I die.
'Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die. Fairest—why fairest wife? am I not fair? My love hath told me so a thousand times. Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday, When I past by, a wild and wanton pard, Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most loving is she? Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die. They came, they cut away my tallest pines, My tall dark pines, that plumed the craggy ledge High over the blue gorge, and all between The snowy peak and snow-white cataract Foster'd the callow eaglet—from beneath Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat Low in the valley. Never, never more Shall lone Ænone see the morning mist Sweep thro' them; never see them over-laid With narrow moon-lit slips of silver cloud, Between the loud stream and the trembling stars.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die. I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd folds, Among the fragments tumbled from the glens, Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her The Abominable, that uninvited came Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall, And cast the golden fruit upon the board,
And bred this change; that I might speak my mind,
And tell her to her face how much I hate
Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,
In this green valley, under this green hill,
Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this stone?
Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with tears?
O happy tears, and how unlike to these!
O happy Heaven, how canst thou see my face?
O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight?
O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,
There are enough unhappy on this earth,
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live:
I pray thee, pass before my light of life,
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.
Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,
Weigh heavy on my eyelids: let me die.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
Do shape themselves within me, more and more,
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills,
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother
Conjectures of the features of her child
Ere it is born: her child!—a shudder comes
Across me: never child be born of me,
Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes!

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me
Walking the cold and starless road of Death
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth
Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says
A fire dances before her, and a sound
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.
What this may be I know not, but I know
That, wheresoe’er I am by night and day,
All earth and air seem only burning fire.’

THE LOTOS-EATERS.

‘Courage!’ he said, and pointed toward the land,
‘This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon.’
In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seemed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon ;
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go ;
And some thro’ wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land: far off, three mountain tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush’d: and, dew’d with showery drops,
Up-climb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.
The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
In the red West: thro' mountain clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale;
A land where all things always seemed the same!
And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whose did receive of them,
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but ever-more
Most weary seemed the sea, weary the oar;
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, 'We will return no more,'
And all at once they sang, 'Our island home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam.'

Choric Song

There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tir’d eyelids upon tir’d eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro’ the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

II.

Why are we weigh’d upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber’s holy balm;
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
‘There is no joy but calm!’
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

III.

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo’d from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep’d at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweeten’d with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV.

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labour be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence; ripen, fall and cease:
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

V.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;
To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

VI.

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears: but all hath suffer'd change:
For surely now our household hearths are cold:
Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle?
Let what is broken so remain.
The Gods are hard to reconcile:
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There is confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labour unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

VII.

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
With half-dropt eyelid still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine—
To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

VIII.

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak:
The Lotos blows by every winding creek:
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone:
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotus-dust is blown.
We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curl'd
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world:
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands.
But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song.
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,

Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil;
Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis whisper'd—
down in hell

Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.

Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar;
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

'YOU ASK ME, WHY, THO' ILL AT EASE.'

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,
Within this region I subsist,
Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas.

It is 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;

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom slowly broadens down
From precedent to precedent:
OF OLD SAT FREEDOM ON THE HEIGHTS.

Where faction seldom gathers head,
    But by degrees to fullness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive thought
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute
    Opinion, and induce a time
When single thought is civil crime,
And individual freedom mute;

Tho' Power should make from land to land
    The name of Britain trebly great—
Tho' every channel of the State
Should fill and choke with golden sand—

Yet waft me from the harbour-mouth,
    Wild wind! I seek a warmer sky,
    And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.

—

'OF OLD SAT FREEDOM ON THE HEIGHTS.'

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,
    The thunders breaking at her feet:
Above her shook the starry lights:
    She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,
    Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,
But fragments of her mighty voice
    Came rolling on the wind.

Then stept she down thro' town and field
    To mingle with the human race,
And part by part to men reveal'd
    The fullness of her face—
Grave mother of majestic works,
   From her isle-altar gazing down,
Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,
   And, King-like, wears the crown:
Her open eyes desire the truth.
   The wisdom of a thousand years
Is in them. May perpetual youth
   Keep dry their light from tears;
That her fair form may stand and shine,
   Make bright our days and light our dreams,
Turning to scorn with lips divine
   The falsehood of extremes!

'LOVE THOU THY LAND, WITH LOVE FAR-BROUGHT.'

Love thou thy land, with love far-brought
   From out the storied Past, and used
Within the Present, but transfused
   Thro' future time by power of thought.
True love turn'd round on fixed poles,
   Love, that endures not sordid ends,
For English natures, freemen, friends,
   Thy brothers and immortal souls.
But pamper not a hasty time,
   Nor feed with crude imaginings
The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings
   That every sophister can lime.
Deliver not the tasks of might
To weakness, neither hide the ray
From those, not blind, who wait for day,
Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the winds;
But let her herald, Reverence, fly
Before her to whatever sky
Bear seed of men and growth of minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the years:
Cut Prejudice against the grain:
But gentle words are always gain:
Regard the weakness of thy peers:

Nor toil for title, place, or touch
Of pension, neither count on praise:
It grows to guerdon after-days:
Nor deal in watch-words overmuch:

Not clinging to some ancient saw;
Not master'd by some modern term;
Not swift nor slow to change, but firm:
And in its season bring the law;

That from Discussion's lip may fall
With Life, that, working strongly, binds—
Set in all lights by many minds,
To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,
And moist and dry, devising long,
Thro' many agents making strong,
Matures the individual form.
Meet is it changes should control
Our being, lest we rust in ease.
We all are changed by still degrees,
All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free
To ingroove itself with that which flies,
And work, a joint of state, that plies
Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying, hard to shape in act;
For all the past of Time reveals
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,
Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Ev'n now we hear with inward strife
A motion toiling in the gloom—
The Spirit of the years to come
Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits
Completion in a painful school;
Phantoms of other forms of rule,
New Majesties of mighty States—

The warders of the growing hour,
But vague in vapour, hard to mark;
And round them sea and air are dark
With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,
Is bodied forth the second whole.
Regard gradation, lest the soul
Of Discord race the rising wind;
A wind to puff your idol-fires,
    And heap their ashes on the head;
To shame the boast so often made,
That we are wiser than our sires.

Oh yet, if Nature's evil star
    Drive men in manhood, as in youth,
To follow flying steps of Truth
Across the brazen bridge of war—

If New and Old, disastrous feud,
    Must ever shock, like armed foes,
And this be true, till Time shall close,
That Principles are rain'd in blood;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease
    To hold his hope thro' shame and guilt,
But with his hand against the hilt,
Would pace the troubled land, like Peace;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,
    Would serve his kind in deed and word,
Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,
That knowledge takes the sword away—

Would love the gleams of good that broke
    From either side, nor veil his eyes:
And if some dreadful need should rise
Would strike, and firmly, and one stroke:

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,
    As we bear blossom of the dead;
Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed
Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.
THE EPIC.

At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve,—
The game of forfeits done—the girls all kiss'd
Beneath the sacred bush and past away—
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard Hall,
The host, and I sat round the wassail-bowl,
Then half-way ebb'd: and there we held a talk,
How all the old honour had from Christmas gone,
Or gone, or dwindled down to some odd games
In some odd nooks like this; till I, tired out
With cutting eights that day upon the pond,
Where, three times slipping from the outer edge,
I bump'd the ice into three several stars,
Fell in a doze; and half-awake I heard
The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,
Now harping on the church-commissioners,
Now hawking at Geology and schism;
Until I woke, and found him settled down
Upon the general decay of faith
Right thro' the world, 'at home was little left,
And none abroad: there was no anchor, none,
To hold by.' Francis, laughing, clapt his hand
On Everard's shoulder, with 'I hold by him.'
'And I,' quoth Everard, 'by the wassail-bowl.'
'Why yes,' I said, 'we knew your gift that way
At college: but another which you had,
I mean of verse (for so we held it then),
What came of that?' 'You know,' said Frank, 'he burnt
His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve books'—
And then to me demanding why? 'Oh, sir,
He thought that nothing new was said, or else
Something so said 'twas nothing—that a truth
Looks freshest in the fashion of the day:
God knows: he has a mint of reasons: ask.
It pleased me well enough. 'Nay, nay,' said Hall,
'Why take the style of those heroic times?
For nature brings not back the Mastodon,
Nor we those times; and why should any man
Remodel models? these twelve books of mine
Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-worth,
Mere chaff and draff; much better burnt.' 'But I,
Said Francis, 'pick'd the eleventh from this hearth
And have it: keep a thing, its use will come.
I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes.'
He laugh'd, and I, tho' sleepy, like a horse
That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd my ears;
For I remember'd Everard's college fame
When we were Freshmen: then at my request
He brought it; and the poet little urged,
But with some prelude of disparagement,
Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aes,
Deep-chested music, and to this result.

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MORTE D'ARTHUR.

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea;
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonesse about their Lord,
King Arthur: then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
'The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made,—
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more—but let what will be, be,
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I row'd across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king:
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known:
But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere:
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.
A little thing may harm a wounded man.
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw: but at the last it seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted waterflags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
'Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight:
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bid thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud,

'And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done?
What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumours of a doubt? but were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, "King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills."
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honour and much fame were lost.'

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:

'What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:

'I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:

'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
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.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.  
And lightly went the other to the King.  

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:  
'Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.  
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:  
'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems  
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,  
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,  
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,  
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.  
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;  
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him  
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.'

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:  
'My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.  
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,  
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear  
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,  
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes  
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere  
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,  
And would have spoken, but he found not words,  
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,  
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,  
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,  
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed  
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,  
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, 'Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him, like a goad.
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.
Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold—and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.
Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in the barge,'
And to the barge they came. There those three Queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white
And colourless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the daïs-throne—were parch'd with dust;
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shatter'd column lay the King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,
'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,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
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.'

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
'The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within Himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
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 now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest—if indeed I go—
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.'
So said he, and 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.

Here ended Hall, and our last light, that long
Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness, flared and fell:
At which the Parson, sent to sleep with sound,
And waked with silence, grunted 'Good!' but we
Sat rapt: it was the tone with which he read—
Perhaps some modern touches here and there
Redeem'd it from the charge of nothingness—
Or else we loved the man, and prized his work;
I know not: but we sitting, as I said,
The cock crew loud; as at that time of year
The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn:
Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,
‘There now—that’s nothing!’ drew a little back,
And drove his heel into the smoulder’d log,
That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue;
And so to bed; where yet in sleep I seem’d
To sail with Arthur under looming shores,
Point after point; till on to dawn, when dreams
Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,
To me, methought, who waited with a crowd,
There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore
King Arthur, like a modern gentleman
Of stateliest port; and all the people cried,
‘Arthur is come again: he cannot die.’
Then those that stood upon the hills behind
Repeated—‘Come again, and thrice as fair;’
And, further inland, voices echo’d—‘Come
With all good things, and war shall be no more.’
At this a hundred bells began to peal,
That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed
The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas-morn.

ULYSSES.

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match’d with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.
There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me—
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;
Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved 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.
ST. AGNES' EVE.

Deep on the convent-roof the snows
Are sparkling to the moon:
My breath to heaven like vapour goes:
May my soul follow soon!
The shadows of the convent-towers
Slant down the snowy sward,
Still creeping with the creeping hours
That lead me to my Lord:
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snowdrop of the year
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,
To yonder shining ground;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
To yonder argent round;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee;
So in mine earthly house I am,
To that I hope to be.

Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,
Thro' all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors;
The flashes come and go;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strows her lights below,
And deepens on and up! the gates
Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits
   To make me pure of sin,
The sabbaths of Eternity,
   One sabbath deep and wide—
A light upon the shining sea—
   The Bridegroom with his bride!

SIR GALAHAD.

My good blade carves the casques of men,
   My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
   Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
   The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,
   The horse and rider reel:
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
   And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
   That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
   On whom their favours fall!
For them I battle till the end,
   To save from shame and thrall:
But all my heart is drawn above,
   My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine:
I never felt the kiss of love,
   Nor maiden's hand in mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
   Me mightier transports move and thrill:
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
   A virgin heart in work and will.
When down the stormy crescent goes,
   A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
   I hear a noise of hymns:
Then by some secret shrine I ride;
   I hear a voice but none are there;
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
   The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
   The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
   And solemn chants resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
   I find a magic bark;
I leap on board: no helmsman steers:
   I float till all is dark.
A gentle sound, an awful light!
   Three angels bear the holy Grail:
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
   On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
   My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
   And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne
   Thro' dreaming towns I go,
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
   The streets are dumb with snow.
The tempest crackles on the leads,
   And, ringing, springs from brand and mail;
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
   And gilds the driving hail.
I leave the plain, I climb the height;
No branchy thicket shelter yields;
But blessed forms in whistling storms
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.

I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odours haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armour that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
And thro' the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony
Swells up, and shakes and falls.

Then move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
'O just and faithful knight of God!
Ride on! the prize is near.'

So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
Until I find the holy Grail.
'AS THRO' THE LAND AT EVE WE WENT.'

As thro' the land at eve we went,
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O we fell out I know not why,
And kiss'd again with tears.
And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love
And kiss again with tears!
For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O there above the little grave,
We kiss'd again with tears.

'SWEET AND LOW, SWEET AND LOW.'

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon:
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.
'THE SPLENDOUR FALLS ON CASTLE WALLS.'

The splendour falls on castle walls
   And snowy summits old in story:
   The long light shakes across the lakes,
   And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
   And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
   The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
   They faint on hill or field or river:
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
   And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

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'TEARS, IDLE TEARS, I KNOW NOT WHAT THEY MEAN.'

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
   Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.
HOME THEY BROUGHT HER WARRIOR DEAD.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken’d birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remember’d kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign’d
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.

THY VOICE IS HEARD THRO’ ROLLING DRUMS.

Thy voice is heard thro’ rolling drums,
That beat to battle where he stands;
Thy face across his fancy comes,
And gives the battle to his hands:
A moment, while the trumpets blow,
He sees his brood about thy knee;
The next, like fire he meets the foe,
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

HOME THEY BROUGHT HER WARRIOR DEAD.

Home they brought her warrior dead:
She nor swoon’d, nor utter’d cry:
All her maidens, watching, said,
‘She must weep or she will die.’
Then they praised him, soft and low,
    Call'd him worthy to be loved,
Truest friend and noblest foe;
    Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
    Lightly to the warrior stept,
Took the face-cloth from the face;
    Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
    Set his child upon her knee—
Like summer tempest came her tears—
    'Sweet my child, I live for thee.'

'ASK ME NO MORE: THE MOON MAY DRAW THE SEA.'

Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea;
    The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;
But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee?
    Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: what answer should I give?
    I love not hollow cheek or faded eye:
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;
    Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are seal'd:
    I strove against the stream and all in vain:
Let the great river take me to the main:
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;
    Ask me no more.
THE BROOK.

Here, by this brook, we parted; I to the East And he for Italy—too late—too late: One whom the strong sons of the world despise; For lucky rhymes to him were scrip and share, And mellow metres more than cent for cent; Nor could he understand how money breeds, Thought it a dead thing; yet himself could make The thing that is not as the thing that is. O had he lived! In our schoolbooks we say, Of those that held their heads above the crowd, They flourish'd then or then; but life in him Could scarce be said to flourish, only touch'd On such a time as goes before the leaf, When all the wood stands in a mist of green, And nothing perfect: yet the brook he loved, For which, in branding summers of Bengal, Or ev'n the sweet half-English Neilgherry air I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it, Prattling the primrose fancies of the boy, To me that loved him; for 'O brook,' he says, 'O babbling brook,' says Edmund in his rhyme, 'Whence come you?' and the brook, why not? replies.

I come from haunts of coot and hern, I make a sudden sally, And sparkle out among the fern, To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down, Or slip between the ridges, By twenty thorps, a little town, And half a hundred bridges.
Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

'Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite worn out,
Travelling to Naples. There is Darnley bridge,
It has more ivy; there the river; and there
Stands Philip's farm where brook and river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,
   In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
   I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
   By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
   With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

'But Philip chatter'd more than brook or bird;
Old Philip; all about the fields you caught
His weary daylong chirping, like the dry
High-elbow'd grigs that leap in summer grass.

I wind about, and in and out,
   With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
   And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
   Upon me, as I travel
With many a silvery waterbreak
   Above the golden gravel,
And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

'O darling Katie Willows, his one child!
A maiden of our century, yet most meek;
A daughter of our meadows, yet not coarse;
Straight, but as lissome as a hazel wand;
Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell
Divides threefold to show the fruit within.

'Sweet Katie, once I did her a good turn,
Her and her far-off cousin and betrothed,
James Willows, of one name and heart with her.
For here I came, twenty years back—the week
Before I parted with poor Edmund; crost
By that old bridge which, half in ruins then,
Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the gleam
Beyond it, where the waters marry—crost,
Whistling a random bar of Bonny Doon,
And push'd at Philip's garden gate. The gate,
Half-parted from a weak and scolding hinge,
Stuck; and he clamour'd from a casement, "Run."
To Katie somewhere in the walks below,
"Run, Katie!" Katie never ran: she moved
To meet me, winding under woodbine bowers,
A little flutter'd, with her eyelids down,
Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a boon.

'What was it? less of sentiment than sense
Had Katie; not illiterate; nor of those
Who dabbling in the fount of fictive tears,
And nursed by mealy-mouth'd philanthropies,
Divorce the Feeling from her mate the Deed.
'She told me. She and James had quarrell'd. Why?
What cause of quarrel? None, she said, no cause;
James had no cause: but when I prest the cause,
I learnt that James had flickering jealousies
Which anger'd her. Who anger'd James? I said.
But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once from mine,
And sketching with her slender pointed foot
Some figure like a wizard pentagram
On garden gravel, let my query pass
Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I ask'd
If James were coming. "Coming every day,"
She answer'd, "ever longing to explain,
But evermore her father came across
With some long-winded tale, and broke him short;
And James departed vex't with him and her."
How could I help her? "Would I—was it wrong?"
(Claspt hands and that petitionary grace
Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere she spoke)
"O would I take her father for one hour,
For one half-hour, and let him talk to me!"
And even while she spoke, I saw where James
Made toward us, like a wader in the surf,
Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-sweet.
'O Katie, what I suffer'd for your sake!
For in I went, and call'd old Philip out
To show the farm: full willingly he rose:
He led me thro' the short sweet-smelling lanes
Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he went.
He praised his land, his horses, his machines;
He praised his ploughs, his cows, his hogs, his dogs;
He praised his hens, his geese, his guinea-hens;
His pigeons, who in session on their roofs
Approved him, bowing at their own deserts:
Then from the plaintive mother's teat he took
Her blind and shuddering puppies, naming each, 
And naming those, his friends, for whom they were: 
Then crost the common into Darnley chase 
To show Sir Arthur's deer. In copse and fern 
Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail. 
Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech, 
He pointed out a pasturing colt, and said: 
"That was the four-year-old I sold the Squire."
And there he told a long long-winded tale 
Of how the Squire had seen the colt at grass, 
And how it was the thing his daughter wish'd, 
And how he sent the bailiff to the farm 
To learn the price, and what the price he ask'd, 
And how the bailiff swore that he was mad, 
But he stood firm; and so the matter hung; 
He gave them line: and five days after that 
He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece, 
Who then and there had offer'd something more, 
But he stood firm; and so the matter hung; 
He knew the man; the colt would fetch its price; 
He gave them line: and how by chance at last 
(It might be May or April, he forgot, 
The last of April or the first of May) 
He found the bailiff riding by the farm, 
And, talking from the point, he drew him in, 
And there he mellow'd all his heart with ale, 
Until they closed a bargain, hand in hand.

'Then, while I breathed in sight of haven, he, 
Poor fellow, could he help it? recommenced, 
And ran thro' all the coltish chronicle, 
Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy, Tallyho, 
Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the Jilt, 
Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the rest,
Till, not to die a listener, I arose,
And with me Philip, talking still; and so
We turn'd our foreheads from the falling sun,
And following our own shadows thrice as long
As when they follow'd us from Philip's door,
Arrived, and found the sun of sweet content
Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all things well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
    I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
    That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
    Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
    Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
    In brambly wildnesses:
I linger by my shingly bars;
    I loiter round my cresses;
And out again I curve and flow
    To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
    But I go on for ever.

Yes, men may come and go; and these are gone,
All gone. My dearest brother, Edmund, sleeps,
Not by the well-known stream and rustic spire,
But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome
Of Brunelleschi; sleeps in peace: and he,

Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of words
Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb:
I scraped the lichen from it: Katie walks
By the long wash of Australasian seas
Far off, and holds her head to other stars,
And breathes in converse seasons.* All are gone.'

* See note on this line.
So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a stile
In the long hedge, and rolling in his mind
Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er the brook
A tonsured head in middle age forlorn,
Mused, and was mute. On a sudden a low breath
Of tender air made tremble in the hedge
The fragile bindweed-bells and briony rings;
And he look'd up. There stood a maiden near,
Waiting to pass. In much amaze he stared
On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell
Divides threefold to show the fruit within:
Then, wondering, ask'd her 'Are you from the farm?'
'Yes' answer'd she. 'Pray stay a little: pardon me;
What do they call you?' 'Katie.' 'That were strange.
What surname?' 'Willows.' 'No!' 'That is my name.'
'Indeed!' and here he look'd so self-perplext,
That Katie laugh'd, and laughing blush'd, till he
Laugh'd also, but as one before he wakes,
Who feels a glimmering strangeness in his dream.
Then looking at her; 'Too happy, fresh and fair,
Too fresh and fair in our sad world's best bloom,
To be the ghost of one who bore your name
About these meadows, twenty years ago.'

'Have you not heard?' said Katie, 'we came back.
We bought the farm we tenanted before.
Am I so like her? so they said on board.
Sir, if you knew her in her English days,
My mother, as it seems you did, the days
That most she loves to talk of, come with me.
My brother James is in the harvest-field:
But she—you will be welcome—O, come in!'
ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

PUBLISHED IN 1852.

I.
Bury the Great Duke
   With an empire's lamentation,
Let us bury the Great Duke
   To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation,
Mourning when their leaders fall,
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

II.
Where shall we lay the man whom we deplore?
Here, in streaming London's central roar.
Let the sound of those he wrought for,
And the feet of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore.

III.
Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,
As fits an universal woe,
Let the long long procession go,
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,
And let the mournful martial music blow;
The last great Englishman is low.

IV.
Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
Remembering all his greatness in the Past.
No more in soldier fashion will he greet
With lifted hand the gazer in the street.
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute:
Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
Whole in himself, a common good.
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretence,
Great in council and great in war,
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common-sense,
And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.
O good gray head which all men knew,
O voice from which their omens all men drew,
O iron nerve to true occasion true,
O fall'n at length that tower of strength
Which stood four-square to all the winds that blew!
Such was he whom we deplore.
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
The great World-victor's victor will be seen no more.

All is over and done:
Render thanks to the Giver,
England, for thy son.
Let the bell be toll'd.
Render thanks to the Giver,
And render him to the mould.
Under the cross of gold
That shines over city and river,
There he shall rest for ever
Among the wise and the bold.
Let the bell be toll'd:
And a reverent people behold
The towering car, the sable steeds:
Bright let it be with its blazon'd deeds,
Dark in its funeral fold.
Let the bell be toll'd:
And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd;
And the sound of the sorrowing anthem roll'd
Thro' the dome of the golden cross;
And the volleying cannon thunder his loss;
He knew their voices of old.
For many a time in many a clime
His captain's-ear has heard them boom
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom:
When he with those deep voices wrought,
Guarding realms and kings from shame;
With those deep voices our dead captain taught
The tyrant, and asserts his claim
In that dread sound to the great name,
Which he has worn so pure of blame,
In praise and in dispraise the same,
A man of well-attemper'd frame.
O civic muse, to such a name,
To such a name for ages long,
To such a name,
Preserve a broad approach of fame,
And ever-ringing* avenues of song.

VI.

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?
Mighty Seaman, this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.

*See note on this line.
Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man,
The greatest sailor since our world began.
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
To thee the greatest soldier comes;
For this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea;
His foes were thine; he kept us free;
O give him welcome, this is he
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
And worthy to be laid by thee;
For this is England's greatest son,
He that gain'd a hundred fights,
Nor ever lost an English gun;
This is he that far away
Against the myriads of Assaye
Clash'd with his fiery few and won;
And underneath another sun,
Warring on a later day,
Round affrighted Lisbon drew
The treble works, the vast designs
Of his labour'd rampart-lines,
Where he greatly stood at bay,
Whence he issued forth anew,
And ever great and greater grew
Beating from the wasted vines
Back to France her banded swarms,
Back to France with countless blows,
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
Follow'd up in valley and glen
With glare of bugle, clamour of men,
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
And England pouring on her foes.
Such a war had such a close.
Again their ravening eagle rose
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing wings,
And barking for the thrones of kings;
Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown
On that loud sabbath shook the spoiler down;
A day of onsets of despair!
Dash'd on every rocky square
Their surging charges foam'd themselves away;
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;
Thro' the long-tormented air
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,
And down we swept and charged and overthrew.
So great a soldier taught us there,
What long-enduring hearts could do
In that world-earthquake, Waterloo!
Mighty Seaman, tender and true,
And pure as he from taint of craven guile,
O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
If aught of things that here befall
Touch a spirit among things divine,
If love of country move thee there at all,
Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine!
And thro' the centuries let a people's voice
In full acclaim,
A people's voice,
The proof and echo of all human fame,
A people's voice, when they rejoice
At civic revel and pomp and game,
Attest their great commander's claim
With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,
Eternal honour to his name.
ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.  85

VII.

A people's voice! we are a people yet.
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams forget,
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless powers;
Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set
His Saxon* in blown seas and storming showers,
We have a voice, with which to pay the debt
Of boundless love and reverence and regret
To those great men who fought, and kept it ours.
And keep it ours, O God, from brute control;
O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the soul
Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,
And save the one true seed of freedom sown
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,
That sober freedom out of which there springs
Our loyal passion for our temperate kings;
For, saving that, ye help to save mankind
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,
And drill the raw world for the march of mind,
Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be just.

But wink no more in slothful overtrust.
Remember him who led your hosts;
He bad you guard the sacred coasts.
Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall;
His voice is silent in your council-hall
For ever; and whatever tempests lour
For ever silent; even if they broke
In thunder, silent; yet remember all
He spoke among you, and the Man who spoke;
Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,
Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power;
Who let the turbid streams of rumour flow
Thro' either babbling world of high and low;

*See note on this line.
Whose life was work, whose language rife
With rugged maxims hewn from life;
Who never spoke against a foe;
Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke
All great self-seekers trampling on the right:
Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named;
Truth-lover was our English Duke;
Whatever record leap to light
He never shall be shamed.

VIII.

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,
He, on whom from both her open hands
Lavish Honour shower'd all her stars,
And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.
Yea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great,
But as he saves or serves the state.
Not once or twice in our rough island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory:
He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey closes,
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
Into glossy purples, which outredden
All voluptuous garden-roses.
Not once or twice in our fair island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory:
He, that ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won
His path upward, and prevail'd,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.
Such was he: his work is done.
But while the races of mankind endure,
Let his great example stand
Colossal, seen of every land,
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure:
Till in all lands and thro' all human story
The path of duty be the way to glory:
And let the land whose hearths he saved from shame
For many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illumined cities flame,
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,
Eternal honour to his name.

IX.

Peace, his triumph will be sung
By some yet unmoulded tongue
Far on in summers that we shall not see:
Peace, it is a day of pain
For one about whose patriarchal knee
Late the little children clung:
O peace, it is a day of pain
For one, upon whose hand and heart and brain
Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.
Ours the pain, be his the gain!
More than is of man's degree
Must be with us, watching here
At this, our great solemnity.
Whom we see not we revere;
We revere, and we refrain
From talk of battles loud and vain,
And brawling memories all too free
For such a wise humility
As befits a solemn fane:
We revere, and while we hear
The tides of Music's golden sea
Setting toward eternity,
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,
Until we doubt not that for one so true
There must be other nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo,
And Victor he must ever be.
For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill
And break the shore, and evermore
Make and break, and work their will;
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads roll
Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul?
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;
He is gone who seem'd so great,—
Gone; but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own.
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in State,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave him.
Speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him,
God accept him, Christ receive him.
THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE.

I.

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
'Forward, the Light Brigade!' he said:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

II.

'Forward, the Light Brigade!'
Was there a man dismay'd?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd:
Their's not to make reply,
Their's not to reason why,
Their's but to do and die:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

III.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.
IV.
Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wonder'd:
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
Shatter'd and sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not,
Not the six hundred.

V.
Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

VI.
When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!
All the world wonder'd.
Honour the charge they made!
Honour the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred!
'BREAK, BREAK, BREAK.'

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman’s boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish’d hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.
NOTES ON TENNYSON.

Alfred Tennyson was the third son of the Rev. George Clayton Tennyson, rector of Somersby, a small village in Lincolnshire not far from the sea-coast. Though in the neighbourhood of the fen country, Somersby itself lies "in a pretty pastoral district of sloping hills and large ash trees." "To the north rises the long peak of the wold, with its steep white road that climbs the hill above Thetford; to the south, the land slopes gently to a small deep-channelled brook, which rises not far from Somersby and flows just below the parsonage garden." The scenery of his native village and its neighbourhood, where he spent his youth and early manhood,—the scenery of wold, and fen, and sandy coast—made a deep impress on the poet's mind, and is reflected again and again in his earlier writings. In the parsonage of Somersby, which was then the only considerable house in the little hamlet, Alfred was born August 6th, 1809. His father was a man of ability, with intellectual and artistic interests; books were at hand, and the three elder boys not only became great readers, but from childhood were accustomed to write original verses. The life of the Tennysons was a somewhat secluded one; Alfred was naturally shy, with a bent towards solitary and imaginative pursuits. These tendencies may have been fostered by the character of his early education. He was not sent to a great public school, like most English boys of his class, but attended the village school at Somersby, then the grammar school at the neighbouring town of Louth, and was finally prepared for entering college by home tuition. Already before he had become an undergraduate, he was an author, having, along with his elder brother Charles, written a volume entitled Poems by Two Brothers, which was published at Louth in 1827 by a local bookseller. The work is creditable to such youthful poets (the poems contributed by Alfred were composed between his fifteenth and his seventeenth year), but more remarkable for the absence of marked immaturity than for the presence of positive merits. The breadth of the authors' reading is attested by quotations prefixed to the various pieces: Cicero, Ovid, Virgil, Terence, Lucretius, Sallust, Tacitus, Byron, Cowper, Gray, Hume, Moore, Scott, Beattie and Addison being all put under contribution.

In 1828 Charles and Alfred entered Trinity College, Cambridge, where the eldest brother, Frederick, was already a student. There the Tenny-
sons were associated with some of the most brilliant and promising of their contemporaries. Alfred formed an especially warm friendship with Arthur Henry Hallam, a young man of extraordinary endowments, whose premature death he subsequently commemorated in *In Memoriam*. In 1829 Tennyson won the Chancellor's prize for English verse by a poem on "Timbuctoo," where for the first time in his work, there is some promise of future excellence, and some faint touches of his later style. Next year his poetic career may be said really to have begun with a small volume entitled *Poems Chiefly Lyrical*, which in such poems as *Claribel, The Dying Swan, Mariana, and The Poet*, clearly exhibits some of his characteristic qualities. The volume was favourably reviewed by Leigh Hunt and Hallam, but severely criticized by "Christopher North" in *Blackwood*. In the same year the author embarked on a very different undertaking, going with Hallam to Spain in order to carry, to the revolutionists there, money and letters from English sympathizers. In 1831 his college career was brought to a close by the death of his father, and he returned to Somersby. Here he completed a second volume of poems, published in 1832. This marks another advance in poetic art, and contains some of his most characteristic pieces: *The Lady of Shalott, Oenone, The Palace of Art, The Miller's Daughter, The Lotos-Eaters, The Two Voices*. It should be remembered, however, that several of these do not now appear in their original form, and that much of their perfection is due to revisions later than 1832. This volume, as well as its predecessor, was severely criticized, especially by the *Quarterly*. But although in this article justice was not done to the merits of the volume, the strictures upon defects were in the main well grounded, as the poet himself tacitly acknowledged by omitting or amending in subsequent editions the objectionable passages. Another result of the hostility of the critics was that Tennyson, who was always morbidly sensitive to criticism even from the most friendly source, ceased publishing for almost ten years, except that verses from his pen occasionally appeared in the pages of Literary Annuals. This ten-years silence is characteristic of the man, of his self-restraint and power of patient application—potent factors in the ultimate perfection of his work.

The sudden death of his friend Hallam, in September 1833, plunged Tennyson for a time in profound sorrow, but was doubtless effective in maturing and deepening his emotional and intellectual life. The poet's sister had been betrothed to Hallam; over the household at Somersby, of which Alfred, in the absence of his elder brothers,
was now the head, there gathered a deep gloom. The feelings and ideas which centred about this great sorrow of his youthful days, the poet soon began to embody in short lyrics; these through successive years grew in number and variety, and finally took shape in what by many is considered Tennyson's greatest work, *In Memoriam*.

It was in 1836, when Charles Tennyson was married to Louisa Sellwood, that in all probability Alfred fell in love with the bride's sister, to whom, in course of time he became engaged. The small fortune which he had inherited was insufficient to provide a maintenance for a married pair; poetry, to which he had devoted his life, seemed unlikely ever to yield him a sufficient income. Yet, characteristically enough, Tennyson neither attempted to find a more lucrative profession, nor even departed from his resolve to refrain from again seeking public notice until his genius and his work had become fully matured. In consequence, the friends of his betrothed put an end to the correspondence of the lovers; and a long period of trial began for the poet, when his prospects in love, in worldly fortune, in poetic success, seemed almost hopelessly overcast. In 1837 the family removed from Somersby to High Beech in Epping Forest, then to Tunbridge Wells, and then to the neighbourhood of Maidstone. The change of residence brought Tennyson into closer proximity with the capital, and henceforward, he frequently resorted thither to visit old friends like Spedding, and gradually became personally known in the literary circles of London. Among other notable men he met with Carlyle, found pleasure in the company of this uncouth genius and his clever wife, and, in turn, was regarded with unusual favour by a keen-eyed and censorious pair of critics. Tennyson was one of the very few distinguished men whose personality impressed Carlyle favourably. The account which the latter gives of Tennyson in a letter to Emerson, dated August 1844, is worth quoting at length:—

"Moxon informs me that Tennyson is now in Town, and means to come and see me. Of this latter result I shall be very glad. Alfred is one of the few British and Foreign Figures (a not increasing number, I think!) who are and remain beautiful to me—a true human soul, or some authentic approximation thereto, to whom your own soul can say, Brother! However, I doubt he will not come; he often skips me in these brief visits to Town; skips everybody, indeed; being a man solitary and sad, as certain men are, dwelling in an element of gloom,—carrying a bit of chaos about him, in short, which he is manufacturing into Cosmos. Alfred is the son of a Lincolnshire Gentleman Farmer, I think; indeed you see in his verses that he is a native of 'moated granzes,' and green flat pastures, not of mountains and their torrents and storms. He had his breeding at Cambridge, as for the Law or Church; being master of a small annuity on his Father's decease, he preferred clubbing with his Mother and some
Sisters, to live unpromoted and write poems. In this way he lives still, 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. I think he must be under forty—not much under it. One of the finest-looking men in the world. A great shock of rough, dusty-dark hair; bright, laughing, hazel eyes; massive aquiline face, most massive yet most delicate; of sallow-brown complexion, almost Indian-looking; clothes cynically loose, free-and-easy; smokes infinite tobacco. His voice is musical metallic—fit for loud laughter and piercing wail, and all that may lie between; speech and speculation free and plenteous: I do not meet, in these late decades, such company over a pipe! We shall see what he will grow to. He is often unwell; very chaotic—his way is through Chaos and the Bottomless and Pathless; not handy for making out many miles upon."

Meanwhile, in 1842, two years before this letter was written, Tennyson gave conclusive evidence of the power that was in him, by the publication of two volumes containing, in the first place, a selection from the poems of 1830 and of 1832, and, secondly, a large number of new pieces. Among the latter are Morte d'Arthur, Ulysses, The Gardener's Daughter, The Talking Oak, Locksley Hall, Dora, St. Simeon Stylites, St. Agnes' Eve, "Break, break, break," and the three poems "You ask me why," "Of old sat Freedom," "Love thou thy land." Such pieces as these represent the mature art of their author, and some of them he never surpassed. It was about the time of the publication of these volumes that the fortunes of their author reached their lowest point. The failure of a manufacturing scheme in which he had invested all his means left him penniless. "Then followed," says his son and biographer, "a season of real hardship, and many trials for my father and mother, since marriage seemed to be further off than ever. So severe a hypochondria set in upon him that his friends despaired of his life. 'I have,' he writes, 'drunk one of those most bitter draughts out of the cup of life, which go near to make men hate the world they live in.'" But, at length, the fates became propitious. In the first place the excellence of the collected poems of 1842 rapidly won general recognition; during his ten years of silence Tennyson's reputation had been steadily growing, the two volumes of 1842 set it upon a firm basis. From that day to this, he has held the first place in general estimation among contemporary poets. In 1845 Wordsworth pronounced him "decidedly the first of our living poets"; in the same year the fourth edition of the Poems of 1842 was called for, and the publisher, Moxon, said that Tennyson was the only poet by the publication of whose works he had not been a loser. Further, in 1845, the prime minister, Sir Robert Peel, through the intervention of Tennyson's old college friend Milnes (Lord Houghton), conferred upon him a pension of £200
a year. This was a timely relief to pecuniary difficulties which were at this date very embarrassing. *The Princess*, his first long work, was published in 1847. Through a fanciful story of a Princess who founds a university for women, it gave a poetical presentation and solution of the ‘woman question’; but rather disappointed, at the time, the high expectations excited by the earlier writings. On the other hand, *In Memoriam*, which appeared in 1850, has from the beginning been considered one of the finest products of his genius. It consists of a series of lyrics giving utterance to various moods and thoughts to which the great sorrow of his youth had given birth. These had been carefully elaborated during a long period, are extraordinarily finished in their expression and are fuller of substance than any other of the more ambitious works of their author. No other poem so adequately represents the current thought and average attitude of Tennyson’s generation in regard to many of the great problems of the time. In the year of the publication of *In Memoriam*, the laureateship, rendered vacant by the death of Wordsworth, was bestowed upon its author. In the same year his marriage with Emily Sellwood took place. They had been separated from one another for ten years; Tennyson’s age was forty-one, the bride’s thirty-seven. But their fidelity was rewarded. “The peace of God,” Tennyson said, “came into my life before the altar when I married her”; and indeed the remainder of the poet’s long life, apart from the death in the first years of manhood of his second son, is a record of happiness and success such as does not fall to the lot of many men.

After a tour in Italy the Tennysons in 1853 took up their residence at Farringford, in the Isle of Wight, which was henceforth their home, and the poet entered upon a period of sure and increasing popularity and growing worldly prosperity. He never relaxed, however, even in advanced old age, his strenuous poetic industry; hence a long series of works of a high order of merit, of which we will mention only the more important. In 1855, *Maud*, a lyrical monodrama, was published, about which critical opinion was then and still remains greatly divided, though the poet himself regarded it with special favour. In 1857, Bayard Taylor visited Tennyson at his home and records his impressions: “He is tall and broad-shouldered as a son of Anak, with hair, beard, and eyes of Southern darkness. Something in the lofty brow and aquiline nose suggests Dante, but such a deep, mellow chest-voice never could have come from Italian lungs. He proposed a walk, as the day was wonderfully clear and beautiful. We climbed the steep comb
of the chalk cliff, and slowly wandered westward until we reached the Needles, at the extremity of the Island, and some three or four miles distant from his residence. 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, were perfectly familiar to him. I thought of a remark that I had once heard from the lips of a distinguished English author [Thackeray] that Tennyson was the wisest man he knew."

Tennyson, as such poems as The Lady of Shalott and Morte d'Arthur show, had been early attracted by the legendary tales of King Arthur, which to several poets had seemed a rich storehouse of poetical material. About the year 1857 he began to occupy himself specially with these legends; and from this time on until the middle seventies his chief energy was given to the composition of a series of poems from these sources, which were ultimately arranged to form a composite whole, entitled the Idylls of the King. These poems proved very acceptable to the general taste, and the poet began to reap a fortune from the sale of his works. Of the volume published in 1862, entitled Enoch Arden, which mainly consisted of English Idyls, sixty thousand copies were rapidly sold. This, perhaps, marks the height of his popularity.

In 1875 he entered on a new field with the publication of an historical drama, Queen Mary, followed in 1876 by a similar work, Harold, and by other dramatic pieces in later years. In the drama Tennyson was less successful than in any other department which he attempted, and this lack of success gave rise to a widespread feeling that his powers were now in decline. Such a conclusion was most decisively negativd by the appearance of Ballads and Other Poems in 1880, where he returned to less ambitious and lengthy but more congenial forms—a collection which Mr. Theodore Watts terms "the most richly various volume of English verse that has appeared in [Tennyson's] century." At intervals until the very close of his long life, he produced similar miscellaneous collections of poems: Tiresias and Other Poems, 1885, Demeter and Other Poems,* 1889, The Death of Oenone and Other Poems, 1892. Some of the pieces contained in these miscellanies were doubtless the gleanings of earlier years; but in others there were qualities which clearly showed them to be the

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* Twenty thousand copies of this book were sold within a week.
products of a new epoch in a genius that went on changing and developing even in advanced old age. In the most characteristic pieces, *The Revenge, The Relief of Lucknow, Rizpah, Vastness,* etc., there is a vigour and dramatic force absent in his earlier work, with less of that minute finish and elaborate perfection of phrase which is so often his chief merit. On the other hand, in *Freedom, To Virgil,* and *Crossing the Bar,* we have poems in the more familiar Tennysonian style, not a whit inferior to similar compositions in the volumes of his prime. In 1884 Tennyson was raised to the peerage as Baron of Aldworth and Farringford. The first part of his title was derived from a second residence which he had built for himself in Surrey, choosing a very retired situation in order that he might escape the idle curiosity of tourists. In 1886, the second great sorrow of his life befell Tennyson; his younger son, Lionel, died on the return voyage from India, where he had contracted a fever.

To Tennyson’s continued mental vigour in advanced old age, his works bear testimony; his bodily strength was also little abated. “At eighty-two,” his son reports, “my father preserved the high spirits of youth. He would defy his friends to get up twenty times quickly from a low chair without touching it with their hands while he was performing this feat himself, and one afternoon he had a long waltz with M—— in the ball room.” This vigour was maintained almost to the very close of his long life. It was the sixth of October, 1892, when the great poet breathed his last. “Nothing could have been more striking than the scene during the last few hours,” writes his medical attendant. “On the bed a figure of breathing marble, flooded and bathed in the light of the full moon streaming through the oriel window; his hand clasping the Shakespeare which he had asked for but recently, and which he had kept by him to the end; the moonlight, the majestic figure as he lay there, ‘drawing thicker breath,’ irresistibly brought to our minds his own ‘Passing of Arthur.’” “Some friends and servants came to see him. He looked very grand and peaceful with the deep furrows of thought almost smoothed away, and the old clergyman of Lurgashall stood by the bed with his hands raised, and said, ‘Lord Tennyson, God has taken you, who made you a prince of men. Farewell!’”

Some personal peculiarities may be added. Although so accurate an observer of nature, Tennyson was very short-sighted. He was subject to fits of intense abstraction similar to those recorded of Socrates. He said to Mr. Knowles: “Sometimes as I sit here alone in this great
room I get carried away out of sense and body, and rapt into mere existence, till the accidental touch or movement of one of my own fingers is like a great shock and blow and brings the body back with a terrible start." *

He was accustomed to compose single lines or isolated passages, and to note down images and natural details which he preserved and would subsequently incorporate in his poems. At page 465 of the first volume of the Life, his biographer gives a number of these which had been gathered during various tours, *e.g.*, 

"As those that lie on happy shores and see
Thro' the near blossom slip the distant sail."

"Ledges of battling water."

"A cow drinking from a trough on the hill-side. The netted beams of light played on the wrinkles of her throat."

"His reading was always in a grand, deep, measured voice, and was rather intoning in a few notes than speaking. It was like a sort of musical thunder, far off or near—loud rolling or 'sweet and low'—according to the subject, and once heard could never be forgotten" (Knowles). Miss Thackeray (Mrs. Ritchie) confirms this, describing it as "a sort of mystical incantation, a chant in which every note rises and falls and reverberates again." But some who heard him complain that his reading was so inarticulate as to be scarcely intelligible.

"His acquaintance with all previous poetry was unlimited and his memory amazing" (Knowles).

Mrs. Oliphant, in her Autobiography, giving an account of a visit, says: "I have always thought that Tennyson's appearance was too emphatically that of a poet, especially in his photographs: the fine frenzy, the carelesspicturesqueness were almost too much. He looked the part too well: but in reality there was a roughness and acrid gloom about the man which saved him from his over-romantic appearance. . . . The conversation turned somehow upon his little play of 'The Falcon.' . . . I said something about its beauty, and that I thought it just the kind of entertainment which a gracious prince might offer to his guests; and he replied with a sort of indignant sense of grievance, 'And they tell me people won't go to see it.'"

His ideas in regard to 'the great problems' seem to have varied from time to time. The Rev. Doctor Gatty records: "Many years ago I

* Compare In Memoriam, xcv, and the trances of the Prince in The Princess. In reference to the former passage he said: "I've often a strange feeling of being wound and wrapped in the Great Soul."
had a conversation with the poet in his attic study at Farringford, that lasted till nearly day-break. He discoursed on many subjects, and when we touched on religion, he said, 'I am not very fond of creeds: it is enough for me to know that God Himself came down from heaven in the form of man.'" * "This is a terrible age of unfaith," he would say. "I hate utter unfaith, I cannot endure that men should sacrifice everything at the cold altar of what with their imperfect knowledge they choose to call truth and reason. One can easily lose all belief, through giving up the continual thought and care for spiritual things." He was always greatly interested in the question of a future life and clung passionately to the belief in a personal immortality. "Yes, it is true," he said in January, 1869, "that there are moments when the flesh is nothing to me, when I feel and know the flesh to be the vision, God and the spiritual the only real and true. Depend upon it, the Spiritual is the real: it belongs to me more than the hand and the foot." Mr. Knowles reports that, in conversation with him, Tennyson formulated his creed thus: "There's a Something that watches over us; and our individuality endures: that's my faith, and that's all my faith." "My greatest wish," he once said, "is to have a clearer vision of God."

General Characteristics.

Tennyson's Success.—Tennyson's poetic career was an unusually long one, extending as it did over more than sixty years, and during all that time there was no marked decadence of power such as has been so often manifest in the later work of imaginative writers. Very early in that career he was successful in winning the highest position in popular estimation, and may be said to have maintained it steadily until the end. The partial eclipse of his fame during the seventies was due rather to his employing his powers in the un congenial sphere of the drama, than to any actual decay of force. It must be further noted that Tennyson's work was not merely esteemed, it was read—and that not by a clique of admirers merely, or by a select number of cultivated people, or by the uncritical public alone; it was widely read and really enjoyed by all classes that are at all interested in poetry. Like Pope he was speedily and generally accepted as adequately voicing the thoughts and feelings of his contemporaries. Such success always

*Compare the prologue to In Memoriam.
implies some specially happy adaptation of the genius of the writer to the conditions of his era,—an adaptation which spares him from the conflict and dissipation of force arising from attempts to embody themes and to adopt methods to which the age is little favourable; the inborn aptitudes of such a poet must be in harmony with existing tendencies and the tastes of his contemporaries.

Poetic conditions in his time.—Tennyson himself indicates the prime conditions, positive and negative, to which the successful poet of his own time had to accommodate himself. "I soon found," he once said in conversation with his friend, Mr. James Knowles, "that if I meant to make any mark at all it must be by shortness, for all the men before me had been so diffuse and all the big things had been done. To get the workmanship as nearly perfect as possible is the best chance for going down the stream of time. A small vessel on fine lines is likely to float further than a great raft."*

Tennyson here emphasizes two points, (1) the very obvious fact that he is a late poet, and (2), in consequence of that fact, that he could hope to excel only by perfection in detail and finish in technique. He is not merely a late poet in the midst of a vast accumulation of the work of predecessors in his own and other languages; the natural effect of such lateness is intensified by the fact that he comes at the close of one of those eras of marked fertility which are conspicuous at intervals in the history of poetic literature, and are separated by other eras of comparative barrenness and mediocrity. The great movement which had its beginning in the latter half of the eighteenth century, and reached its brilliant culmination in the work of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Scott, Byron, Shelley and Keats, was, when Tennyson reached maturity (as is abundantly clear to us now), passing into its latest phase. He is a poet, if not of the decline, at least of the close, when the first enthusiasm has spent itself, when the new fields have been traversed, when the new forms have lost their novelty. Such a writer is under serious disadvantages; the most obvious or suitable themes have been treated, the early freshness has vanished. But first enthusiasm, new methods, and new themes are not favourable to perfection in detail. That comes from experience, from calm judgment, and laborious care. And here the later poet has advantages which the earlier does not enjoy. Greatness of conception may be supposed to be dependent on the individual mind, but the history of all arts shows that supreme technical skill can

* See the interesting article entitled Aspects of Tennyson in Nineteenth Century for January, 1893.
only be attained through the experiments, successes, and failures of generations of artists; primitive art is always awkward, new attempts inevitably suffer under defects of form. The opportunity for the poet in Tennyson's day, as he himself thought, lay in technique, in finish, in detail; and his own endowments and circumstances were such as to fit him for success in these respects. The conditions of his personal life were favourable to culture. Beyond preceding eras, the Nineteenth Century possessed the historic sense, rendered accessible, and was capable of appreciating, the literary stores of the past. Tennyson himself was endowed with openness of mind, catholic tastes, great powers of assimilation, and scholarly aptitudes. He became early familiar with the best that had been done; he was well read not only in his mother tongue, but in Greek, Latin and Italian literatures. If, then, he felt (as he himself confesses) hampered by the existence of all this splendid poetry of his predecessors, he at least succeeded in making the best of the circumstance,—studied their art, borrowed multitudinous hints, phrases, images from their works. So the reader of his works is struck by his eclecticism, the power of learning from writers of diverse genius, ages, and nations, and of welding varied materials into new and perfect wholes. Especially do we note this breadth and catholicity of Tennyson's genius, when we compare his work with that of his immediate forerunners, Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley and Scott, each somewhat narrow in his poetic tastes, and excelling within a somewhat limited province. Tennyson profits by the example of writers as different as Wordsworth and Keats; he attempts varied subjects and different manners: classic, romantic, domestic themes; the simple and the ornate style; lyric, dramatic, narrative poetry; song, monologue, idyll. His success is, upon the whole, extraordinary; and this versatility makes it difficult to characterize his work in general terms. At the same time, it is abundantly manifest that only certain of these attempts are wholly congenial to his mind and manner, that others, however excellent, are tours de force—the results of great general poetic power patiently and judiciously employed in using what he has learnt from others.

Perfection of his work in detail.—To this breadth of taste and of reading, this power of profiting by example, Tennyson added a natural aptitude for detail, for careful and finished work. His poetic character is here in harmony with the general tendency of his age, especially manifest in the minuteness and accuracy of modern science. The same spirit is present in his delineations of nature, which surpass those of
earlier poets in the minuteness and accuracy of the features noted. His earliest publications seem to show that what impelled him to poetry was not the need of embodying some pressing thought or feeling, but the delight in heaping together beautiful details, the pleasure in musical phrases, exquisite imagery, in the skill of the artist. Whatever charm exists in such characteristic poems as Claribel, or the Recollections of the Arabian Nights, lies in the details; the meaning and purport of the whole is vague. Tennyson's earliest efforts are marked by paucity of thought, absence of intense feeling, but by exuberant richness of expression. This richness was, at the beginning, excessive and unformed; but presently the poet showed that he had unusual capacity for laborious revision and self-criticism. He rapidly developed critical judgment and self-restraint. He could learn even from the galling article in The Quarterly for 1833.* We hear of the endless pains with which he polished line after line before publication; and, even after that, the successive texts of many passages† exhibit emendations extraordinarily numerous, minute, and effective. One is particularly surprised by the extent to which in many cases the final beauty and power of a passage are the creation of these changes, and are absent from the original text.

Even the limitations of Tennyson's genius helped him to excel in his own particular sphere. He lacked the impetuous temperament which we are wont to associate with the highest poetic endowment, ardour which springs from intense feeling or the consciousness of abundant material pressing for utterance, or of great thoughts to be revealed. There are, indeed, two kinds of artistic workers. Some are so dominated by the feeling, or thought, that it seems to take form without the conscious intervention of the artist himself. Or, at least, his thoughts and feelings are primarily busied with the whole conception—the mood, character, situation, or whatever else it may be—and all details are suggested from, and considered in relation to, this central idea. In others, there is no such dominating inspiration; the primary interest is in the beauty of detail; the whole is of secondary interest sought out as a centre and support for the parts. To Wordsworth, his own message seemed of such weight, that its form must have always had but a second place; the emotional temperament of Shelley would not permit

*See Dixon's Primer of Tennyson, pp. 40, fol. "Some of the pieces which drew forth [the reviewer's] sarcastic comments were omitted from future editions, and almost all were altered or re-written in respect of the censured passages."

†In The Lady of Shalott, Oenone, The Lotos-Eaters, striking examples are to be
him coldly to reshape what had been moulded in the white heat of inspiration. These two poets belong to the first-mentioned kind. But if the relative importance of the impressions made upon the reader by successive passages and by the whole outcome, be a criterion, Tennyson, unlike them, is an artist of the other class. Of this there is a quaint illustration in a letter* of his friend Spedding, written shortly before the composition of *Enoch Arden:* "Alfred," he says, "wants a story to treat, being full of poetry with nothing to put it in." We get a hint of this tendency to work up details, apart from the theme which they were to unfold, in the poet's letter to Mr. S. E. Dawson prefixed to the latter's edition of *The Princess:* "There was a period in my life," writes Tennyson, "when, as an artist—Turner, for instance,—takes rough sketches of landscape, 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." We note, too, how he uses over again, in new connections, lines and phrases employed in pieces which he suppressed.

**Metrical and musical effects.**—The most universal and characteristic quality of Tennyson's work, then, is its perfection in detail—its finished technique, the beauty which pertains to each line and phrase. We may next inquire by what devices he attains this beauty of detail, and in what special peculiarities of technique does this mastery exhibit itself. If we turn for a clue to his earlier poems, where his natural bent is most likely to exhibit itself clearly, the first quality which gives them distinction is the subtle adaptation of sound to sense,—the attempt, by varying of lines and stanzas, by the adjustment of verse pauses, of metrical feet, of vowel and consonantal sounds, to reflect and suggest the meaning and emotional accompaniments of the thought expressed. The poet, in fact, seeks to approximate through the articulate sounds of verse to the effects produced by music. The poem to which he gave the first place in the volume of 1830, significantly entitled "Claribel, a Melody," exhibits this musical quality almost to the exclusion of any other; and the prevalence of this quality throughout the volume is the most novel and striking characteristic of the new poet's work. An attempt of this kind naturally leads to the taking of great liberties with the regular norm of verse in order to attain suitably varied effects; hence one is struck by the apparent capriciousness of lines and stanzas; and Coleridge was led to say after examining these pieces that the author "had begun to write poetry without

*Quoted in Dixon's *Primer*, p. 107.
very well understanding what metre was.” In time, however, Tennyson learned to combine musical with properly metrical effects, and such a piece as The Lotus-Eaters is an example of his triumphant success. But everywhere in his poetry, this imitative rhythm is present, most effective, perhaps, when least obtrusive—when it is felt, but is scarcely capable of being exactly indicated and analysed. The influence of this tendency on his blank verse is to give it great variety, and to produce a large number of lines in which wide departures are made from the regular metrical norm. For example, in the following cases there is a multiplication of unaccented syllables:

Myriads of rivulets hurrying through the lawn.  
—The Princess.

Of some precipitous rivulet to the sea.  
—Gareth and Lynette.

Melody on branch and melody in mid air.  
—Ibid.

I saw the flaring atom-streams
Ruining along the illimitable inane.  
—Lucretius.

Again, by the arrangement of the main pauses, a sudden break is made in the flow of the verse in keeping with the meaning conveyed:

his arms
Clash’d; and the sound was good to Gareth's ear.  
—Gareth and Lynette.

Fall, as the crest of some slow-arching wave
Drops flat.  
—The Last Tournament.

made his horse
Caracole; then bow’d his homage, bluntly saying, etc.  
—Ibid.

Flash’d, started, met him at the door, and these, etc.  
—Ibid.

These are two of the commonest devices of this character, but a little careful examination will reveal a great many of a more subtle or composite kind, for example:

Down the long stairs, hesitating.  
—Lancelot and Elaine.

So strode he back slow to the wounded king.  
—Morte d'Arthur.

To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.  
—Ulysses.

The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices.  
—Ibid.
Again, we are often conscious of a subtle appropriateness in the choice of the vowel or consonantal sounds:

The moan of doves in immemorial elms
And munnurinff of innumerable bees.

—The Princess.

The long low dune and lazy-plunging sea.

—The Last Tournament.

Shocks, and the splintering spear, the hard mail hewn,
Shield breakings, and the clash of brands, the crash, etc.

—The Passing of Arthur.

The league-long roller thundering on the reef.

—Enoch Arden.*

Kindred but broader effects are produced by the poet’s happy selection and management of stanza-forms, of which his works afford a great variety. Compare, for example, the four-line stanzas of In Memoriam, of the song in The Brook, of The Palace of Art, and note how each one admirably suits the theme for which it is employed. Many different elements are combined in the appropriate and subtly varied music of the following exquisite lines:—

I.

O that ’twere possible
After long grief and pain
To find the arms of my true love
Round me once again!

II.

When I was wont to meet her
In the silent woody places
By the home that gave me birth,
We stood tranced in long embraces
Mixt with kisses sweeter sweeter
Than anything on earth.

*Also contrast the vowel effects in

On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full

with

And fling him far into the middle mere:
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.

For further examples, see the Introduction to the Tennyson volumes in English Classics edited by Mr. Rowe.
III.

A shadow flits before me,
Not thou, but like to thee:
Ah Christ, that it were possible
For one short hour to see
The souls we loved, that they might tell us
What and where they be.
Etc. —Maud, Pt. ii.

Pictorial details used to suggest a thought, feeling, or situation.—In the last paragraph attention has been drawn to the way in which the poet, through sound and metrical effects, indirectly suggests and instils the fitting tone of mind and feeling. Another peculiarity of his technique, conspicuous in his earliest volumes and pervading all his work, is a similar indirect method of suggesting or presenting a situation through the details of landscape and other material surroundings. The genius of Tennyson is eminently pictorial; he delights and excels in pictures of external objects; The Recollections of the Arabian Nights is nothing but a series of these, and the whole of the volume which contained this poem, bore evidence of this tendency. Such a preference does the poet’s genius have for these picturesque effects that, instead of directly describing some inner condition of mind or feeling, or in addition to directly describing it, he reflects it through the external surroundings. For example, he wishes us to understand and feel the desolation and loneliness of Mariana in the poem so named; yet he does not describe the mood directly. The whole poem is a picture of the moated grange and its surroundings, from which he selects every sight and sound that may suggest loneliness and long neglect. “There is not, throughout the poem, a single epithet which belongs to the objects irrespective of the story with which the scene is associated, or a single detail introduced which does not aid the general expression of the poem. They mark either the pain with which Mariana looks at things, or the long neglect to which she has been abandoned, or some peculiarity of time and place which marks the morbid minuteness of her attention to objects.” * The landscape of The Lotos-Eaters affords a masterly illustration of the same artifice. In The Lady of Shalott the scene changes to harmonize with the situation of the heroine; in the Idylls of the King we find this device systematically followed; the season of the year during which the action of each idyll is represented as taking place reflects and reinforces the pervading tone of that particular incident.

*See Brimley’s Essay, pp. 8 fol., from which the above sentences are quoted.
Vocabulary and Phraseology.—Passing on to an examination of more minute elements of his style, his vocabulary and phraseology, we find them characterized by the same care and discrimination, by the same seeking after picturesque effects and beauty; we feel also the same sense of conscious artifice; we note a constant indebtedness to the works of his predecessors, and a masterly skill in adapting for his own purposes the happy phrases and images which he has met in his reading.* Tennyson, as has already been noted, is a versatile poet, and great variety of styles may be found in his collected works,—sometimes he is simple, sometimes realistic, but the manner most natural to him, which is most pervading, and most characteristic in his work, is a highly ornate one. It exhibits a richness and fulness of colour and imagery that is apt to withdraw the mind from the whole theme and outcome of a piece, to admiration and enjoyment of each passing phrase and image. The poet seems instinctively to select his theme so as to give scope for the exhibition of this quality, rather than for bringing home to the heart and imagination of the reader some profoundly human situation. The anguish of despised and deserted love is a subject for the highest poetry; but it is not the anguish and sadness of the woman Oenone for which we chiefly care when we read Tennyson’s poem, but the idyllic and classic surroundings of the mountain-nymph, the beauty of successive lines, pictures, and passages. Morte d’Arthur (masterpiece although it is) and all the Idylls win their power in a large measure from the same sources. For such purposes the simple and direct style is little suitable—the style where the words seem to come to the poet’s pen unbidden, where the expression is so naturally the outcome of the idea as to be transparent, where the thought is so completely brought home to the imagination and heart that the manner is unnoted.† In Tennyson’s expression the artist is always felt; the conscious perception of his skill is a large part of the pleasure. So in his diction, while he does not avoid the vocabulary of ordinary life which Wordsworth preferred, he on the whole prefers a word or phrase with distinctly poetic

*Mr. Churton Collins devotes a volume (Illustrations of Tennyson) to tracing such adaptations. Many cases are pointed out in the notes to this volume.

† “Tennyson’s decorative art, his love of colour for its own sake, of music for its own sake, lead him at times into what must always seem to the highly cultivated sense extravagances of colour, an over-profusion, a lush luxuriance, and into similar extravagances of sound. To put it briefly, he rarely trusts his thought, as Wordsworth trusted it, to build for itself a natural home of expression. So much an artist was he that Nature could not speak his language, and hence the inevitable word is rarely heard in his poetry.” (Dixon, Primer of Tennyson, pp. 83-4.)
associations. He employs the language of earlier poetry, obsolete and rare words, antiquated preterits and past participles, novel compounds, double-epithets.* He thus wins a charm for his style, but it is not the charm of simplicity and directness, but of florid and elaborate beauty. Ingenious and picturesque periphrases supply the place of commonplace terms: so we find “the knightly growth that fringed [Arthur’s] lips,” “the azure pillars of the hearth” (smoke from chimneys), “moving isles of winter” (icebergs), “took a word and played upon it and made it two colours” (punned), “unclasp’d the wedded eagles of her belt,” “nor fail in childward care” (care of children), etc. In this matter he is a follower of Keats, to whom of all English poets he owes most and whom he most resembles; but Tennyson manifests, after his earliest attempts at least, a moderation and good judgment which are his own. The pictorial character of his style is observable in the success with which he suggests the proper image by even a single word: “the ripple *washing* in the reeds,” “the wild water *lapping* on the crag,” “she shrilling, let me die,” “creamy spray,” “little breezes *dusk and shiver*.”

The ever-silent spaces of the East

*Far-folded* mists, and gleaming halls of morn. — *Tithonus.*

Fiercely flies

The blast of North and East, and ice

Makes daggers at the sharpen’d eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns

To yon hard crescent, as she hangs

Above the wood which grides and clangs

Its leafless ribs and iron horns. — *In Memoriam,* cvii.

Similarly we note the exquisite finish and picturesqueness of phrase:

“the lucid interspace of world and world.”

So dark a *forethought* rolled about his brain
As on a dull day in an ocean cave
The blind wave feeling round his long sea hall
In silence.

*Such as hest, marish, hooves, enow, adown, anear, boscage, brewis, boughts, cate, to oar, rathe, lurdan, tarriance, tinet, brand, Paynin, scud; clomb, sware, spake, brake, foughten; brain-feverous, green-glimmering, sallow-rifted, strange-statued, crag-carven, ruby-budded.*

Of course such words form only a very small percentage, but it should be noted that a few scattered words of this character suffice to give the predominant effect to a passage, just as a few dialectic terms and forms suffice, in the best writers, to give the desired local or conversational colour.
Akin to this felicity of phrasing and this success in appropriating picturesque words, in his power of seizing on the minuter features of nature, and his skill in flashing them upon the inward eye. It is particularly in the minuteness and accuracy of his observation of nature, that his descriptions are differentiated from those of his predecessors:

hair
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell
Divides three-fold to show the fruit within.

—The Brook.

With blasts that blow the poplar white.
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold.

—In Memoriam, lxii.

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,
And rarely pipes the mounted thrush;
Or underneath the barren bush
Plits by the sea-blue bird of March.

—Ibid, xi.

(See also preceding stanzas).

Till now the doubtful dark reveal'd
The knolls once more where, couch'd at ease,
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field.

—Ibid, xcv.

The steer forgot to graze
And, where the hedgerow cuts the pathway, stood
Leaning his horns into the neighbour field,
And iowing to his fellows.

—The Gardener's Daughter.

Nigh upon the hour
When the lone hern forgets his melancholy,
Lets down his other leg, and stretching, dreams
Of goodly supper in a distant pool.

—Gareth and Lynette.

Lyrical expression of thought and feeling.—This skill in technique which we have been emphasizing, and the patient laboriousness and good judgment of Tennyson are qualities of wide application, and likely to give a measure of success in almost any sort of poetry which he might attempt. And indeed this success has in some measure followed the poet everywhere. In his dramas, for example, a species of art to which by universal admission, neither the poet's genius, nor the circumstances of his life, nor the conditions of his age were suited, the critics are disposed to wonder less at the defects exhibited than at
the excellence attained. Accordingly, to assertions which are true of Tennyson's work in general, it may often be possible to adduce striking exceptions. If we deny him the power of representing commonplace, contemporary men, or humour, we are confronted with The Northern Farmer; if playfulness, with The Talking Oak; if realistic tragic power, with Rizpah. Yet, while not denying the many shapes in which the poet's genius has shown itself, there are certain forms in which he manifestly is most completely at his ease, and certain kinds of poetry which we associate especially with him. In the first place, Tennyson excels in the lyric delineation of his own moods and feelings; of this power, In Memoriam gives the fullest exemplar. Among these moods he has a unique gift for rendering vague, evanescent, subtle shades of feeling, so delicate as scarcely to be capable of direct expression in language; but which may be adumbrated—by a method which we have already noted to be specially Tennyson's own—through the rhythm and music of the verse and through the use of external details. So the familiar song "Break, break, break" finds expression for dumb, wistful grief in the grey, dull scenery of the coast.* "Tears, idle tears," "Far, far away," Crossing the Bar, "The splendour falls," etc., furnish other masterly examples of the same power.

Expression of feeling and thought through concrete pictures.—In the second place, the poet excels in the indirect presentation of similar moods, feelings and thoughts through an objective situation or character. We have already called attention to this species of poetry in Mariana, but higher manifestations of this faculty are afforded by Ulysses, Tithonus, The Lotos-Eaters, Morte d'Arthur, Merlin and the Gleam. Here the traits of character, the details of scene or situation are selected not merely in order to produce an effective picture, although that is one object, but to body forth an inner experience. The poet himself has told us that this is true of the finest of these poems, Ulysses. He says, after speaking about In Memoriam: "There is more of myself in "Ulysses," which was written under the sense of loss and that all had gone by, but that still life must be fought out to the end"

*See Hutton's Literary Essays, p. 372, fol.: "Observe how the wash of the sea on the cold gray stones is used to prepare the mind for the feeling of helplessness with which the deeper emotions break against the hard and rigid element of human speech; how the picture is then widened out till you see the bay with children laughing on its shore, and the sailor-boy singing on its surface, and the stately ships passing on in the offing to their unseen haven, all with the view of helping us to feel the contrast between the satisfied and unsatisfied yearnings of the human heart."
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(See article by Mr. Knowles, *Nineteenth Century*, Jan. 1893). Such a poem gives scope to the poet’s pictorial faculty, yet it is imbued with a deeper meaning and intenser feeling which elevates it above mere description.*

His Idylls.—In the third place, Tennyson’s qualities lend themselves especially to, and have been repeatedly employed upon, still another poetic form, the Idyll. The name, which, like the thing, is derived from the Greeks, means ‘a little picture.’† It was one of the latest literary forms to arise in Greek literature, and was developed in an era resembling our own, when to use Tennyson’s language, all the great things had been done, and the poet’s chance for going down the stream of time lay in brevity and finish. The word ‘idyll,’ therefore, (though like most poetic terms, it can only be vaguely defined) is applied to short poems of a pictorial character, couched in an elaborate and finished style, where the aim of the poet is rather to charm the aesthetic feelings by the beauty of the pictures suggested, and by the exquisite skill of the workmanship, than to move the heart by the greatness of the theme, or the truth and intensity of the delineation. In the development of poetry, grand and obvious subjects are likely to be treated first; and since these are themselves moving and beautiful, the poet cannot do better than bring them home, with the utmost vividness and truth, to the imagination of his readers; this he will best succeed in doing by the use of the simple, transparent, direct style. But when the great themes are exhausted, and the poets, in search of fresh matter, turn to trivial subjects, or subjects not wholly beautiful, or not intensely interesting and touching, they strive to make amends, for these deficiencies, by a style which gives pleasure in itself, by ornamentation which is beautiful and appropriate, but not absolutely needful for the presentation of the theme, and by idealizing with a view to aesthetic charm, rather than with a view to profound emotional effects. In *Oenone*, for example, Tennyson presents a subject

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*See Hutton, *Literary Essays*, p. 364, fol.: “Even when Tennyson’s poems are uniformly moulded by an ‘infused’ soul, one not infrequently notices the excess of the faculty of vision over the governing conception which moulds the vision, so that I think he is almost always most successful when his poem begins in a thought or a feeling rather than from a picture or a narrative, for then the thought or feeling dominates and controls his otherwise too lavish fancy. ‘Ulysses’ and ‘Tithonus’ are far superior to ‘Oenone,’ exquisite as the pictorial workmanship of ‘Oenone’ is. . . . Whenever Tennyson’s pictorial fancy has had it in any degree in its power to run away with the guiding and controlling mind, the richness of the workmanship has to some extent overgrown the spiritual principle of his poems.”

†See Stedman’s *Victorian Poets*, chap. vi.
from Greek legend, unreal and remote to us, and therefore, however pathetic the situation represented, incapable of kindling our deepest sympathy. On the other hand, it is a subject full of aesthetic situations, affording ample scope for the display of sensuous beauty, and free from the commonplaceness and ugliness which must always cling to what is derived from our actual world. In other idylls, the poet does not go so far afield for a theme; in *The Gardener's Daughter*, he takes contemporary life; but again, he selects on the ground of beauty and charm, and excludes every trait which might interfere with these; as a consequence, we may say, the picture is so idyllic, that we scarcely feel it to be actual and real. It does not stir the deeper feelings connected with love, as *Romeo and Juliet* does; the poet makes no such attempt. Again, in *Enoch Arden* we have a theme intensely pathetic, taken from homely, actual English life; yet the author does not depend mainly upon the genuine poetic power of his matter, does not treat it simply, as Wordsworth has treated a similar theme in *Michael*; Tennyson's treatment is idyllic, and the actual characteristics of the story are lost in the gorgeous and alien ornament.* Again the *Idylls of the King*, though in their final shape aiming at something beyond mere idyllic beauty, and bound into a larger unity, are yet on the basis of their general style and character, properly termed idylls. Their chief interest does not depend upon the loftiest elements that can enter into a work of art, the truthful and powerful presentation of human life and character; they do not stir our sympathies and interest as these are stirred by the spectacle of actual existence. For notwithstanding the pathos and tragic force of occasional passages, we are, on the whole, drawn to the *Idylls of the King*, not by our sympathy with the personages, their sufferings and their destiny, but by enjoyment of the verse, by diction and imagery, by the charm of a picture more

*See Bagehot's Essay on Wordsworth, Tennyson and Browning. Mr. Bagehot happily cites, as an exaggerated example of this ornate style, the following passage, where the poet intentionally obscures and hides the real subject, viz., the peddling of fish (which is certainly not poetical) by quite extraneous details:

Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's ocean spoil
In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,
Rough-reddened with a thousand winter gales,
Not only to the market-cross were known
But in the leafy lanes behind the down,
Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp
And peacock yew-tree of the lonely hall,
Whose Friday fare was Enoch's ministering.
romantic and sensuously beautiful than that afforded by the real world, Tennyson showed a certain shyness of the task of representing actual life as it is. The condition of society, manners, and thought in the *Idylls of the King* plainly did not exist at any period of the world's history. In *The Princess*, where the theme and central situation belongs essentially to the present day, where the character, thoughts, aims, pursuits of the heroine bear unmistakably the impress of the nineteenth century, the poet does not venture to give these a realistic setting; but with the aid of reminiscences from chivalry and the Middle Ages, constructs a wholly fanciful but very beautiful background for his picture. Some poets reveal the great and beautiful by penetrating beneath the superficial husk of the commonplace and ugly in life about us; others, like Keats and Tennyson, by casting about it an atmosphere of charm, a glamour of fancy. "It is the distance," said Tennyson, "that charms me in the landscape, the picture and the past, and not the immediate to-day in which I move." *

In pointing out the fact that idyllic poetry is not of the highest order, we are neither contemning it nor disparaging Tennyson. In the domain of poetic art there are many mansions; the idyll has its place and functions. We do not always desire the grander, more profound, and therefore more exacting, art of *Othello* and *Lear*. At times we are glad to escape to the charm and beauty of a fanciful world, remote from this of our real experience. In the sort of poetry which soothes and charms, yields calm pleasure, and pure, yet sensuous, delight, Tennyson is a master; and, in particular, he has almost identified the idyll in English literature with his own name.

**His longer works.**—One point in Tennyson's deliverance (see p. 102) on the conditions of poetry in his day, remains to be noted. Whether it is true or not that "all the big things had been done," it is unquestionably true in Tennyson's own case that he makes his mark "by shortness." Grandeur and grasp of conception, the ability to conceive a great whole which should be an effective artistic unit, was not his. That mental peculiarity which, as we have seen, inclined him to work from details upwards, rather than from the general conception downwards, is still more evident when we examine the structure of his more ambitious attempts. His longer poems are made by joining together smaller wholes; their unity is a second and added idea. In *In Memoriam*, there is, doubtless, a line of development, a connection in the

*Aspects of Tennyson, in Nineteenth Century for January, 1893.*
thoughts, and a unity of tone among the several lyrics; they arise from a common germinal experience, they follow in natural sequence; but they are not manifestly members of an organized body to whose beauty and completeness they contribute, and which would be maimed by their absence. They are scarcely more a whole, than the series of Shakespeare's Sonnets; they are not a unit in the sense in which Macbeth, or Othello, or Romeo and Juliet, or Paradise Lost is a unit. Tennyson's remark as to the way in which In Memoriam was constructed is significant in this connection: "The general way of its being written was so queer that if there were a blank space, I would put in a poem,"* and might, apparently, be applied also to the Idylls of the King and to Maud. It is noteworthy with regard to the former—the most ambitious of his "big things"—that several of the parts were published before the whole was clearly conceived, if conceived at all (See Select Poems, 1901, p. 206); and that several other parts were added after the whole had been apparently completed. The unity is of the loosest kind; there is no steady development of plot interest. Each idyll does not win its complete and deepest interest from its relation to the whole, as in the case with each scene of Shakespeare's plays, and each book of Paradise Lost. Again in Maud, the central and finest lyric "O that 'twere possible" was published long before Maud was written or dreamed of. It was a second thought to build around this a series of songs which should unfold a character and a story; the poem affords no stringent standard by which we can say that each of these songs is, or is not necessary; they might have been either more or fewer. What is of still greater importance: several of these songs—the one just referred to, for example—do not lose, but actually gain by being considered apart from the context, by being separated from the hysterical hero and his story. There remains (apart from the dramas) one other long work The Princess; this does possess more of unity; yet the poet himself is sensible of some incongruity in the structure; and in order that his work may not be tried by the strictest standard of art, he imaginatively accounts for this defect by adding a prologue and epilogue which explain that The Princess is not to be treated as the conception of one mind, but as a story told by seven different narrators, and, in consequence, it 'moves in a strange diagonal.'† This apology for a lack of consistency is thrust into the foreground by the second title of the piece, "The Princess; a Medley." To sum up, Tennyson's highest

*Aspects of Tennyson, by Knowles, in Nineteenth Century for Jan. 1893.
†See II. 27-23 of the Conclusion to The Princess.
excellences do not arise from qualities which can be exhibited only in extensive poems upon great and broad themes, but from qualities which may also belong to short unambitious pieces. He requires neither the grandest sort of theme, nor a very extensive canvas to reveal the full power of his art.

**General character of Tennyson's thought.**—We have emphasized the adaptation of the peculiar endowments of Tennyson to the conditions and opportunities of poetic art in his day. These endowments have given him extraordinary excellence in technique; Tennyson is one of the most versatile and perfect artists among English poets. Turning now from form to thought and matter, such rank can no longer be maintained for him. In those earliest pieces where we find the main characteristics of his technique (though as yet somewhat crude) abundantly present, we also observe, on the whole, comparative thinness of matter. Undoubtedly, as he grew older, and experience and knowledge increased, his work became much less purely pictorial and fanciful; he infused more of human nature into his poems, dwelt less aloof in a world of fancy *; his sympathies widened, his heart was touched to deeper issues, and there was more of thought, of what Matthew Arnold calls 'the criticism of life'. A growing realism in the characters, and scenes depicted, and in the style employed, is especially noticeable in his later miscellaneous pieces beginning with the *Poems and Ballads* of 1880. But, after all, what gives Tennyson his high and unique place among the poets is, not power of thought, but power of form. He has no specially profound insight into character, or broad experience of life. His sensitive, shy, and, apparently, little genial nature, and the seclusion of his habits were not favourable to acquiring these. Nor is there any special originality in his ideas or in his attitude toward the facts of life. On the other hand, his receptive and active intelligence readily assimilated conceptions which were in the air; his calm and sane judgment enabled him to seize them in their truer and more permanent aspects; so that, while he makes no bold and original contributions to our store of ideas, no poet probably in the whole range of English literature has more fully and adequately voiced the thought and spirit of his own generation. This is another cause of his popularity. The ordinary reader is not repelled by ideas, or ways of viewing them, to which he is unaccustomed; he finds the questions in which he is interested, and the current opinions in

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*Compare for example the fanciful and unreal, though exquisitely beautiful *Lady of Shalott*, with the more human story, made out of the same material, in *Lancelot* and *Elaine*. 
regard to them. Fortunately for the poet, the age was fertile in novel and germinal conceptions, and he had rare skill in embodying these in poetic form without giving any sense of incongruity. His entrance upon his literary career was contemporaneous with the beginning of a marked epoch in intellectual and national progress.* In politics, the years of repression and stagnation which had originated in the dread of the French Revolution, and been prolonged by the struggle against Napoleon for national existence, began, about 1820, to yield before new forces in the political and intellectual world; it was fully ushered in by the realization of Parliamentary Reform in 1832. It was an age of rapid change, of great national development, of extraordinary commercial and scientific progress, of political theories and reforms, of new movements in philosophy and religion, and, in its earlier part, of great hopefulness. The chief characteristics of this age are faithfully reflected in Tennyson's verse—its optimism, its enthusiasm for science, its belief in the steady and rapid progress of social institutions towards perfection, its religious unrest, its new scientific ideas. But Tennyson outlived this epoch, as he outlived the greater number of his own contemporaries. In his old age he found many of the anticipations of his youth disappointed, he found himself amidst a generation exhibiting ultra-democratic and radical tendencies with which he could not sympathize,—he found the class to which he belonged by association and with

* "The very year of Tennyson's first volume [1830] was the year of the second French Revolution, and the second English revolution; the year of the 'Three Days' in Paris, and of the appearance of Lord Gray as Prime Minister in England and champion of the Reform Bill. It was the year of the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester railway. Mr. Huskisson, who met his death on that occasion, had recently brought forward the first notions of Free Trade, which the beginnings of steam navigation were soon to do much to develop. It was the year of Lyell's 'Principles of Geology,' and of Comte's 'Cours de Philosophie Positive.' Kehle's 'Christian Year' had been printed in 1827; and in 1829 Catholic Emancipation had become law; and forthwith O'Connell began to agitate for Repeal of the Union. The position of the Irish Church was called in question in 1831; and in the same year the Corn Law Rhymes of Ebenezer Elliott preached more powerfully than from any pulpit a new doctrine for the poor:

'It is the deadly Power that makes
Bread dear and labour cheap.'

At this time rick-burning was rife (To 'Mary Boyle,' viii, ix, x. Also 'The Princess,' iv, 383-367), and Hunt and Cobbett were filling the new-forming mind of the masses with ideas of social equality, while the most autocratic of European nations, 'that o'ergrown Barbarian in the East' was absorbing Poland. The year of Tennyson's second volume passed the Reform Bill, brought out 'Tracts for the Times,' proposed to emancipate slaves, saw Faraday's Experiments in Electricity, and heard George Coombe's lecture on popular education." (Luce's Handbook to Tennyson, pp. 12-13.)
which he sympathized in virtue of its ideals and the beauty of its actual life—the landed gentry—losing political influence, suffering from material loss, possibly destined to be crushed out of existence in the struggle of modern life. The consequence of this, and of the natural effects of old age, is a marked change in the tone of his writings; a loss of hopefulness, a growing bitterness with the existing condition of things.*

Tennyson's preference for middle positions. — Tennyson was, however, not the mere creature of his age—a mirror to reflect indifferently each passing phase of thought. He had a pronounced personality of his own, which led him to find interest in some tendencies and to be unresponsive to others; to embody certain ideas with enthusiasm, and touch upon others only that he may testify his repugnance. We have already had occasion to mention a certain lack of ardour and impetuosity in the poet, calmness of temperament and self-control, sane judgment and good taste. Such qualities beget a constitutional preference for middle courses, a dislike of excess and extremes. We find, accordingly, Tennyson's sympathies are everywhere with moderate views: in politics, in religion, in the 'woman question,' etc. So, the slow and orderly development of the English nation, the self-restraint and spirit of compromise manifested in her history, the character of her existing institutions, the spirit in which the reforms of his own day were being carried out, were in harmony with the poet's nature, and inspired not a little of the fervour of the patriotic passages in his works. Even his aesthetic sense was satisfied with the venerable and orderly beauty of English institutions; just as he delighted to depict the embodiment of the same spirit and forces in the prevailing features of English landscape:

An English home-gray twilight pour'd
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
Softer than sleep—all things in order stored,
A haunt of ancient Peace.

Crudity, excess, violence, offended both his aesthetic and his intellectual nature. He believed in progress, but it must be gradual. He was, as the three political poems included in this volume show, a liberal conservative, in the natural sense of the words. He had no sympathy with the radicalism of his times, with root-and-branch theories that demanded sudden and violent changes in institutions and conditions to which his heart was attached. He had the historic sense of his age; it was not

*Compare the poem on Freedom with the political poems of 1833: "Love Thou Thy Land," etc.; and Locksley Hall, with Locksley Hall Sixty Years After.
merely England as it existed, that he saw and loved; it was England the embodiment of a long and unbroken development through the wise and heroic efforts of generations of Englishmen—England teeming with associations from a splendid past. But of the suffering and misery out of which came the radical theories that he disliked, he seems to have had no adequate sense, through limitations either of his sympathies or of his experience. He saw things too exclusively from the point of view of the country-gentleman—the class to which he was most closely bound, both by personal association, and by the beauty and charm of their life and its surroundings. But it was his good fortune, as far as immediate popularity was concerned, to be in thought and feeling the average educated Englishman; though this also implied a narrowness, a lack of understanding of non-English conditions, of the point of view of other classes than his own, a want of sympathy with new social movements that, in turn, result in limitation and conventionality in his work.

His ideals of character and conduct.—As Tennyson’s work is marked by good taste and moderation, as his character and life were exempt from marked eccentricities and departures from social conventions, and as his views were marked by a preference for middle courses; so the ideals of character and conduct displayed in his poetry, exhibit kindred peculiarities. His King Arthur, the type of the highest manhood, is distinguished by his self-control, his good sense, his practical activity. When, in the Holy Grail, his knights ride away in pursuit of the Heavenly vision, the King remains at his post faithful to the more homely calls of life:

Seeing the King must guard
That which he rules, and is but as the hind
To whom a space of land is given to plow,
Who may not wander from the allotted field
Before his work be done.

The evils and disorder which are represented as the consequences of the quest of the Grail, show that the poet’s sympathies are not with the mystical enthusiasm of Galahad, but with the more prosaic and practical aims of Arthur—the redressing of wrong, the improvement of the condition of the race.* All that partakes of extravagance is

*“With Mr. Tennyson the mystic is always the visionary who suffers from an over-excit able fancy. The nobler aspects of the mystical religious spirit are unrepresented in his poetry. We find nowhere among the persons of his imagination a Teresa, uniting as she did in so eminent a degree an administrative genius, a genius for action with the genius of exalted piety.” (Dowden’s Mr. Tennyson and Mr. Browning.)
foreign to his nature. Self-restrained characters are more to his taste than passionate ones. He does not succeed in depicting the latter class; the hero of *Maud* is morbid and excitable, not strong; does not exhibit the grand and imposing aspect of intense emotion. Tennyson's sympathies are with that thoroughly English ideal 'the gentleman'—an ideal where the controlling forces count for more than the impelling. The average Englishman admires the man who is strong to endure external shocks, who has his own nature well in hand, who severely restrains the exhibition even of perfectly innocent and laudable feelings; the demonstrativeness of the Frenchman and German, the passionate and effusive nature in general, have for him something effeminate. Here Tennyson and his audience are again at one. The rapturous and mystical communion with nature, which is the theme of Wordsworth's poetry, or the beauty and saving power of intense passion, of which Shelley and Browning are the apostles, meet no such ready response from Englishmen as the praise of self-restraint, of obedience to duty, of beneficent practical activity which are enshrined in Tennyson's writings. A disciplined nature wisely devoted to the practical work of improving society is Tennyson's highest ideal of life, the ideal he puts into the mouth of Athene—herself the incarnation of the wisdom and virtue which the Greek mind found in the mean:

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"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control, 
These three alone lead life to sovereign power. 
Yet not for power (power of herself 
Would come uncall'd for) but to live by law, 
Acting the law we live by without fear; 
And, because right is right, to follow right 
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.

Oh! rest thee sure 
That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee, 
So that my vigour, wedded to thy blood, 
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a god's, 
To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks, 
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow 
Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown will, 
Circled thro' all experiences, pure law, 
Commeasure perfect freedom."
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His attitude towards the great questions.—Closely akin to these pervading tendencies of Tennyson's nature is his admiration and reverence for law.* This predominant trait of the poet's mind is revealed

*See Dowden's *Mr. Tennyson and Mr. Browning* in *Studies in Literature.*
not only in the political sphere upon which we have already lightly touched, but comes out in the way in which he regards the whole universe. Here, again, Tennyson is fortunate in his sensitive appreciation for an aspect of nature which has been revealed with unprecedented clearness and force by the modern science. He shares here to the full the enthusiasm of the scientific investigator. Further, the scientific conception that the whole universe is the manifestation, not only of law, but also of orderly, slow, and regular development, was in harmony with the poet's mind and feeling. He early accepted the idea of development; it is to be found in In Memoriam. But while entering heartily into the scientific enthusiasm of his time, both because science improved the condition of man's life and because scientific conceptions commended themselves to his own intellect and feeling, he was always strenuously opposed to the purely materialistic and non-spiritual views of the universe to which science was supposed by some to lead. The arguments from external nature adduced against theistic and spiritual ideas, he always met, as in In Memoriam, by arguments from the inner consciousness.* Akin to his rejection of materialism, is that strenuous adherence to the belief in immortality which comes out again and again in his poetry. It is interesting that the two greatest poets of the generation, Tennyson and Browning, should give such marked prominence to this matter in their works. But, apart from his conviction of spiritual and personal force in the universe, and of a personal immortality, Tennyson manifests the vagueness and doubt of his generation in regard to the great problems; and even the beliefs that he did maintain, he clings to rather than confidently maintains. This lack of strong convictions, of a message to convey, of ardent passion, of inspiration, his somewhat conventional and narrow range of sympathy, the elaboration of his style,—all contribute towards the sense that possesses the reader (notwithstanding all his admiration for the poet's work) that there is a something lacking, a want of force and of originality needful to put him in the very highest rank of poets. He soothes and charms rather than braces and inspires. He reflects our own thoughts rather than quickens us. He is a poet of beauty rather than of power.

Select Bibliography.—Alfred, Lord Tennyson: A Memoir by his son (Macmillan & Co.). The Poetical Works are published in various forms by Macmillan, the most convenient being that in one vol., of which only the editions issued Sept. 1894 and later are complete.

*See for example In Memoriam, cxxiv. See also on these points Tennyson as the Poet of Evolution, by Theodore Watts, in Nineteenth Century, vol. xxxiv.
Annotated editions of a large number of the poems are to be found in various volumes of Macmillan’s *English Classics*; also of the *Idylls of the King* and a number of other poems in volumes ed. by Rolfe (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.); also miscellaneous selections of the poems edited for Canadian schools by Messrs. Wetherell, Burt, Sykes, and Libby; to these editions the present editor is indebted, especially to Rolfe’s for variant readings. A large Tennyson literature is now in existence, of which a useful bibliography will be found in Dixon’s *Primer of Tennyson* (Methuen, London, 1866)—not only essays but volumes dealing either with his work in general or with special poems, particularly with the *Idylls of the King* and *In Memoriam*. Among these, one of the best is Gwynn’s *Tennyson* (Blackie, 1899); Dixon’s *Primer*, already mentioned, contains useful information and a judicious view of the poet’s genius; Luce’s *Handbook to the Works of Alfred Tennyson* (Bell, London, 1895), besides a general survey of Tennyson’s work, takes up each poem individually; Stopford Brooke’s *Tennyson: His Art and Relation to Modern Life* (Isbister, London, 1894) contains a very full critical examination of Tennyson’s work; Lyall’s *Tennyson* (*English Men of Letters*); of treatises on individual poems, we have MacCallum’s *Tennyson’s Idylls and Arthurian Story* (Glasgow, Maclehose, 1894) mainly occupied by the history of these legends in literature, while Elsdale’s *Studies in the Idylls* (Macmillan) and Littledale’s *Essays on Tennyson’s Idylls* are chiefly devoted with an examination and interpretation of the *Idylls* themselves; the articles on the *Idylls* in the *Contemporary Review* for Jan. 1870, and for May 1873, are based on the poet’s own explanations; Dawson’s *Study of the Princess* (Montreal, 1882), Genung’s *In Memoriam* (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.), Gatty’s *Key to In Memoriam* (Bell, London, 3rd ed. 1885), Bradley’s *In Memoriam* with notes, King’s *In Memoriam* (Morang, Toronto). For various readings and development of the text, Churton Collins’ *Early Poems of Alfred Tennyson*, Nicoll’s *Literary Anecdotes of the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. II (Hodder and Stoughton), and Jones’ *Growth of the Idylls of the King* (Lippincott, Phila., 1895); Churton Collins’ *Illustrations of Tennyson* (Chatto and Windus, 1891) gathers illustrations and originals from Greek, etc. Critical essays: in Stedman’s *Victorian Poets* (Houghton, Mifflin), in Brimley’s *Essays* (Macmillan), Hutton’s *Literary Essays* (Macmillan), Bagehot’s *Literary Studies* (Longmans), Dowden’s *Studies in Literature* (Kegan Paul), Ward’s *English Poets* by Jebb, articles in the *Nineteenth Century* for 1893, etc.
RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS.

This poem first appeared in the volume of 1830, and has undergone only slight alterations in text. It is a good example of the poet’s earliest work,—of its musical charm and pictorial character, of richness and elaborateness of diction and imagery carried even to excess. It paints a series of pictures, charming from their sensuous beauty, which are suggested to Tennyson’s imagination by reminiscences of the Arabian Nights, more particularly of one of the stories, that of Nur Al-Din Ali and the Damsel Anis al Jalis, especially of that part of the story narrated on the Thirty-sixth Night. The varying arrangement of the rhymes in the several stanzas should be noted.

Arabian Nights. The famous collection of Arabian stories known as The Thousand and One Nights, which, in abbreviated selections, is familiar to most children, especially through the story of Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp.

7. Bagdat. A city situated on both banks of the Tigris, some 500 miles from its mouth. “It has an extremely picturesque appearance from the outside, being encircled and interspersed with groves of date trees, through which one may catch the gleams of domes and minarets.” In the 9th century it was greatly enlarged by Haroun al Raschid.

fretted. Ornamented with bands arranged at right angles.

9. sworn. ‘Close’ or ‘firm’; cf. the expression “sworn friends.”

10. golden prime. The epithet is not used in its literal sense, but as suggesting the Age of Gold—the period when, according to ancient myth, the world was in its perfection. Prime is the season of highest vigour and splendour.

11. Haroun, surnamed Al-Raschid (‘the orthodox’), flourished 786-809 A.D. (i.e., about the time of Charlemagne), caliph of Bagdat, famed for his bravery and magnificence, and for his patronage of literature and art.

12. Anight. ‘By night’; cf. As You Like It, ii., 4: “Coming anight to Jane Smile.”

15. citron-shadows. ‘Shadows of the citron trees’; ‘citron’ is applied to lemon-trees and allied species.
23. clear-stemmed platans. Oriental plane-trees which run up smoothly for some height before sending out their wide-spreading branches.

24. The outlet of the river into the canal.

26. sluiced. Led out by a sluice, which, in its narrow sense, is an artificial passage for water fitted with a gate. Cf. Par. Lost, i., 701: "veins of liquid fire Sluic'd from the lake."

28-29. The green sward with its flowers resembled "damask-work" (raised patterns in a woven fabric) or "deep inlay" (ornamental work when pieces of wood, metal, ivory, etc., are let into a background of some different, or differently coloured, material).

36. star-strown calm. The smooth water in which the stars were reflected.

37. night in night. The still greater darkness caused by the close shadows of the trees.

40. clomb. Such antiquated verbal forms are very frequently employed by Tennyson; see p. 110

47. rivage. Bank; Rolfe compares Spenser, Faerie Queene, iv., 6, 20:

The which Pactolus with his waters shere
Throws forth upon the rivage round about him near.

An example of the sort of diction referred to on p. 110.

48-49. Note the abundance of epithets here, and throughout the poem.

52. sparkling flints. 'The gravel at the bottom of the stream'; it seems scarcely probable that these would be visible in the circumstances.

58. engrain'd. Properly 'dyed in fast colours'; the poet seems still to have the idea of a woven fabric in his mind, as at line 28.

59. marge. A common poetical form for "margin."

60. fluted. 'With longitudinal grooves'; as, e.g., in Greek pillars.

63. studded wide. 'Embossed at intervals.' The word "studded" keeps up the idea of an ornamented surface (cf. ll. 25, 58).

64. With disks and tiars. "Disks" suggests round, flattish blossoms, "tiars" more elongated and convex forms. "Tiara" is
properly an eastern hat, and is naturally suggested by the locality of the poem. For the poetical form "tiar," cf. Par. Lost, iii., 625.

68. In closest coverture. 'So as to afford a close coverture'; Rolfe cites Much Ado, iii., 1: "in closest coverture."

70. bulbul. The Persian name for the nightingale.

71. Not he, etc. The song of the nightingale seems to express too much to be the voice of a bird merely; cf. Shelley's To a Skylark:

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart.

which possess'd. 'Held and interpenetrated.'

72-73. delight, etc., are not governed by "possessed," but in opposition to "something."

74-75. 'A something which is eternal, of complex nature, irrepressible, above conditions of time and space.' With the whole passage cf. Keats' Ode to a Nightingale.

76. flattering. 'Lending a lustre to'; cf. Aylmer's Field: "A splendid presence flattering the poor roofs," and Shakespeare, Sonnet, 33:

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye.

78. Black. The original reading was "black-green"; the change gives emphasis to "black," inasmuch as its one syllable does duty for the two syllables of the regular foot.

81. A sudden splendour. The light from the Pavilion of the Caliphat (see l. 114).

84. counterchanged. 'Interchanged'; cf. In Memoriam, lxxix:

Witch-elms that counterchange the floor
Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright.

95. as in sleep. 'As if I were asleep.'

100. drawn. "Borne" was the original reading.

101. pleasance. Archaic and poetical for 'pleasure'. Cf. the following passage from the original story in the Arabian Nights: "Now this
garden was named the Garden of Gladness and therein stood a belvedere hight the Palace of Pleasure."

106. rosaries. In the sense of the Latin original (rosarium), 'gardens, or beds, of roses.'

108. Symbols that belonged to, or recalled, the time.

112. the long alley's latticed shade. The original speaks of a walk with "a covering of trellis work of canes extending along the whole length."

114. Caliphat (usually "Caliphate") the dominion of the Caliphs, or successors of Mahomet.

122. In the original we are told that the palace was illuminated with "eighty latticed windows, and eighty lamps suspended, and in the midst a great candlestick of gold."

123. quintessence. The stress is usually upon the second syllable, but the pronunciation which the metre here requires, is also admissible.

125. silvers. A bold use of the plural, meaning, of course, 'silver candlesticks.'

127. mooned. 'Ornamented with crescents'—the symbol of Turkish dominion, hence an anachronism here.

domes aloof In inmost Bagdat. The domes in the centre of the city, which stood out in the distance.

130. time is the object of "celebrate" (l. 131).

135. argent-lidded. "Argent" refers to the colour; so in Dream of Fair Women, l. 158: "the polish'd argent of her breast."

148. diaper'd. The word is applied to material covered with a regularly repeated pattern produced in the weaving without use of colour.

148-9. The lines seem to suggest that the cloth of gold had inwrought upon it garlands of flowers (as a border probably) and, besides that, a regularly repeated pattern (presumably in the main body of the cloth).
THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

First published in 1832, but, as the notes show, the poem has been greatly improved by later revision. It is the first work which Tennyson based upon Arthurian legends; in this case contained, according to Palgrave, in an Italian novel (see note on l. 9). Lancelot and Elaine is a very different treatment of the same story where the interest is more human and the motives and characters perfectly comprehensible. Here we have a beautiful series of pictures presenting part of the history of a mysterious being, involved in a strange fate. This mystery of the poem suggests symbolism, to which the poet was inclined, as, for example, in The Palace of Art and the Idylls of the King; so Mr. Hutton seems to think that the history of the poet’s own genius is shadowed forth, which "was sick of the magic of fancy and its picture-shadows, and was turning away from them to the poetry of human life." "The key to this tale of magic ‘symbolism’ is of deep human significance, and is to be found, perhaps, in the lines:

Or when the moon was overhead  
Came two young lovers lately wed;  
‘I am half sick of shadows’ said  
The Lady of Shalott.

Canon Ainger in his Tennyson for the Young quotes the following interpretation given him by my father: ‘The new-born love of something, for some one, in the wide world from which she has been so long excluded, takes her out of the region of shadows into that of realities.’” (Life, I, 116.) It was doubtless, however, the picturesque aspects of the subject, rather than any deep human significance, that attracted and occupied the poet.

3. wold. ‘Open country.’ The landscape the poet was most familiar with at this time was the landscape of Lincolnshire. According to the Century Dictionary "The wolds of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire are high rolling districts, bare of trees and exactly similar to the downs of the southern part of England.” The word appears in Lear, iii, 4, in the form “old.”

meet the sky. Note how suggestive is the phrase of the wide uninterrupted prospect.

5. many-tower’d Camelot. Camelot is the capital of Arthur’s domain, identified with Winchester by Malory (Bk. II, chap. xix); but
in Tennyson's treatment of the Arthurian legends, the scenes and geography are wholly imaginary, and the poet seems purposely to shun any touch which might serve to connect his scenes with actual localities.

In *Gareth and Lynette* we have a description of Camelot:

Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces
And stately, rich in emblem and the work
Of ancient kings who did their days in stone;
Which Merlin's hand, the mage at Arthur's court,
Knowing all arts, had touch'd, and everywhere
At Arthur's ordinance, tipt with lessening peak
And pinnacle, and had made it spire to heaven.

**6-9. In the edition of 1832, these lines read—**

The yellow-leaved waterlily,
The green-sheathed daffodilly,
Tremble in the water chilly,
Round about Shalott.

**9. Shalott.** This form of the name is probably suggested by Italian original *Donna di Scalotta.* In the *Idylls of the King,* 'Astolat,' the form used by Malory, is employed.

**10-12. In 1832 the reading was—**

Willows whiten, aspens shiver,
The sunbeam-showers break and quiver
In the stream that runneth ever.

**10. Willows whiten** through the breeze exposing the lower and lighter side of the willow leaves.

**11. dusk and shiver.** The darkening is due to the breaking up of the smooth surface of the water so that it no longer reflects the light.

**19. The following two stanzas stood in the ed. of 1832:**

Underneath the bearded barley,
The reaper, reaping late and early,
Hears her ever chanting cheerily,
Like an angel, singing clearly,
    O'er the stream of Camelot.
Piling the sheaves in furrows airy,
Beneath the moon, the reaper weary
Listening whispers, 'tis the fairy
    Lady of Shalott.'
The little isle is all inralled
With a rose fence, and overtrailed
With roses: by the marge unhailed
The shallop flitteth silken-sailed,
        Skimming down to Camelot.
A pearl garland winds her head:
She leaneth on a velvet bed,
Full royally apparelled
        The Lady of Shalott.

It will be noted that, in his second version, the poet gains the great advantage of indicating the aloofness of the mysterious heroine,—a prime point in the story—of which, as it originally stood, there was no indication in Pt. I.; the picture of the barges, etc., serves to intensify this by contrast. The vague echoes of song are in much better keeping with all the traits of the Lady of Shalott than the phrase, 'like an angel, singing clearly.'

37. In the ed. of 1832:—

No time hath she to sport and play:
A charmèd web she weaves alway.
A curse is on her if she stay
Her weaving, either night or day,
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what that curse may be;
Therefore she weaveth steadily,
Therefore no other care has she,
        The Lady of Shalott.
She lives with little joy or fear,
Over the water, running near,
The sheepbell tinkles in her ear,
Before her hangs a mirror clear,
        Reflecting towered Camelot.
And as the mazy web she whirls,
She sees the surly village churls, etc.

56. pad. 'An easy paced horse' (etymologically connected with path).
64. still. 'Always,' 'ever.'
76. greaves. 'Armor to protect the shins.'
82. free. The bridle was held with a slack hand.
84. Galaxy. The Milky Way (from Gk. γάλα γάλακτος, milk).
86. to. In ed. of 1832 'from'; so also l. 104.
87. blazon'd. 'Ornamented with heraldic devices.'
baldric. 'A belt worn over one shoulder and crossing the breast.'

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody sun at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand, etc.

98. bearded meteor. The beard is, of course, what could be more prosaically described as the 'tail.'

99. still. In ed. of 1832, "green."

101. hooves. Archaic plural.

107. by the river. In ed. of 1832, "tirra lirra."

111. water-lily. In ed. of 1832, "water flower."

115. The mirror reflects both Lancelot on the bank, and his image in the water.

119. Note how throughout the poem, the season of the year and the weather are made to harmonize with the events of the story; the same device is adopted in the *Idylls of the King*; see p. 108 of this volume.

123-126. In the ed. of 1832—

Outside the isle a shallow boat
Beneath the willow lay afloat,
Below the carven stern she wrote
*The Lady of Shalott.*

Then followed a stanza which has been omitted—

A cloud white crown of pearl she dight
All raimented in snowy white
That loosely flew (her zone in sight,
Clasped with one blinding diamond bright)

Her wide eyes fixed on Camelot.
Though the squally east wind keenly
Blew, with folded arms serenely
By the water stood she queenly
Lady of Shalott.

127. In the ed. of 1832—

With a steady stony glance—
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Beholding all his own mischance,
Mute, with glassy countenance—

She looked down to Camelot,

It was the closing, etc.
136. In the ed. of 1832—

As when to sailors while they roam,
By creeks and outfalls far from home,
Rising and dropping with the foam,
From dying swans wild warblings come,
Blown shoreward; so to Camelot
Still as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her chanting her death song,
The Lady of Shalott.

145. In 1832—

A long drawn carol, mournful, holy,
She chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her eyes were darkened wholly,
And her smooth face sharpened slowly, etc.

156. In 1832—

A pale, pale corpse she floated by,
Dead cold, between the houses high,
Dead into towered Camelot.
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
To the planked wharfage came:
Below the stern they read her name,
"The Lady of Shalott."

They crossed themselves, their stars they blest,
Knight, minstrel, abbot, squire, and guest.
There lay a parchment on her breast,
That puzzled more than all the rest,
The well fed wits of Camelot.
"The web was woven curiously,
The charm is broken utterly,
Draw near and fear not—this is I
The Lady of Shalott.

It will be noted how great is the improvement made by the changes in the original version; particularly the poem gains in unity by the omission of needless details, or of details not in perfect keeping with the general effect, e.g.: the stanza beginning 'As when to sailors,' etc.; the dwelling on unpleasing aspects of death (stanza next to the last), which mars the simple beauty and impressiveness of the appearance of the dead Lady; above all, the introduction of Lancelot in the closing lines affords a wholly new and effective picture.

165. royal cheer. Thé gaiety at the banquet in the palace.
OENONE.

First printed in the volume of 1832; but, in parts, greatly altered and improved since. It is the first of the Tennysonian *Idylls* proper—a form imitating in general character and in style the works of Theocritus, a Greek poet of the Alexandrian period (see p. 113 of this volume and Stedman’s *Victorian Poets*, chap. vi.). Further, it is an example of Tennyson’s practice of infusing a modern spirit into a classical theme. The latter affords a picturesque framework with opportunities for beautiful details to charm the imaginative vision and gratify the aesthetic taste; the former gives elevation, and profounder interest and significance to the subject. In the present poem the combination is not so complete and successful as in some other poems (*Ulysses*, for example) being chiefly found in Athene’s speech, but the theme is brought closer to the reader’s sympathies by the pathetic interest of the situation.

1-29. In the ed. of 1832, the following is the reading:

There is a dale in Ida, lovelier
Than any in old Ionia, beautiful
With emerald slopes of sunny sward, that lean
Above the loud glenriver, which hath worn
A path thro’ steepdown granite walls below
Mantled with flowering tendriltwine. In front
The cedar shadowy valleys open wide.
Far seen, high over all the Godbuilt wall
And many a snowycolumnned range divine,
Mounted with awful sculptures—men and Gods,
The work of Gods—bright on a darkblue sky
The windy citadel of Ilion
Shone, like the crown of Troas. Hither came
Mournful Oenone, wandering forlorn
Of Paris, once her playmate. Round her neck,
Her neck all marblewhite and marblecold,
Floated her hair or seemed to float in rest.
She, leaning on a vine-entwined stone,
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shadow
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff,

O mother Ida, manyfountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
The grasshopper is silent in the grass,
The lizard with his shadow on the stone,
Sleeps like a shadow, and the scarletwinged
Cicala in the noonday leapeth not.
Along the water-rounded granite-rock
The purple flower droops: the golden bee, etc.
Mr. Stopford Brooke says (p. 87): "To compare the first draft of Oenone with the second, is not only to receive a useful lesson in the art of poetry—it is also to understand, far better than by any analysis of his life, a great part of Tennyson's character; his impatience for perfection, his steadiness in pursuit of it, his power of taking pains, the long intellectual consideration he gave to matters which originated in the emotions, his love of balancing this and that form of his thought against one another; and finally, correlative with these qualities, his want of impulse and rush in song, as in life." Mr. Brooke quotes (p. 113) the first thirteen lines of the 1832 version given above and remarks: "The blank verse halts; a hurly-burly of vowels like 'Than any in old Ionia' is a sorrowful thing; there is no careful composition of the picture; the things described have not that vital connection one with the other which should enable the imaginative eye to follow them step by step down the valley till it opens on the plain where Troy stands white, below its citadel." He then quotes the passage as it stands in the later editions, and comments: "The verse is now weighty and poised, and nobly paused—yet it moves swiftly enough. The landscape is now absolutely clear, and it is partly done by cautious additions to the original sketch. . . . Nothing can image better the actual thing than that phrase concerning a lonely peak at dawn, that 'it takes the morning'; nor the lifting and slow absorption of the mists of night when the sun slants warm into the pines of the glen, than those slow-wrought, concentrated lines about the mountain vapour."

1. This opening description is said to have been suggested by what the poet saw in the Pyrenees, which he visited in the autumn of 1831.

Ida. The mountain chain to the south of the district of Troas.

Ionian. Ionia was the name applied to a narrow strip of the coast of Asia Minor from the river Hermus, on the north, to the Meander, on the south.

3-5. Those who have seen the movements of mist on the mountains will appreciate the felicity of this description.

10. topmost Gargarus. The summit of Gargarus; a Latin idiom, cf. "summus mons." Gargarus is one of the highest peaks in Ida, some 5,000 feet above the sea.

11. takes the morning. 'Catches the first rays of the rising sun.'


20. fragment of rock (see the corresponding line in the version of 1832).

21-22. Until the sun had sunk so low that the shadow of the mountain reached the place where Oenone was sitting.

23-24. A refrain repeated at intervals through the poem, is a frequent peculiarity of Greek idylls; cf. Theocritus, i. and ii., Moschus, Epitaph; the same device is found in Spenser, Prothalamium, and Pope, Pastorals, iii., etc.


25. Tennyson is indebted for many hints to the Greek Idyllic poets (see Stedman's Victorian Poets). Line 25, translation of Callimachus' Lavacrum Palladis: μεσαμβρινὸν δείχ' ὅρος ἀσωχία. (Collins' Illustrations of Tennyson.)

27. Cf. Theocritus, Idyll vii., 22: ἀνίκα δὴ καὶ σαῦρος ἐφ' αἰμασίαι καθείς (When, indeed, the lizard is sleeping on the wall of loose stones).

28-29. and the cicala sleeps. The purple flowers droop. In 1884 this was changed to: “and the winds are dead. The purple flowers droop,” because, in fact, the cicala is loudest at noon.

30. Cf. Henry VI., Part II., ii. 3: “Mine eyes are full of tears, my heart of grief.”

37. cold crown'd snake. Theocritus speaks of the cold snake; “crown'd” refers to its crest or hood. The resemblance of the crest to a crown is the probable origin of the name “basilisk,” which is a diminutive formed from the Gk. word for ‘king.’

38. a River-God. According to the myth, this river-god was Kebren (Κεβρῆν).

40-42. According to the myth, the walls of Troy rose under the influence of Apollo's lyre (see Ovid, Heroides, xv., 179); cf. Tithonus,

Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Cf. also the building of Pandemonium in Par. Lost, i., 710.

51. white-hooved. The usual form would be “white-hoofed”; cf. 'hooves' for 'hoofs' in Lady of Shalott, 101.

52. Simois. One of the rivers of Troas.

53-127. Originally this passage read:
"‘O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
I sate alone: the goldensandalled morn
Rosehued the scornful hills: I sate alone
With downdropt eyes: whitebreasted like a star
Fronting the dawn he came: a leopard skin
From his white shoulder drooped: his sunny hair
Clustered about his temples like a God’s:
And his cheek brightened, as the foambow brightens
When the wind blows the foam; and I called out,
“Welcome, Apollo, welcome home, Apollo,
Apollo, my Apollo, loved Apollo.”

"‘Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
He, mildly smiling, in his milkwhite palm
Close-held a golden apple, lightningbright
With changeful flashes, dropt with dew of Heaven
Ambrosially smelling. From his lip,
Curved crimson, the fullflowing river of speech
Came down upon my heart.

"‘My own ÓEnone,
Beautifulbrowed ÓEnone, mine own soul,
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingrav’n
‘For the most fair’ in aftertime may breed
Deep evilwilledness of heaven and sere
Heartburning toward hallowed Ilion;
And all the colour of my afterlife
Will be the shadow of today. Today
Here and Pallas and the floating grace
Of laughterloving Aphrodite meet
In manyfolded Ida to receive
This meed of beauty, she to whom my hand
Award the palm. Within the green hillside,
Under yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,
Is an ingoing grotto, strown with spar
And ivymatted at the mouth, wherein
Thou unbeholden mays’t behold, unheard
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods."

"‘Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
It was the deep midnoon: one silvery cloud
Had lost his way between the piney hills.
They came — all three — the Olympian Goddesses:
Naked they came to the smoothswarded bower,
Lustrous with lilyflower, violeteyed
Both white and blue, with lotetree-fruit thickset
Shadowed with singing pine; and all the while,
Above, the overwandering ivy and vine,
This way and that in many a wild festoon
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarlèd boughs
With bunch and berry and flower thro’ and thro’.
On the treetops a golden glorious cloud
Leaned, slowly dropping down ambrosial dew.
How beautiful they were, too beautiful
To look upon! but Paris was to me
More lovelier than all the world beside.

"'O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
First spake the imperial Olympian
With arched eyebrow smiling sovranly,
Fulleyèd Here. She to Paris made
Proffer of royal power, ample rule
Unquestioned, overflowing revenue
Wherewith to embellish state "'from many a vale
And riversundered champaign clothed with corn,
Or upland glebe wealthy in oil and wine—
Honour and homage, tribute, tax and toll,
From many an inland town and haven large,
Mast-thronged below her shadowing citadel
In glassy bays among her tallest towers."

"'O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Still she spake on and still she spake of power
"'Which in all action is the end of all.
Power fitted to the season, measured by
The height of the general feeling, wisdomborn
And throned of wisdom—from all neighbour crowns
Alliance and allegiance evermore.
Such boon from me Heaven's Queen to thee kingborn," etc.

48. lawn. Originally meant a clearing in a wood, then a meadow; cf. Lycidas, l. 25.

55. solitary morning. Refers to the remoteness and aloofness of the first rays of direct light from the sun.

57. The light of a star becomes pale and white in the dawn. Cf. The Princess, iii., l: "morn in the white wake of the morning star," and Marriage of Geraint, 734: "the white and glittering star of morn."

61-62. The wind carries the spray into the air, and the increased number of watery particles which break up the rays of light, intensify the colour. To such rainbows, Tennyson refers in Sea-Fairies, and in Princess, v., 308:

This flake of rainbow flying on the highest
Foam of men's deeds.

66. In the fabulous gardens of the Hesperides at the western limit of the world were certain famous golden apples, which it was one of the labours of Hercules to obtain.
67. Ambrosia was the food of the Greek gods.

74. whatever Oread haunt. Imitation of a classical construction = 'any Oread that haunts.' Oread means 'mountain-nymph.'


80. full-faced, according to Rowe and Webb, ‘‘not a face being absent,’ or perhaps also in allusion to the majestic brows of the Gods.” But the reference seems rather to be to the fact that the apple was cast *full in the face of all the Gods*. The picture presented by the words “When all—Peleus” is that of the Olympian gods facing the spectator in a long row.

81. Ranged = ‘were placed in order.’ Cf. *Princess*, iii., 101-2:

and gained

The terrace ranged along the northern front.

84. Delivering. For this use of the word compare *Richard II.*, iii., 3:

Through brazen trumpet send the breath of parle Into his ruin'd ears, and thus deliver, etc.

95-98. Suggested doubtless by *Iliad*, xiv., 347-9:

τοίοι δ’ ὄντο Χαών δία φύεν νεοθηλέα ποιήν
λωτόν θ’ ἐφεύγεντα εἰς κρόκον ἤδ’ ὑάκινθων
πυκνόν καὶ μαλακόν.

('And beneath them the divine earth caused to spring up fresh new grass, and dewy lotus, and crocus, and hyacinth thick and soft').

Cf. also *Par. Lost*, iv., 710, fol.

96. Cf. *In Memoriam*, lxxiii.: "Laburnums, dropping wells of fire."

97. amaracus, and asphodel. Greek names of flowers; the former identified by some with sweet marjoram, the latter is a species of lily. In *Odyssey* ii., 539, the shades of the heroes are represented as *haunting* an asphodel meadow.

104. The crested peacock was sacred to Here (Juno).

105-106. Cf. *Iliad*, xiv., 350-351:—

ἐπὶ δὲ νεφέλην ἐςαντο
καλὴν χρυσείην στιλπνὰι δ’ ἀπέπιπτον ἐφραῖ

('And they were clothed over with a cloud beauteous, golden; and from it kept falling glittering dew-drops').
124. throned of wisdom. 'Power which has been attained, and is maintained by wisdom.'

128. Paris was the son of Priam, King of Troy; but as a dream of his mother, Hecuba, indicated that the child was to bring misfortune to the city, he was exposed on Mount Ida, where he was found by a shepherd, who brought the boy up as his own son.


137. Flatter'd his spirit. 'Charmed his spirit'; cf. Maud, xiv., iii.: "The fancy flatter'd my mind."

139-140. 'With the spear athwart, or across, her shoulders.'

144-150. The sentiment of these five lines is characteristic of Tennyson and his work. He is the poet of self-control, moderation, duty, law, as his work is the manifestation of these very qualities; in these respects both his theory and practice are the very opposite of some of the most poetical natures,—of Shelley, for example, with his ardour and passion. See pp. 119-120 of this volume; also Dowden's Studies in Literature for a contrast between Tennyson and Browning in this regard.

144-167. In the edition of 1832, Pallas' speech read as follows:—

"Selfreverence, selfknowledge, selfcontrol
Are the three hinges of the gates of Life,
That open into power, everyday
Without horizon, bound or shadow or cloud.
Yet not for power (power of herself
Will come uncalled for) but to live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear,
And because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom, in the scorn of consequence.
(Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.)
Not as men value gold because it tricks
And blazons outward life with ornament,
But rather as the miser, for itself.
Good for selfgood doth half destroy selfgood.
The means and end, like two coiled snakes, infect
Each other, bound in one with hateful love.
So both into the fountain and the stream
A drop of poison falls. Come hearken to me,
And look upon me and consider me,
So shalt thou find me fairest, so endurance
Like to an athlete's arm, shall still become
Sinew'd with motion, till thine active will
NOTES ON TENNYSON.

(As the dark body of the Sun robed round
With his own ever-emanating lights)
Be flooded o'er with her own effluences,
And thereby grown to freedom."


153. Sequel of guerdon. 'A reward to follow,' 'the addition of a reward.'

164-165. grow Sinew'd with. 'Become strengthened by.'

165-167. 'The mature will, having passed through all kinds of experience, and having come to be identical with law (or duty) is commensurate with perfect freedom.' To the truly disciplined will, obedience to law or duty is perfect freedom, because that is all that the perfected will desires; cf. the phrase in the Collect for Peace in the Book of Common Prayer, "O God . . . whose service is perfect freedom."

171. There is of course a play on the two senses of "hear," 'to apprehend by the ears' and 'to give heed to.'

172-182. In the edition of 1832 this passage read:—

"Idalian Aphrodite oceanborn,
Fresh as the foam, newbathed in Paphian wells,
With rosy slender fingers upward drew
From her warm brow and bosom her dark hair
Fragrant and thick, and on her head upbound
In a purple band: below her lucid neck
Shone ivorylike, and from the ground her foot
Gleamed rosywhite, and o'er her rounded form
Between the shadows of the vinebunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved."

174. Idalian. So called from Idalium, a mountain city in Cyprus, reputed to be one of her favourite haunts.

175. According to the myth, Aphrodite was born of the foam of the sea. Paphos was a city in Cyprus where she first landed after her birth from the waves.

178. Ambrosial. The epithet is often applied by Homer to the hair of the gods, and to other things belonging to them. It may refer here to the fragrance of the hair.

187. This was Helen, wife of Menelaus, King of Lacedaemon. Paris subsequently carried her off, and this was the cause of the Trojan war, and the destruction of Troy itself.
189-191. In the ed. of 1832:—

I only saw my Paris raise his arm
I only saw great Here's angry eyes.

208. In order to build ships for Paris' expedition to Greece, where he was to carry off Helen.

219. trembling. Refers to the twinkling of the stars.

222. fragments. Cf. on l. 20 above.

224. The Abominable. Eris, the goddess of strife.

245-50. She has vague premonitions of the evils to befall the city of Troy in consequence of Paris' winning the fairest wife in Greece.

258. their refers to Paris and Helen.

263. Cassandra, daughter of Priam, upon whom Apollo bestowed the gift of prophecy, with the drawback that her prophecies should never be believed. Accordingly, when she prophesied the siege and destruction of Troy, they shut her up in prison as a mad woman.

264. A fire dances before her. In Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 1256, Cassandra exclaims: παται, οἴοντε πῦρ ἐπτρίπται δέ μοι ('Ah me, the fire, how it comes upon me now').

THE LOTOS-EATERS.

First published among the poems of 1832; in the edition of 1842 important changes were made. The germ of the poem is contained in a few lines of the Odyssey, ix., 82, fol.—"But on the tenth day we set foot on the land of the Lotos-eaters, who feed on food of flowers. . . . I sent forward ship mates to go and ask what manner of men they might be who lived in the land by bread, having picked out two men, and sent a third with them to be a herald. And they went their way forthwith and mixed with the Lotos-eaters; so the Lotos-eaters plotted not harm to our ship mates, but gave them of lotos to eat. But whoever of them ate the honey-sweet fruit of the lotos, no longer was he willing to bring back tidings or to come back; but there they wished to abide, feeding on the lotos with the lotos-eaters, and all forgetful of home."

In this passage the poet found the situation, and the suggestion of languor, of indifference to active life and the ties of affection. This germ the poet has immensely developed with the help of hints from the
Greek idyllic poets, and from Thomson's Castle of Indolence. Further, he creates a charming landscape in harmony with, and lending emphasis to, the mood of the central human figures. The poem is largely descriptive, but the description is not intended merely to bring pictures before the mental vision, but to express a human mood and experience (see p. 112); this gives an interest and elevation which are absent from mere material descriptions which are apt soon to weary.

The opening part of the poem is written in Spenserian stanza; the large compass and slow musical movement of this stanza fit it especially for detailed description. The same form is employed in Thomson's Castle of Indolence, and the following passages have been pointed out by Mr. Churton Collins as especially likely to have given suggestions for The Lotos-Eaters.

Was nought around but images of rest:
Sleep-soothing groves, and quiet lawns between;
And flowery beds that slumbrous influence kést,
From poppies breath'd; and beds of pleasant green
Where never yet was creeping creature seen.
Meantime unnumber'd glittering streamlets play'd,
And hurled everywhere their waters sheen;
That, as they bickered through the sunny glade,
Though restless still themselves, a lulling murmur made.

A pleasing land of drowsy-head it was,
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye;
And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,
Forever flushing round a summer sky.

Lotus was a name applied to several different species of plants; it is supposed that the species referred to in the story of the Odyssey is the Zizyphus Lotus, a low thorny shrub bearing fruit about the size of a sloe, with sweet farinaceous pulp. Herodotus at least seems (iv., 177) to identify the Lotus of the Odyssey with this plant.

1. he said. The leader of the band, i.e. Ulysses.
5. swoon refers to the dull, languid character of the air.
7. In 1832 this line read: "Above the valley burned the golden moon."
9. The movement of the verse with its three marked pauses and "the length and soft amplitude of the vowel sounds with liquid consonants," as Mr. Roden Noel remarks, happily echoes the sense. Cf. Milton's:
From morn
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve
A summer's day.

11. Tennyson, in a letter to Mr. Dawson (quoted in the preface to *A Study of "The Princess"*) says: "When I was about twenty or twenty-one I went on a tour to the Pyrenees. Lying among these mountains before a waterfall that comes down one thousand or twelve hundred feet, I sketched it (according to my custom then) in these words:—

'Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn.'

When I printed this, a critic informed me that 'lawn' was the material used in theatres to imitate a waterfall and graciously added, 'Mr. T. should not go to the boards of a theatre but to Nature herself for his suggestions.'—And I had gone to Nature herself."

Mr. Libby remarks: "Our river Rideau (curtain) was so-called by some one who had made an observation similar to Tennyson's."

16. In edition of 1832: "'Three thunder-cloven thrones of oldest snow.'"

16. aged snow. Snow that had lain unmelted for ages.


19. The sunset seemed to linger as if charmed by the beautiful scene which it was leaving.

21. yellow down. *Downs* are rolling hills (see note on *Lady of Shalott*, l. 3). It has been suggested that the downs are yellow because of the evening light, but in that case the mountains would be yellow also, whereas, the colour seems to mark out the 'down' from the rest of the landscape; further, ll. 15-18 seem to show that the sun was so low as only to touch the *tops* of the mountains. The *down* is probably, therefore, yellow from the character of the vegetation upon it, perhaps covered with the yellow-flowered lotus.

23. galingale. "Generally used of *Cyperus Longus*, one of the sedges; but the Papyrus species is here intended" (Palgrave). The papyrus is a sedge, growing in still pools, rising some 8 or 10 feet above the water, bearing on the summit of the leafless stem "a compound umbel of extremely numerous drooping spikelets with a general involucre of eight tiny filiform leaves."

26. rosy flame of sunset.
31-33. The sea sounded to their ears as if breaking on some remote and unknown shore.

34. The voices of the dead were supposed to be shrill and weak; so Virgil, *Aeneid*, vi., 492, speaks of their voices as *exiquam vocem*, so Theocritus, xiii., 59. Shakespeare (*Hamlet I.*, 1) says: "the sheeted dead Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets."

38. The sun was setting in the west, the moon rising in the east (see l. 7).

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**CHORIC SONG.**

The narrative stanza of Spenser is now changed to the varied metre of a choral ode, to suit the varying feelings to which lyric expression is to be given. The theme is the folly of struggle with the difficulties of life—let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die. The same theme had already been treated in similar verse by Tennyson in *The Sea-Fairies* of 1830.

49. *gleaming* refers, according to Rowe and Webb, to the reflections of light from particles of mica, quartz, etc., in the granite; but, doubtless, as Mr. Sykes notes, the reference is to the reflections of the light of the sky upon the water.

51. Rolfe prints "tired" in both places in this line and observes: "All the eds. print ‘tir’d’ in both places contrary to Tennyson’s rule not to use the apostrophe when the verb ends in *e*.” But Tennyson, no doubt, used the apostrophe to prevent mistakes. "Tir’d" of course represents two syllables in the line, but the effect is obtained by dwelling on the *ir*; to pronounce tir’d injures the sound effect.

56. The narcotic properties of the poppy (from one species opium is made) associate it with sleep.

57. The whole of this choric song is full of touches which resemble and may have been suggested by the pastoral poets; many of these parallels may be found in Collins and Stedman; in some cases the resemblance is very close, *e.g.*, compare this stanza with the following from Bion, *Idyll v.*, 11-15:
translated by Lang: "Wretched men and weary that we are, how sorely we toil, how greatly we cast our souls away on gain, and laborious arts, continually coveting yet more wealth! Surely we have all forgotten that we are men condemned to die, and how short is the hour, that to us is allotted by Fate."

66. slumber's holy balm. Macbeth (Act ii., 1) speaks of "the innocent sleep ... balm of hurt minds."

73. Cf. Matthew, vi., vv. 25 fol.

84. Mr. Collins compares Aen. iv., 451: taedet coeli convexa tueri. (It is a weariness to behold the vault of heaven).

94, fol. Mr. Collins compares Moschus, Idyll, v.:

translated by Lang: "Surely an evil life lives the fisherman, whose home is his ship, and his labours are in the sea. ... Nay, sweet to me is sleep beneath the broad-leaved plane-tree; let me love to listen to the murmur of the brook hard by, soothing, not troubling, the husbandman with his sound."

95. Mr. Collins compares Aen. i., 381: conscendi navibus aequor, and Othello, ii., 1: "And let the labouring barque climb hills of seas."

102. amber light. See l. 19.


106-7. These two lines exemplify Tennyson's power of presenting the minuter phenomena of nature in picturesque phrase.

109. mild-minded melancholy. This phrase had been already employed by Tennyson in a suppressed sonnet of his, printed in the Englishman's Magazine for August, 1831.
114. This stanza was added in the edition of 1842; note that it introduces one of the most human touches in the poem.

118. inherit us. 'Have succeeded to our possessions.'

120. island princes, etc. 'The princes of Ithaca and the neighbouring islands, which were their homes.' The state of things represented in ll. 120-123 did, according to the Odyssey, exist in Ithaca.

133. In the ed. of 1832 this line read: 'O propt on lavish beds,' etc.

134. lowly is used as if the adverbial form from 'low,' as in The Lady of Shalott, 146.

136. dark and holy. 'Shaded with clouds and wrapt in religious calm' (Rowe and Webb). But the suggestion of 'clouds' seems out of keeping with the context. The darkness is rather that of the 'dark-blue sky' (l. 84) contrasted with the brightness of the landscape (l. 137).

139. dewy echoes. The epithet is vague but suggestive, after the manner of Keats; dewy cannot properly be applied to echoes; it seems to suggest the sound of waterfalls dashing into spray.

141. watch. Originally 'hear.'

142. wov'n acanthus-wreath divine. 'Through the masses of acanthus foliage.' Acanthus, a plant with graceful pendant leaves whose form is familiar to us in the capital of Corinthian columns. Divine presumably 'divinely beautiful.' Cf. Madeline, ii., "Light glooming over eyes divine."

145. barren. Originally read "flowery."

148. alley. Milton also uses "alley" of the natural passages in the woods in Comus, 311.

149. the yellow Lotos-dust. 'The pollen of the Lotos flowers.'

149. Note the metrical effect produced by beginning the lines with the stressed syllable; this gives an animation in keeping with a change of tone in the singers, who now make up their minds as to their course.
The whole passage from this line to the end was re-written and greatly improved in 1842. Originally it stood:

"We have had enough of motion,
Weariness and wild alarm,
Tossing on the tossing ocean,
Where the tuskèd seahorse walloweth
In a stripe of grassgreen calm,
At noon tide beneath the lea;
And the monstrous narwhale swalloweth
His foamfountains in the sea,
Long enough the winédark wave our weary bark did carry.
This is lovelier and sweeter,
Men of Ithaca, this is meeter,
In the hollow rosy vale to tarry,
Like a dreamy Lotos-eater, a delirious Lotos-eater!
We will eat the Lotos, sweet
As the yellow honeycomb,
In the valley some, and some
On the ancient heights divine;
And no more roam,
On the loud hoar foam,
To the melancholy home
At the limit of the brine,
The little isle of Ithaca, beneath the day's decline,
We'll lift no more the shattered oar,
No more unfurl the straining sail;
With the blissful Lotos-eaters pale
We will abide in the golden vale
Of the Lotos-land, till the Lotos fail;
We will not wander more.
Hark! how sweet the horned ewes bleat
On the solitary steeps,
And the merry lizard leaps,
And the foamwhite waters pour;
And the dark pine weeps,
And the lithe vine creeps,
And the heavy melon sleeps
On the level of the shore:
Oh! islanders of Ithaca, we will not wander more.
Surely, surely slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
Than labour in the ocean, and rowing with the oar.
Oh! islanders of Ithaca, we will return no more."

In regard to this change Mr. Stopford Brooke says (Tennyson: His Art and Relation to Modern Life, p. 123): "Instead of the jingling, unintellectual, merely fanciful ending of the poem of 1833, every image of which wanders hither and thither without clear purpose and weakens the impression of the previous part, the poem thus closing in a feeble
anti-climax, we have the weighty, solemn, thoughtful, classic close, embodying the Epicurean conception of the Gods, bringing all Olympus down into harmony with the indifferent dreaming of the Lotos-eaters, but leaving in our minds the sense of a dreadful woe tending on those who dream; for what the gods do with impunity, man may not do. Yet, even the Lotos-eating Gods inevitable fate awaits. This is the work of a great artist, and in this steady improvement of his poems Tennyson stands almost alone. Other poets, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, did not recast their poems in this wholesale fashion, and the additions and changes which they made were by no means always improvements. Tennyson, working with his clear sense of what was artistic, and with the stately steadiness which belonged to his character, not only improved but doubled the value of the poems he altered."

152. the wallowing monster, etc. The whale would answer to the description (see l. 7 of the passage quoted on l. 150).

153. equal mind. A classic phrase; cf. Horace, Od., ii., 3,

aequam memento rebus in arduis
servare mentem.

154. hollow. ‘Consisting of a valley,’ or ‘full of valleys’; cf. opening description.

155, fol. The calmness and indifference of the Gods was a notion of the Epicureans and is depicted by Lucretius, De Rer. Nat., iii., 15 fol. (see note on Morte d’Arthur, l. 260); another parallel to this passage is cited from Goethe, Iph. auf Tauris, iv.

156. nectar and ambrosia was the proper diet of the Olympian divinities.

158. golden houses. “The epithet ‘golden’ is often used by Homer of the gods and all their belongings” (Rowe and Webb).

164. So Macbeth (Act v., sc. 1) calls life “a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.”

167. little dues. The small returns which they get from sowing the seed, etc.

168. hell. ‘Hades’ where Greek story represents Ixion, Tantalus, etc., suffering endless torments.

169. Elysian valleys. Elysium or the Elysian fields is described in
Homer as the habitation of heroes after death—the Greek heaven (see Ody., iv., 563).

170. asphodel. See note on Oenone, l. 95.

‘YOU ASK ME WHY, THO' ILL AT EASE.’

This and the two following pieces were first published in 1842, but we are told that they were written in 1833. The poem before us exhibits the poet’s pride in his country, and in that steady development of her political institutions—that combined conservatism and progress—which distinguishes her history. Tennyson’s satisfaction, upon the whole, with his country may be contrasted with the bitter attacks of Byron and Shelley on the social and political condition of England in their day. The difference in Tennyson’s attitude is mainly due to his character and temperament, but partly to the change in the general tone and condition of the country since the close of the era of repression which had existed during the Napoleonic wars, and during the time when the opinions of Byron and Shelley were maturing.

2. this region. England. There is a reference to its misty climate in the following line, as compared with the more brilliant atmosphere of “the South.”

6. sober-suited Freedom. Not a showy freedom since it does not exhibit itself in institutions strikingly democratic; the English constitution may not commend itself to those who seek for external forms markedly popular, but it contains the substance of freedom.

11. Originally this line read “broadens slowly.”

11-12. English history is full of examples of this, both in politics and law. Compare Macaulay’s famous comments on the Revolution of 1688 towards the close of chap. x. of his History.

19. ‘When freedom of opinion in the individual is considered a crime against society.’

23-24. As the first two lines of the stanza refer to increase in power, so these to increase in wealth.

24. The line read originally “should almost choke.”
'OF OLD SAT FREEDOM ON THE HEIGHTS.'

1-4. Of old, freedom was not actually realized in human society, but existed as an ideal out of the reach of man; so the poet represents her as dwelling on the heights amidst the unfettered play of the great forces of nature; cf. the close of Coleridge's *France*, where the poet finds Liberty, not among men, but in nature, "The guide of homeless winds and playmate of the waves."

6. 'Self-contained and prepared for that future growth of liberty which she foresees.'

7-8. 'Earlier men had some partial perception and experience of freedom.'


15-16. The poet has in mind, perhaps, the common representation of Britannia with the trident in her hand to symbolize the dominion of the sea. The trident is the symbol of Neptune, hence "God-like." Cf. also the common representation of Jove with the triple thunder-bolt in his hands, *e.g.*, Ovid. *Metamor.*, ii., 848:

Ille pater rectorque deum, cui dextra trisulcis
Ignibus armata est, qui nutu concutit orbem.

'LOVE THOU THY LAND, WITH LOVE FAR-BROUGHT.'

This poem is an expansion of the concluding lines immediately preceding. It was written soon after the passing of the first Reform Bill—a time of hopefulness, for the extreme tension had been relieved by a bloodless revolution—a time of anxiety for moderate thinkers, as initiating, perhaps, a too rapid transfer of power to the hands of an ignorant democracy.

3-4. but transfused, etc. 'The true patriot will take thought for the possibilities of future development.' Cf. lines 15 and 16 of "You ask me why."

14. the ray. 'The ray of knowledge'—as indicated by next stanza.

17-20. Cf. the Prologue to *In Memoriam*:

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell.
and the whole of No. cxiv. in the same poem.

19. sky. 'Climate,' 'region.' 'Sky' is the subject of the subjunctive "bear" in the next line.

22-24. 'Do not compromise at all with your own prejudices, but in the treatment of what may seem the prejudices of others, be more considerate.'

26-27. neither count on praise, etc. The highest work is not wont to win immediate fame; that comes later when time has tested what is really praiseworthy: cf. Luke, xi., 48: "Ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them."

28. watch-words. Phrases which embody some prevalent idea, as "The brotherhood of man," "The unity of the empire." Lines 29 and 30 are an expansion of line 28. The poet means that we should not allow our judgment to be blinded by enthusiasm for some specious and widely accepted generalization.

33. That is a relative pronoun referring to "law." A good law will be the result of discussions which will have exposed all its aspects; it will, in consequence, represent and serve to bind together the interests of various classes; and, as corresponding to felt needs, will be a living and effective force, not a mere dead letter on the statute-book.

36. close. 'Include'; cf. To the Queen:

A thousand claims to reverence closed
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen.

37. cold and warm, etc. There is a reference to the old idea of nature being composed of four elements. Cf. Milton's description of Chaos, Par. Lost, II., 892:

For hot, cold, moist, and dry, four champions fierce
Strive here for mast'ry, and to battle bring
Their embryo atoms.

45-48. 'The new must adjust itself to that which is passing away' ("that which flies"). There seems to be awkwardness and incongruity in the expression of this stanza.

50-52. The realization of new ideas in practice has usually been accompanied with violence.
61. 'The forms of government which are to preside over future developments.'

67-68. The image is that of a hurricane carried over the face of the earth accompanied by Discord.

69. 'This storm of violence will hasten the destruction of the institutions which you have idolized.'

74. 'In these later years of the world's history, as well as in former times.'

87. Cf. Matthew, x., 34: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I come not to send peace, but a sword."

94. "As we profit by those who have gone before."

95. Earn well the thrifty months. 'Deserve well the months during which something may be laid up for the future.' But perhaps the poet uses "earn" with something of the sense of "harvest"; in provincial English, it is said to have the sense 'glean,' and is etymologically connected with Ger. "ernte," meaning 'harvest'.

THE EPIC
AND THE EPILOGUE (ll. 273-303).

The lines under The Epic were written by the poet (and are included in these Selections) merely as an introduction to the Morte d'Arthur. The abrupt opening and fragmentary character of the latter poem seemed to need an explanation, just as certain peculiarities of the story of The Princess require an explanation, and in both cases Tennyson makes use of a setting—a prologue and epilogue. Lines 27-28 need not be taken as literally true of Tennyson; it is extremely unlikely that he had written twelve books on the story of Arthur, but they do indicate that Morte d'Arthur is only portion of a larger scheme which was subsequently realized in Idylls of the King. Mrs. Ritchie quotes Tennyson as saying: "When I was twenty-four, I meant to write a whole great poem on it (the Arthurian story), and began it in the Morte d'Arthur. I said I should do it in twenty years but the reviews stopped me. By Arthur I always meant the soul, and by the Round Table the passions and
capacities of man. There is no grander subject in the world than King Arthur.” Here the poet, besides telling that, when he wrote Morte d’Arthur, he had the larger scheme in his mind, also asserts the symbolic nature of the poem; and this is a point to which The Epic and epilogue before us draw attention. The imaginary audience in The Epic are interested in the most modern questions, ‘geology and schism,’ etc., and old things are passing away. This is true also of Tennyson’s real audience and the real world. To such an audience the poet comes with a story from old ‘heroic times,’ fashioned after the manner of the father of poetry, Homer; what interest can it have for them? The answer is hinted at, in the epilogue (276, fol.); Tennyson insinuates (modesty forbids him to put his claim openly): first, that there is perhaps a certain charm in the style (a charm which every reader will grant); second, that there is something of modern thought in the poem—it is not a mere description of external events as Homer’s account would have been, but contains something of a deeper significance. In the dream (288, fol.) Tennyson gives a further hint that some, at least, of these “modern touches” are conveyed through symbolism. Arthur according to the old story was to come again; he did not really die. The poet seizes upon this to point the moral of his tale, which is contained in lines 240-241:

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

His hearers say the old honour is gone from Christmas (The Epic, l. 7), there is a general decay in faith (l. 18); the poet substantially answers: “Not so, your decay is not real decay, but change, development. The old ideals pass away, but only to give place to higher ones; the old English ideal, King Arthur, has gone, but reappears in nobler form—the ‘modern gentleman’; and so we can confidently anticipate in future generations (297, fol.) a continual progress to perfection.” The Epic opens with the lament that Christmas is gone, but the Epilogue closes with the ringing of bells that announce that Christmas still exists; old customs connected with it may indeed be passing away, but the real essence of the Christmas festival still abides. One may compare the well-known lyric from In Memoriam, “Ring out wild bells” (cvi.):

Ring out a slowly dying cause
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.
NOTES ON TENNYSON.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

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.

Morte d'Arthur therefore represents some of the most characteristic aspects of the poet's thought (as well as the most characteristic beauties of his style)—his faith in human progress, his belief in development,—in a slow and steady development in which the old does not pass away, but reshapes itself to new forms in accordance with new conditions.

MORTE D'ARTHUR.

This poem was first published in the volumes of 1842; Edward Fitzgerald states that it was read to him from MS. in 1835, and then lacked introduction and epilogue. Again he says, "Mouthing out his hollow oes and aes, deep-chested music, this is something as A. T. reads . . . His voice very deep and deep-chested, but rather murmuring than mouthing, like the sound of a far sea or of a pine-wood, I remember, greatly struck Carlyle." Tennyson, according to his son (Life, I, p. 194), warned his readers "not to press too hardly on details whether for history or for allegory."

In 1869, when the greater number of The Idylls of the King had been written, Tennyson took this poem out of its setting, prefixed 169 lines, and added 30 at the close, in order to fit it to be the conclusion of the series of Idylls of the King. In this shape it is entitled The Passing of Arthur. The added lines serve to make the connection with the other idylls closer, and to bring out the symbolic meaning, which in the earlier form had not, in the body of the poem, been very prominent; indeed, Morte d'Arthur may, according to the feelings of some readers at least, be best enjoyed without thought of symbolism. The style of the Morte d'Arthur is unlike, and (in the present editor's opinion) superior, to that of the other idylls—the blank verse more stately, and less familiar in its rhythms, the style more terse and restrained. Apart from particular imitations of phrase and turns of
expression, the Homeric quality lies in the dignified flow of the verse, in the terseness and clearness yet impressiveness of the style, and, to some degree, in the nature of the theme; but Mr. Brimley is undoubtedly right when he says: "They are rather Virgilian than Homeric echoes; elaborate and stately, not naive and eager to tell the story; rich in pictorial detail; carefully studied; conscious of their own art; more anxious for beauty of workmanship than interest of action" (Brimley's Essays, p. 34). In this poem and in Ulysses, Tennyson's blank verse is at its best. Tennyson is one of the most successful employers of narrative blank verse. The great model in this species had been Milton; but his long and resonant periods, his rhythm attained largely by the use of sonorous polysyllables, were little suited to the treatment of themes less grand than his own. Accordingly, the poets of the 18th century who used blank verse in narrative, were constantly falling into pompous rhetoric, or into homely and unrhymical lines differing little from prose. Tennyson, making use of some models he found in Keats, developed a blank verse of his own, in which by a careful adjustment of the pauses within the lines, an avoidance of diaeresis (i.e., the coincidence of word endings, with foot-endings), etc., he attained smoothly-flowing verses without the use of polysyllables, and a periodic rhythm less prolonged and involved than Milton's.

The source of Morte d'Arthur is Sir Thomas Malory's version of the Arthurian legends—a book entitled Morte d'Arthur, written about 1570. The original is followed with remarkable closeness in parts, and the comparison is so interesting that we quote the whole (viz., chap. v. of Bk. xxii.):—

Ah, Sir Launcelot, said king Arthur, this day have I sore missed thee. Alas, that ever I was against thee, for now have I my death, whereof Sir Gawaine me warned in my dream. Then Sir Lucan took up the king the one part, and Sir Bedivere the other part, and in the lifting, the king swooned, and Sir Lucan fell in a swoon with the lift, that the part of his bowels fell out of his body, and therewith the noble knight's heart brast. And when king Arthur came to himself again, he beheld Sir Lucan how he lay foaming at the mouth, and part of his bowels lay at his feet. Alas, said the king, this is unto me a full heavy sight to see this noble duke so die for my sake, for he would have holpen me that had more need of help than I. Alas, he would not complain him, his heart was so set to help me. Now Jesu have mercy upon his soul. Then Sir Bedivere wept for the death of his brother. Leave this mourning and weeping, said the king, for all this will not avail me: for, wit thou well, and I might live myself, the death of Sir Lucan would grieve me evermore; but my time lieth fast, said the king. Therefore, said Arthur, take thou Excalibur, my good sword, and go with it to yonder water side, and when thou comest there, I charge thee throw my sword in that water, and come again, and tell me what thou there seest. My lord, said Bedivere, your commandment shall be done, and lightly bring you word again. So Sir Bedivere
departed, and by the way he beheld that noble sword, that the pommele and haft were all of precious stones, and then he said to himself, If I throw this rich sword in the water, thereof shall never come good, but harm and loss. And then Sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree. And as soon as he might he came again unto the king, and said he had been at the water, and had thrown the sword into the water. What sawest thou there? said the king. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but waves and winds. That is untruly said of thee, said the king; therefore go thou lightly again, and do my command as thou art to me lief and dear, spare not, but throw it in. Then Sir Bedivere returned again, and took the sword in his hand; and then him thought sin and shame to throw away that noble sword; and so oft he hid the sword, and returned again, and told to the king that he had been at the water, and done his commandment. What saw thou there? said the king. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but the waters wap and the waves wan. Ah traitor, untrue, said king Arthur, now hast thou betrayed me twice. Who would have wend that thou that hast been to me so lief and dear, and thou art named a noble knight, and would betray me for the riches of the sword. But now go again lightly, for thy long tarrying putteth me in great jeopardy of my life, for I have taken cold. And but if thou do now as I bid thee, if ever I may see thee, I shall slay thee with mine own hands, for thou wouldest for my rich sword see me dead. Then Sir Bedivere departed, and went to the sword, and lightly took it up, and went to the water side, and there he bound the girdle about the hilts, and then he threw the sword as far into the water as he might, and there came an arm and an hand above the water, and met it, and caught it, and so shook it thrice and brandished, and then vanished away the hand with the sword in the water. So Sir Bedivere came again to the king, and told him what he saw. Alas, said the king, help me hence, for I dread me I have tarried over long. Then Sir Bedivere took the king upon his back, and so went with him to that water side. And when they were at the water side, even fast by the bank hoved a little barge, with many fair ladies in it, and among them all was a queen, and all they had black hoods, and all they wept and shrieked when they saw king Arthur. Now put me into the barge, said the king: and so he did softly. And there received him three queens with great mourning, and so they set him down, and in one of their laps king Arthur laid his head, and then that queen said, Ah, dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me? Alas, this wound on your head hath caught overmuch cold. And so then they rowed from the land; and Sir Bedivere beheld all those ladies go from him. Then Sir Bedivere cried, Ah, my lord Arthur, what shall become of me now ye go from me, and leave me here alone among mine enemies. Comfort thysel; said the king, and do as well as thou mayest, for in me is no trust for to trust in. For I will into the vale of Avillon, to heal me of my grievous wound. And if thou hear never more of me, pray for my soul. But ever the queens and the ladies wept and shrieked, that it was pity to hear. And as soon as Sir Bedivere had lost the sight of the barge, he wept and wailed, and so took the forest, and so he went all that night, and in the morning he was ware betwixt two holts hoar of a chapel and an hermitage.

1. So refers to a supposed preceding portion, Morte d’Arthur being, as indicated in The Epic, a mere fragment.

3. King Arthur’s table. The famous “Round Table” with its 150 seats. After it was named the order of knights established by Arthur,

A glorious company, the flower of men,
To serve as model for the mighty world,
And be the fair beginning of a time. —Guinevere.
4. Lyonnesse. A fabulous country extending from Cornwall to the Sicily Isles, and supposed to have been subsequently submerged by the sea.

6. bold Sir Bedivere. "Bold" is a permanent epithet that is connected with Sir Bedivere when there is no reason in the context for calling attention to that particular quality. Such permanent epithets are especially common in Homer, so Achilles is πολύπτωτος (swift footed), Ulysses πολύπτωτος (crafty), etc. In Virgil pius is a frequent epithet of Aeneas; in Scott, William of Deloraine is "good at need."

7. This line is omitted in The Passing of Arthur, the only change the poet made in the original poem when he developed Morte d'Arthur into The Passing of Arthur.

9. chancel. Properly, the eastern portion of the church containing the choir and altar, often railed off from the main part of the edifice.

12. a great water. "This phrase has probably often been ridiculed as affected phraseology for 'a great lake'; but it is an instance of the intense presentative power of Mr. Tennyson's genius. It precisely marks the appearance of a large lake outspread and taken in at one glance from a high ground. Had 'a great lake' been substituted for it, the phrase would have needed to be translated by the mind into water of a certain shape and size, before the picture was realized by the imagination. 'A great lake' is, in fact, one degree removed from the sensuous to the logical,—from the individual appearance to the generic name, and is, therefore, less poetic and pictorial" (Brimley). The word "water" is used in the same sense by Malory (see iv., 6).

21. Camelot. See note on Lady of Shalott, l. 5.

23. Merlin. The famous enchanter; he received Arthur at his birth, and reappears repeatedly in the legends; he is one of the chief characters in the Idyll Merlin and Vivien.

23-24. Cf. The Coming of Arthur, where this prophecy in regard to Arthur is referred to—

And Merlin in our time
Hath spoken also, not in jest, and sworn,
Though men may wound him, that he will not die,
But pass, and come again.

27. Excalibur. The word is said to be of Celtic origin and to mean 'cut-steel'; Spenser calls Arthur's sword Morddure, i.e., 'the hard-biter.' In the stories of chivalry, the sword, spear, etc., of the heroes,
which often possessed magical powers, have commonly special names. In the following stanza from Longfellow, the names of the swords of Charlemagne, The Cid, Orlando, Arthur, and Lancelot are successively mentioned:

It is the sword of a good Knight,  
Tho' homespun be his mail;  
What matter if it be not bright  
Joyeuse, Colada, Durindale,  
Excalibur, or Aaroundight.

In *The Coming of Arthur*, l. 295, Excalibur is described:

the sword  
That rose from out the bosom of the lake,  
And Arthur row'd across and took it—rich  
With jewels—elfin Urim, on the hilt,  
Bewildering heart and eye—the blade so bright  
That men are blinded by it—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 yourself,  
"Cast me away!"

31. **samite** is a rich silk stuff interwoven with threads of gold and silver.

37. **middle mere.** 'Middle of the mere.' Tennyson is imitating a common Latin construction; cf. note on *Oenone*, 10.

38. **lightly.** 'Nimbly,' 'quickly'; the word is used frequently by Malory. See pp. 155-6 above.

43. **hest.** 'Command'; frequent in Shakespeare, etc.

48-51. Note the variations of consonants, vowels, and pauses in this line to give sound effects in keeping with the sense.

51. **levels.** "'The classic *aequora* may have suggested the 'shining levels,' but there is a deeper reason for the change of phrase, for the great water as seen from the high ground, becomes a series of flashing surfaces when Sir Bedivere looks along it from its margin" (Brimley). Cf. Virgil, *Georgics I.*, 469: *tellus quoque et aequora*.

55. **keen with frost.** We connect frost with transparency of the air, and the transparency of the air made the moonlight **light** clearer.

56. **diamond sparks.** "'The eds. down to 1853 have 'diamond studs'" (Rolfe).
57. Jacinth. Another form of hyacinth; the name is applied to a bright coloured, transparent variety of zircon of various shades of red passing into orange.

60. Now looking at one side of the question, now at another. The line is a translation of *Aeneid*, iv., 285: *Atque animum nunc hues celerem, nunc dividit illuc.*


*Atreides then his massy lance prepares,*

*In act to throw.*

(Rowe and Webb).

63. the many-knotted waterflags. This refers presumably to the iris which, with its blue and yellow flowers and sword shaped leaves, is so common near streams, pools, etc. What the poet refers to by "many-knotted" is not clear. Mr. Sykes enumerates the explanations in his note: "(1) The root stalk of the flag which shows additional bulbs from year to year; (2) the joints in the flower stalks, of which some half-dozen may be found in each stalk; (3) the large seed-pods that terminate the stalks, a very noticeable feature when the plant is sere; (4) the various bunches or knots of iris in a bed of the plants, so that the whole phrase suggests a thickly matted bed of flags. I favour the last interpretation, though Tennyson's fondness of technical accuracy in his references makes the second more than possible."

70-71. "The ripple *washing in the reeds,*" and the "wild water *lapping on the crags*" are "two phrases marking exactly the difference of sound produced by water swelling up against a permeable or impermeable barrier" (Brimley).

73. 'Thou hast been false to thy natural honesty, and to thy title of knight.' Cf. Malory: "And thou art named a noble knight and would betray me for the riches of the sword."

80. lief. 'Dear' (A. S. leof), used by Chaucer (e.g., *Troilus and Crysede*, iii., 1. 596: "myn uncle lief and dere"), Spenser, etc., but now obsolete except in the colloquial phrase, "I had as lief."

86. chased. 'Engraved with ornamental designs.'

103-106. Malory, i., 22, tells how Arthur first saw the Lady of the Lake: "So they rode till they came to a lake, the which was a fair
water and broad, and in the midst of the lake Arthur was ware of an arm clothed in white samite, that held a fair sword in that hand. Lo, said Merlin, yonder, is that sword that I spake of. With that they saw a damsel going upon the lake: What damsel is that, said Arthur. That is the Lady of the Lake, said Merlin; and within that lake is a rock, and therein is as fair a place as any upon earth and richly beseen."

110. conceit. Used, as often in Shakespeare, in the original sense of 'conception,' 'idea'; cf. _Merch. of Venice_, iii., 4, 2: "You have a noble and a true conceit of godlike amity."

112. The repetition of lines and phrases is Homeric.

122. Tennyson is fond of this bold metaphor; cf. _In Memoriam_, ix.: "'Till all my widow'd race be run," _Aylmer's Field_, 720: "'I cry to vacant chairs and widow'd walls."

125. 'Who shouldst perform all the services which belonged to them severally.'

129. for. 'Since': a use of _for_ common in Shakespeare, _e.g._, _Richard III._, ii., 2, 85 (see Abbot's _Shakespearian Grammar_, § 151).

139. a streamer of the northern morn. A ray of the Aurora Borealis (Aurora = dawn, Borealis = northern). Cf. Scott, _Lady of the Lake_, iv., 9:

Shifting like flashes darted forth  
By the red streamers of the north.

140. the moving isles, etc. Icebergs; the aurora is more conspicuous in northern latitudes.

171. Remorsefully. 'With pity.' _Remorse_ is employed by Shakespeare in sense of 'pity'; so _Merch. of Ven._, iv., 1, 20:

Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse more strange  
Than is thy strange apparent cruelty.

and _Two Gentlemen of Verona_, iv., 3, 13:

O Eglamour thou art a gentleman  
Valiant, wise, remorseful, well accomplish'd.

182. His breath, made visible by the frosty air, clung about him.

183. The effect that mist has in enlarging the apparent size of objects is a matter of common experience, cf. _Guinevere_, 597:

The moony vapour rolling round the King,  
Who seem'd the phantom of a Giant in it,  
Enwound him fold by fold.
186. Dry clash'd. We speak of *liquid* sounds; *dry* as applied to sounds means harsh and abrupt. The metaphor is suggested by classical phrases; so in *Iliad*, xiii., 409: καρφαλέον ἁσπὶς ἀυτὲ (*the shield rang dry* when struck by a spear); *Lucretius*, vi., 119, uses aridus sonus (dry sound) in reference to certain kinds of thunder; again Virgil *Georg.* i., 357-8: aridus fragor. Cf. *The Voyage*, l. 10:

Warm broke the breeze against the brow,  
Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail.

**harness.** *Body-armour*—the original meaning of the word. Cf. *Macbeth*, v., 5, 52: "At least we'll die with harness on our back."

186-90. Similar sound-effects in frosty air are noted by Wordsworth, *Influence of Natural Objects*:

With the din  
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud,  
The leafless trees and every icy crag  
Tinkled like iron.

192. *'The reflections of the moon on the water.'*

193. hove. For *'hove in sight'; from heave 'to rise,'* as in Gray's *Elegy*: "Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap"; the phrase is applied to a vessel *rising* above the horizon.

197. Black-stoled. *Stole* is a long loose robe reaching to the feet; cf. *Sir Galahad*, 43.

199. shiver'd. Cf. *The Princess*, iii., 73: "Consonant chords that shiver to one note." In the present passage the word seems to convey not only the idea of vibration, but also of shrillness.

tingling. As if the stars had nerves which thrilled in response.

202-3. The details are very effective in suggesting a picture of utter desolation.

209. casque. *'Helmet.'*

214. the springing east. *'The rising sun.'* Cf. p. 110, 2nd sentence.

215. greaves. See note on *Lady of Shalott*, l. 76.

*cuisses.* Armour for the thighs; cf. *I. Hen. IV.*, iv., 1, 105: "His cuisses on his thighs."

235. Cf. Malory, xiv., 2: "Also Merlin made the Round Table in tokening of the roundness of the world, for by the Round Table is the world signified by right."
240-1. These two lines give expression to the inner sense of the poem. Cf. *In Memoriam*, Prologue:

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be:
They are but broken lights of thee
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

242. In order that men may develop, and not stagnate, there is need of change. Even good customs are apt to degenerate into mere formalities, and to hamper the growth of the human spirit.

244-5. "May God accept my work and, absorbing it, as it were, into Himself, purify it of all its unworthy elements" (Rowe and Webb).

254. The idea of the earth being bound to the heavens by a gold chain is an old one, and has been supposed to originate with Homer (*Iliad*, viii., 25-26). It is found in *Par. Lost*, ii., 1051, in Bacon’s *Advancement of Learning*, there is an allusion to it: "According to the allegory of the poets the highest link of nature’s chain must needs be tied to the foot of Jupiter’s chair," and in Hare’s Sermon on the Law of Self-Sacrifice: "This is the golden chain of love, whereby the whole creation is bound to the throne of the Creator."

259. Malory speaks in one passage of a valley and in others of an island of Avilion—mere places of earth, however; but in Celtic legend the name is connected with the habitation of the blest, and it is in that sense that the poet uses it here.

260. Cf. the description of Elysium, *Odyssey*, vi., 42:

(Where, they say, the seat of the Gods abideth sure, nor is it shaken by winds or ever wetted by shower, nor does snow come near it.)

and *Lucretius*, iii., 18-22:—

(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 frost harms with hoary fall: an ever-cloudless aether o’ercanopies them.)
and Tennyson himself in *Lucretius*:

> The Gods, who haunt  
The lucid interspaces of world and world,  
Where never creeps a cloud, or moves a wind,  
Nor ever falls the least white star of snow.

218. **High from the daïs-throne.** 'As he sat elevated on the daïs-throne.'

223. In the later *Idylls of the King*, the poet's conception of Arthur changes somewhat; and he represents his hero as indifferent about his success in tournaments; he is inferior in this respect to Lancelot (see *Gareth and Lynette*, 485-6), but excels in real battle; cf. *Lancelot and Elaine*, ll. 310, fol.

232. Cf. *Matthew* ii., 1-11: "Now when Jesus was born . . . behold there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying where is he that is born King of the Jews, for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him . . . And, lo, the star which they saw in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was . . . And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."

234. **Round Table.** See note on l. 3.


happy. The commentators compare Virgil's "laetas segetes" (glad harvest).

263. **crown'd with summer sea.** Cf. *Odyssey*, x., 195: νήσον, τὴν πέρι πόντος ἀπειροτος ἐστεφάνωται (an island round which the infinite sea has made a crown).

267. **fluting.** 'Singing with flute-like notes.' The notion of the swan singing before death is very ancient; it is found in Virgil, Pliny, etc.; cf. *Othello*, v., 2: "I will play the swan and die in music," Tennyson's *Dying Swan*, etc.

268. **Ruffles.** Refers to the slight opening out of the wings when the swan swims.

269. **swarthy webs.** 'The dark webbed feet.'
ULYSSES.

This poem was first published in 1842, and has remained unaltered. Among the Greeks who fought against Troy, Ulysses was conspicuous, especially for fortitude, wisdom, and craft. On his return voyage to Ithaca, he gave offence to Poseidon (Neptune), and was in consequence delayed by numerous misfortunes. These adventures are the subject of the Odyssey, which represents him as finally restored to his kingdom and his faithful wife Penelope.

Tennyson, in the poem before us, accepts this character, but represents the hero after his return dominated in his old age by a thoroughly modern feeling—the restless desire of experience and knowledge. The hint for this amplification of Homer, Tennyson found, as is pointed out by Mr. Churton Collins, in Dante: "The germ, the spirit, and the sentiment of this poem are from the twenty-sixth canto of Dante's Inferno. Tennyson has indeed done little but fill in the sketch of the great Florentine. As is usual with him in all cases where he borrows, the details and minuter portions of his work are his own; he has added grace, elaboration, and symmetry; he has called in the assistance of other poets. A rough crayon draught has been metamorphosed into a perfect picture. As the resemblances lie not so much in expression as in general tone, we will in this case substitute for the original a literal version. Ulysses is speaking:

Neither fondness for my son, nor reverence for my aged sire, nor the due love which ought to have gladened Penelope, could conquer in me the ardour which I had to become experienced in the world, and in human vice and worth. I put out into the deep open sea with but one ship, and with that small company which had not deserted me. . . . I and my companions were old and tardy when we came to that narrow pass where Hercules assigned his landmarks. 'O brothers,' I said, 'who through a hundred thousand dangers have reached the West, deny not to this brief vigil of your senses which remain, experience of the unpeopled world beyond the sun. Consider your origin; ye were not formed to live like brutes, but to follow virtue and knowledge.' . . . Night already saw the other pole with all its stars, and ours so low that it rose not from the ocean floor (Inferno, xxvi., 94-126)."

Mr. Knowles reports Tennyson as saying when speaking of In Memoriam: "It [In Memoriam] is a very impersonal poem as well as personal. There is more about myself in 'Ulysses,' which was written under the sense of loss, and that all had gone by, but that still life must be fought to the end. It was more written with the feeling of his loss upon me than many poems in 'In Memoriam.'" The "loss" referred to, is of course the death of his friend Hallam.
We have, then, in the *Ulysses*, a particularly happy example of the infusion of the poet’s own mood and feeling into a character and situation which serve to bring them out and intensify them for the reader. Ulysses,—full of knowledge and experience, but with that inevitable sense of the diminution of power, of hopefulness, and of the possibilities of life, which comes with age,—still feels within his heart that insatiable craving for more light and more life which lies deep in every more finely touched spirit; and the words put into his mouth by the poet, become for the reader a typical expression of similar yearning for the infinite, and of the similar sense of limitation and loss however occasioned. For the expression of a kindred mood, compare *Merlin and the Gleam*.

The blank verse of the poem is at once characteristic and masterly. In short, as Mr. Stedman (*Victorian Poets*) says: “For visible grandeur and astonishingly compact expression, there is no blank verse poem, equally restricted as to length, that approaches the *Ulysses*.”

2. among these barren crags of Ithaca, the domain of Ulysses, an island near the entrance of the gulf of Corinth.

3. mete and dole. The words are used to indicate the pettiness of the work; indeed, the wording of the first five lines indicates the speaker’s discontent with the existing conditions of his life.

5. and know not me. ‘My broad and varied experience have given me a spirit and ideas which are beyond the comprehension and sympathy of the inhabitants of this isle, limited as they are by the narrow round of their daily lives.’

6-7. Cf. *Macbeth*, ii., 3:

> The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
> Is left this vault to brag of.

8. suffer’d greatly. The poem is full of touches that recall Homer; one of the stock epithets of Ulysses is πολύτραχος ‘much enduring.’

10. the rainy Hyades. A group of stars in the head of the constellation ‘Taurus’ which, when they rose with the sun were supposed to bring rain; hence the name which is derived from the Gk. verb for ‘to rain.’ Cf. Virgil, *Aeneid*, i., 744: Arcturum, pluviasque Hyadas, geminosque Triones.

11. I am become a name. ‘I have become famous.’ For this use of name, cf. *Dream of Fair Women*, 163; it is a common Latin idiom, cf. *Aeneid*, ii., 89, etc.
17. **ringing** with the clash of weapons.

18. Cf. *Aeneid*, ii., 6: quorum pars magna fui. Virgil uses the phrase in the sense of having taken a large share in events; Tennyson means more than that: Ulysses has not only been influential in all matters in which he has been concerned, but these things have in their turn contributed to make him what he is.

19-21. Our experience at once reveals and limits our perception of the possibilities of life and knowledge; these last are infinite, and, therefore, our advance only serves to widen our perception of their extent. So, experience may be compared to an arch, which at once enables us to see, and limits our vision of, the world beyond, whose horizon continually recedes as we approach.


Perseverance, dear my lord,
Keeps honour bright; to have done is to hang
Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail
In monumental mockery.

25. **one**, *i.e.*, one life.

29. **three suns**. 'Three years'; so 'moons' for months. *Gardener's Daughter*, l. 15: "for some three careless moons, The summer pilot of an empty heart."

33. **Telemachus** is represented in the *Odyssey* as a prudent young man; Tennyson makes him an impersonation of humdrum respectability without the genius and inspiration which belong to the higher spirit of Ulysses. There is just a touch of contempt in Ulysses' reference to him.

44-45. Note how suggestive and admirable is the background indicated by this touch of landscape, and by lines 54-56.

45, fol. Cf. Teucer's address to his companions in Horace, *Odes*, i., 7:

O fortis pejora qui passi
Mecum saepe viri, nunc vino pelliti curas;
Cras ingens iterabimus aequor.

In the Homeric story Ulysses had no such mariners; they all perished on the return voyage from Troy.

53. According to Homer the Gods themselves took part in the conflicts before the walls of Troy, Mars and Venus fighting for the Trojans.
54. 'The lights of the houses.'

55. Note the happy effect of the long monosyllables, and the double caesura.

58-59. sitting...furrows. Suggested by the oft-recurring line of the Odyssey: ἐξὺς δ' ἐξέμεναι πολιην ἀλα τύπτον ἐρετμοῖς (And sitting in order they smote the hoary sea with their oars).

60-61. the baths Of all the western stars. The place where the stars seem to plunge into the Ocean. So in Iliad, xviii., 48, it is said of the Constellation of the Bear: οἶν δ' ἀμµωρὸς ἐστι λοετρῶν Ὀκεανῶ (‘it alone is free from the baths of Ocean’).

62. In Homer, Ocean is represented as a mighty stream encompassing the earth; at the western side its waters plunge into a vast chasm where is the entrance to Hades (see Odyssey, x., 511, fol.).

63. the Happy Isles. The ‘Fortunatae Insulae’ (‘Islands of the Blessed’) which were supposed to lie somewhere to the west of the Pillars of Hercules, and were sometimes identified with Elysium, the dwelling-place, after death, of favoured heroes.

64. Achilles the greatest of the Greek heroes before Troy.

66. strength. Abstract for concrete—‘that strong band.’

70. Note how the coincidence of the metrical pauses between the feet, with the sense pauses, gives a movement to the line in keeping with the thought expressed.

ST. AGNES' EVE.

Published originally in The Keepsake for 1837, under the title of St. Agnes; included in the Poems of 1842; the title changed to St. Agnes' Eve in the edition of 1857.

January 21st is sacred to St. Agnes who, it is narrated, refused to marry the heathen son of the pretor, and after terrible persecution suffered martyrdom in the reign of the emperor Diocletian (284-305, A.D.). With St. Agnes' Eve various superstitions were connected, more especially that upon observing the proper rites, a maiden might see her future husband (cf. Keats' Eve of St. Agnes). It is possible that Tennyson felt that the character and circumstances delineated in the poem did not exactly suit St. Agnes, and, accordingly changed the title
of the poem, leaving the heroine a nameless embodiment of that ascetic enthusiasm which finds its masculine representative in Sir Galahad; she is 'the pure and beautiful enthusiast who has died away from all her human emotions, and become the bride for whom a Heavenly Bridegroom is waiting....Wordsworth at his best, as in 'Lucy,' might scarcely match the music of these stanzas; their pictorial perfection he could hardly attain unto; every image is in such delicate harmony with the pure young worshipper that it seems to have been transfigured by her purity, and in the last four lines the very sentences faint with the breathless culmination of her rapture" (Luce).

16. argent round. 'The full moon.'

19. mine earthly house. Cf. II. Corinthians, v., 1: "For we know if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands eternal in the heavens."

21. Break up. 'Break open,' as in I. Henry VI., 1, 3, and Matthew, xxiv., 43: "If the Goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he....would not have suffered his house to be broken up."

25-36. She too has her marvellous vision, like other maidens on St. Agnes' Eve, but a vision of an import and character very different from theirs.

35. the shining sea. Cf. Revelation, xv., 2: "I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast....stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.'"

SIR GALAHAD.

This, like The Lady of Shalott, is one of the earlier poems in which Tennyson works upon materials afforded by Arthurian romance. In Malory's Morte d'Arthur, Sir Galahad is the knight who lived 'a clean maiden' and in consequence saw the Holy Grail. Tennyson seizes upon this personage to embody a type of the combination of ascetic and knightly virtue—of that devotion to an ideal which led the devotee to disregard earthly ties and bodily needs, and to live in a spiritual ecstasy. This poem represents the masculine side of the same spiritual condition which is unfolded in St. Agnes' Eve. Sir Galahad reappears in the Idylls of the King, being one of the prominent personages in The Holy Grail. First published in 1842.
5. shattering. The epithet is used to denote the broken and stunning sounds of a trumpet peal.

6. brand. Sword; the word is from the same root as 'burn,' and was, perhaps, employed in the present sense on account of the brightness of swords.

9. lists. Originally the barriers that enclosed the ground for a tournament, then the ground itself.

11-12. The lady spectators scattered flowers upon the successful combatants, from the galleries which overlooked the lists.

14. on whom = on those on whom. Similar omissions are common in Shakespeare, etc.; cf. Measure for Measure, ii., 2: "Most ignorant of what he is most assur'd."

18. crypt. 'Underground cell.'

21-22. He refers to the vision of the Holy Grail, which appared only to the pure, and to the special favour of heaven which such vision indicates.

25. crescent. 'The crescent moon.'

31. stalls. 'The seats belonging to the clergy in the choir of a cathedral.'

42. the Holy Grail. The word 'grail' or 'graal,' means originally a bowl. According to the legend found in Malory and other versions of Arthurian story, the Sangreal, or holy grail was the vessel in which Jesus sacrificed the paschal lamb (or according to some versions, the cup which he used at the Last Supper). With this vessel Joseph of Arimathea caught the blood that flowed from the wound upon the Cross. Joseph brought it to Britain (see Faery Queen, ii., 10, 53). It could not be seen by any one who was not perfectly pure, and so was lost. The Grail had mystical and miraculous powers, and to find it became one of the quests of the Knights of the Round Table. Tennyson has treated the subject more fully in his 'Holy Grail,' one of the Idylls of the King.

51. The emphasis is of course on the "'ere."

Ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long.

—Hamlet, i. 1.
53. **the leads.** *Lead* was the common covering for roofs of substantial buildings in earlier times. It has been suggested that this noise of hail upon the roof is inconsistent with l. 52.

61. According to Malory’s account of Sir Galahad’s death, Joseph of Arimathea appears to him and says: “thou hast resembled me in two things, in that thou hast seen the marvels of the Sancgreal and in that thou hast been a clean maiden.”

‘**AS THRO’ THE LAND AT EVE WE WENT.**’

This and the following six songs are from *The Princess*, published in 1847. These songs (with the exception of ‘*Tears, idle tears*’) were not, however, inserted until the third edition of the poem appeared in 1850.

In *The Princess*, a party of ladies and gentlemen are gathered on a pleasant summer day in the ruins of an old abbey, and to pass the time, seven young men tell in succession an impromptu story about a Princess who founded a college for women. The story is thus divided into seven parts, and between the parts a song is inserted, supposed to be sung by the ladies—

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the women sang
Between the rougher voices of the men,
Like linnets in the pauses of the wind.
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These six songs are given in the text, together with “*Tears, idle tears,*” which is not one of the interludes, but belongs to the story itself.

6-9. The poem as originally printed consisted of two stanzas of five lines each. The ll. 6-9 were subsequently added and the lines printed without division into stanzas.

‘**SWEET AND LOW, SWEET AND LOW.**’

6. **dying.** ‘*Setting.*’

14-15. These phrases are thrown in without grammatical construction, a practice extremely common in earlier forms of poetry. The connection in thought is sufficiently apparent.

Another version of this song may be found in the *Life*, Vol. I., p. 255.
'THE SPLENDOUR FALLS ON CASTLE WALLS.'

According to the Life (Vol. I, p. 253) this song commemorates the echoes of Killarney.

1. splendour. The splendour of sunset.

3. long light. The rays of light seem long because the sun is low in the horizon.

shakes. 'Quivers through the motion of the water.'

9. scar. 'A bare or broken place on the side of a mountain'; the word is frequently used by Scott in the form scaur.

10. The mysterious and faint character of the echoes is well suited to suggest fairy agency.

'TEARS, IDLE TEARS, I KNOW NOT WHAT THEY MEAN.'

In The Princess we hear how a party of ladies from the college spend a summer afternoon in a scientific ramble:—

Many a little hand
Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the rocks,
Many a light foot shone like a jewel set
In the dark crag; and then we turn'd, we wound
About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,
Hammering and clinking, chattering stony names
Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap and tuff,
Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the Sun
Grew broader toward his death and fell, and all
The rosy heights came out above the lawns.

then they gathered to their evening repast, and the Princess asked some one to sing—

and a maid,
Of those beside her, smote her harp, and sang.
'Tears, idle tears,' etc.

The form of this poem should be noted; non-rhyming verse has not often been employed for lyrical purposes in modern English. Milton uses it but with very partial success in the choruses of Samson Agonistes. The most successful example of such use before Tennyson is the well known Ode to Evening, by Collins (1721-1759), which may be found in the Appendix to this volume. Mr. James Knowles, in The Nineteenth Century for Jan. 1893, reports that Tennyson speaking
of this song said: "It is in a way like St. Paul's 'groanings which cannot be uttered.' It was written at Tintern when the woods were all yellowing with autumn seen through the ruined windows. It is what I have always felt even from a boy, and what as a boy I called the 'passion of the past.' And it is so always with me now; it is the distance that charms me in the landscape, the picture and the past, and not the immediate to-day in which I move" (Compare with this last sentence the poem Far-far-away). The "Tintern" referred to is Tintern Abbey, "perhaps the most beautiful ruin in England," on the right bank of the Wye in Monmouthshire, associated with Wordsworth's well-known Lines written above Tintern Abbey.

Prof. W. M. Dixon is "inclined to regard [this poem] as the most characteristic of his genius of any poem ever written by the author, and that for two reasons. It is his most successful expression of the emotion of vague regret, of dumb inarticulate pain of heart, a province of universal human feeling, which Tennyson alone among poets has found a voice to render, and thus made particularly his own."

The idea and feeling of this song are expressed in an early poem of Tennyson's published in The Gem for 1831, but not contained in his collected works:

O sad no more! O sweet no more!
O strange no more!
By a mossed brookbank on a stone
I smelt a wildwood flower alone;
There was a ringing in my ears,
And both my eyes gushed out with tears,
Surely all pleasant things had gone before,
Low-buried fathom deep beneath with thee,

No more!

'THY VOICE IS HEARD THRO' ROLLING DRUMS.'

This song received its present form in the edition of 1851; the following is the earlier version:

Lady, let the rolling drums
Beat to battle where thy warrior stands;
Now thy face across his fancy comes
And gives the battle to his hands.

Lady, let the trumpet blow,
Clasp thy little babes about thy knee:
Now their warrior father meets the foe,
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.
"HOME THEY BROUGHT HER WARRIOR DEAD."

In a volume of selections published in 1865, Tennyson included another version of this song. The poem may have been suggested by an incident in The Lay of the Last Minstrel, i., 9:

But o'er her warrior's bloody bier
The Ladye dropp'd nor flower nor tear!
Vengeance, deep-brooding o'er the slain,
Had lock'd the source of softer woe;
And burning pride and high disdain,
Forbade the rising tear to flow;
Until, amid his sorrowing clan,
Her son lisp'd from the nurse's knee—
"And if I live to be a man,
My father's death revenged shall be!"
Then fast the mother's tears did seek
To dew the infant's kindling cheek.

This song is closely linked in thought to the subject of Part VII. of The Princess, to which it forms a prologue. In Part VII. we are told how the Princess, under the influence of kindly feelings, undertakes to nurse the wounded hero, her long repulsed suitor, how pity gave place in her heart to a tenderer interest, how her novel ideas and schemes for her sex give place, and 'Love at last is lord of all,' or to quote the words of the Prince—

Till out of long frustration of her care,
And pensive tendance in the all-weary noons,

And out of hauntings of my spoken love,
And lonely listenings to my mutter'd dream,
And often feeling of the helpless hands,
And wordless broodings on the wasted cheek—
From all a closer interest flourish'd up,
Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to these,
Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with tears
By some cold morning glacier; frail at first
And feeble, all unconscious of itself,
But such as gather'd colour day by day.

Mr. P. M. Wallace in his notes on this song, says:—"Note the predominance in this song of monosyllables. Of the 125 words which it contains only seven have more than one syllable, and these only two. This feature imparts a peculiar stateliness to the composition, emphasising the solemnity of its tone without impairing its melody."

12. Cf. Shakespeare, Venus and Adonis, 772:

And all in vain you strive against the stream.
THE BROOK.

First published in the volume entitled *Maud and Other Poems*, 1855. In the *Life* it is stated that "'Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea' was the poem more especially dedicated to the Somersby stream, and not, as some have supposed, 'The Brook,' which is designed to be a brook of the imagination."

*The Brook* represents one *genus*—and that a distinctive one—in Tennyson's poetry, the English Idyll. About the commonplace and realistic details of a somewhat slight theme he throws an idyllic charm—in this case partly through the halo which the past wears for the memory of the middle-aged speaker, partly through the beauty of the strikingly English background.

The unpretentious and simple narrative is relieved by touches of exquisite poetic beauty, and the perfect lyric which winds its course through the poem, blends itself with the framework in the most felicitous way and greatly enhances the general effect of the poem.

4. **scrip.** Documents entitling the holder to payments.

6. Cf. *Merchant of Venice*, I, iii:

   *Antonio*: Was this inserted to make interest good?
   Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?
   *Shylock*: I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast.

The Greek word for interest, τόκος, means properly 'begetting.'

16. **branding.** Scorching (the word is etymologically connected with burn). Cf. *In Memoriam*, II:

   Nor branding summer suns avail
   To touch thy thousand years of gloom.

17. **Neilgherry.** The Neilgherry Hills in the southern part of India in the Madras Presidency; a favourite resort of Europeans because the elevation makes the air cool and salubrious.

19. **primrose fancies.** Youthful and flowery fancies; the primrose is an early flower as the etymology indicates: *primrose* represents Middle English *primerole* (the change to rose being due to popular etymology), Lat. *primerula* or *primula*, a diminutive from *primus*. Cf. *Hamlet*, I, iii:

   Whiles, like a puffed and reckless libertine,
   Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,

and Drayton, *Polyolbion*, XV, 149:

   The primrose placing first, because that in the spring
   It is the first appears, then only flourishing.
23. **coot and hern.** *Hern* is a variant for *heron*. The *coot* is an aquatic bird that is chiefly found on still waters—small lakes, etc.

26. **bicker.** One of those picturesque words, the skilful use of which is characteristic of Tennyson. It indicates quick, repeated action, and is frequently applied to streams; so Thomson, *Castle of Indolence*, I, iii: “they [streamlets] bickered through the sunny glade”; and Scott, *Monastery*, IX: “At the crook of the glen, where bickers the burnie”; also to light, *The Princess*, V, 253: “as the fiery Sirius alters hue, And bickers into red and emerald.”

29. **thorps.** ‘Hamlets’; an example of Tennyson’s predilection for reviving old Saxon words; used by Chaucer (e.g., *Parlement of Foules*, l. 350), and in scattered examples later; it is said that seventy-six names of places in Lincolnshire, Tennyson’s native county, end with this termination; e.g., Mablethorpe, Claythorpe, Theddlethorpe, etc.

43. **fret.** ‘Eat away.’

45. **fairy.** For similar use of the word, see quotation from Wordsworth in note on l. 61 below.

46. **willow-weed and mallow.** The ‘willow-weed’ (*Epilobium Hier-sutum*) is a common plant in England on the margins of streams amongst reeds and coarse grasses, as is also the common mallow (*Malva Sylvestris*).

54. **grigs.** ‘Crickets.’

58. **grayling.** A fish of the salmon family which “prefers rivers with rocky or gravelly bottom and an alternation of stream and pool.”


70. **lissome.** A variant of ‘lithesome.’

82. The reference is to the well-known Scotch song by Burns, “Ye banks and braes o’ Bonnie Doon.”

94. **mealy-mouthed.** In its original metaphorical sense ‘speaking indistinctly’; hence, ‘soft spoken’ with an insinuation of untruth or hypocrisy.

98. **prest the cause.** ‘Pressed for a statement of the cause.’

103. **wizard pentagram.** A figure consisting of two equilateral triangles placed upon one another so as to form a six-pointed star. It was supposed in the Middle Ages to have magical powers against evil spirits.

118. **meadow-sweet** (*Spiraea Ulmaria*), a sweet-scented, low shrub. “A flower which greets all ramblers to moist fields and tranquil water-
courses in midsummer is the meadow-sweet, called also queen of the meadows. It belongs to the Spiræa tribe, where our hardhack, nine-bark, meadow-sweet, queen of the prairie and others, belong, but surpasses all our species in being sweet-scented—a suggestion of almonds and cinnamon. I saw much of it about Stratford, and in rowing on the Avon plucked its large clusters of fine, creamy white flowers from my boat.” (Burroughs' A Glance at British Wild-flowers.)

128. Approved. ‘Confirmed what he said’; so Antony and Cleopatra, I, i, 60: “I am full sorry that he approves the common liar.”

132. chase. Properly “an unenclosed hunting ground which is private property.”

141. bailiff. ‘The steward or manager of an estate.’

156. ‘Ratified the bargain by shaking hands.’

171. covers. ‘Underbrush which covers the game.’

177-8. The network of light and shadow made by the ripples on the surface may be observed in any shallow stream.

180. shingly. Adjective from ‘shingle’ in sense of ‘gravel’; cf. Lancelot and Elaine, 53: “And down the shingly seaur he plunged”; and Enoch Arden, 768: “Lest the hard shingle should grate underfoot.”

189. Arno. The river upon which Florence is built; see 1. 35 above.

190. Brunelleschi (pronounced broonelléskee) was a famous Italian architect (1377-1446), the designer of the dome of the Cathedral of Florence.

196. In converse seasons. The poet subsequently changed this to “in April-autumns.”

203. bindweed bells. Flowers of the bindweed, a species of Convolvulus (‘morning glory’).

briony. The common briony (Bryonia Dioica) is a plant with tendrils, like the cucumber, which is common in hedge-rows.

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

First published on the morning of the day of the Duke's funeral, Nov. 18th, 1852; it was revised in 1853 and again when it appeared with Maud in 1855. The Ode, as indicated above, was written before the funeral actually took place, but the poet was a spectator of the procession and pronounced it “very fine.” He writes, “At the funeral I was struck with the look of sober manhood in the British soldier.” It
exemplifies the qualities of the ode proper, which is described by Mr. Gosse as "any strain of enthusiastic and exalted lyrical verse directed to a fixed purpose and dealing progressively with one dignified theme." The varied and irregular metre corresponds with the progressive and changing character of the thought and feeling embodied. The ode before us is not only admirable as poetry, but seizes with truth upon the real excellences of its hero's character and the essence of his relations to the nation.

1. The first edition reads: "Let us bury."

5, 6. The first edition reads:

When laurel-garlanded leaders fall,
And warriors carry, etc.

9. The first edition does not contain this line: the second edition reads:

He died on Walmer's lonely shore
But here, in streaming, etc.

The Duke is buried in St. Paul's Cathedral in the very centre of traffic.

18-9. Compare with what Carlyle said on the occasion of the Duke's funeral. "It is, indeed, a sad and solemn fact for England that such a man has been called away, the last perfectly honest and perfectly brave public man they had." (Life in London, vol. ii, chap. xxi.) In 1850 Carlyle had seen him at a grand ball and writes: "By far the most interesting figure present was the old Duke of Wellington, who appeared between twelve and one, and slowly glided through the rooms—truly a beautiful old man; I had never seen till now how beautiful, and what an expression of graceful simplicity, veracity, and nobleness, there is about the old hero when you see him close at hand." (Ibid., chap. xviii.)

20. The first edition reads: "Our sorrow draws but on the Golden Past," and does not contain the next two lines.

23. Cf. McCarthy's History of Our Own Times, chap. xxiii: "The trust which the nation had in him was absolutely unlimited. It never entered into the mind of any one to suppose that the Duke of Wellington was actuated in any step he took, or advice he gave, by any feeling but a desire for the good of the state." His influence as a "state-oracle," and his good sense (see l. 33 below) were exhibited in the passage of the Catholic Emancipation Bill (1829), and in the passing of the Reform Bill by the abstention from voting on the part of a large number of the Peers.
28. The first edition reads "freest from."

39. four-square. The Greeks conceived the square as something perfect; hence, the epithet τετράγωνος was applied by them metaphorically to indicate perfect character. This idea may have been in Tennyson's mind, although here the epithet is applied more literally to a tower, and suggests a preparedness for attack from any quarter.

42. World-victor's victor. The conqueror of Napoleon.

49. The cross of gold upon the dome of St. Paul's.

55. Carlyle, in his diary, refers to this car in very uncomplimentary terms:—

"November 19, 1852.—Yesterday saw the Duke of Wellington's funeral procession from Bath House second floor windows; a painful, miserable kind of thing to me and others of a serious turn of mind. The one true man of official men in England, or that I know of in Europe, concludes his long course. The military music sounded, and the tramp of feet and the roll of guns and coaches, to him inaudible forever more. The regiment he first served in was there, various regiments or battalions, one soldier from every regiment of the British line; above four thousand soldiers in all. Nothing else in the sumptuous procession was of the least dignity. The car, or hearse, a monstrous bronze mass, which broke through the pavement in various places, its weight being seven or ten tons, was of all the objects I ever saw the abominably ugliest, or nearly so. . . . All people stood in deep silence and reverently took off their hats. . . . Tennyson's verses are naught. Silence alone is respectable on such an occasion."

59. This line is not in the first edition.

68. As, for example, in the Peninsular war.

74. well-attemper'd frame. Cf. Julius Caesar, V, v:

His life was gentle, and the elements
So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, 'This was a man.'

75. civic muse. The muse that presides over what relates to the state and public life.

79. ever-ringing. Altered in 1873 to "ever-echoing."

83. mighty seaman. Nelson, who was buried under the dome of St. Paul's; the poet represents him as putting the question contained in the three preceding lines.
ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON. 179

91-113. In the first edition:

His martial wisdom kept us free;
O warrior-seaman, this is he.
This is England's greatest son,
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
And worthy to be laid by thee;
He that gained a hundred fights,
And never lost an English gun;
He that in his earlier day
Against the myriads of Assaye
Clashed with his fiery few and won:
And underneath another sun
Made the soldier, led him on,
And ever great and greater grew,
Beating from the wasted vines
All their marshal's bandit swarms
Back to France with countless blows
Till their host of eagles flew
Past the Pyrenean pines.

99. Assaye. A village of Hyderabad in Hindostan where, in 1803, the Duke (then Arthur Wellesley) with 5,000 men defeated two Mahratta chieftains with 30,000 men.

104. The treble works. These were the famous triple lines of Torres Vedras by means of which in 1810 he baffled the French marshal, Masséna.

110. The French were driven back over the Pyrenees in the autumn of 1813.

118. This line is followed in the first edition by a line subsequently omitted: “He withdrew to brief repose.”

119. Eagle. A metal eagle on a pole was the standard of a Roman legion, and this ensign was adopted for the regiments of Napoleon. The reference of the line is to the renewal of war by the escape of Napoleon from Elba, April, 1815.

123. The battle of Waterloo was fought upon Sunday, June 18th, 1815.

127. The appearance of the Prussian army under Blücher at 7 o'clock in the evening was the signal for the charge of the British Guards, which decided the battle.

130. “As they joyously sprang forward against the discomfited masses of the French, the setting sun broke through the clouds . . . and glittered on the bayonets of the Allies, while they in turn poured
down into the valley.” (Creasy’s Decisive Battles, quoted by Messrs. Rowe and Webb.)

136. silver-coated. The reference is presumably to the chalk cliffs which form the southern coast of England. Shakespeare’s use of silver in Richard II, II, i, seems more appropriate:

This precious stone set in the silver sea.

137. The battle of the Baltic was fought off Copenhagen against the Danes in 1801; the battle of the Nile, against the French in 1798.

151, fol. The sentiments of Section vii are very characteristic of the writer; cf. ll. 49 fol. of the Conclusion of The Princess, “Love thou thy land,” etc.

152-3. The reference is to the revolutions on the Continent. During 1848 and the following years revolutionary movements took place in France, Austria, Italy, Spain, etc., which, in the main, seemed productive rather of evil than good.

154-5. These lines are not in the first edition.

155. Saxon. In the latest editions the poet changed this to the more inclusive term “Briton.”


159. This line is not in the first edition.

brute control. ‘The unreasoning and unrighteous power of mere force, whether of the many or the few.’

160. the eye. The Greeks used the word for eye (ophthalmo) for what is very dear and precious, whence came Milton’s phrase, “Athens, the eye of Greece” (Paradise Regained, IV, 240).

164. Cf. ‘You ask me why,’ l. 6.

166. ye help to save. In first edition “ye save.”

168-9. In first edition:

And help the march of human mind:
Till crowds be sane and crowns be just.

170. wink. ‘Shut the eyes,’ as often in Shakespeare; e.g., Two Gentlemen of Verona, I, ii, 139: “I see things, too, although you judge I wink”; Sonnet xliii, i, etc.; so in Acts, xvii, 30: “And the times of this ignorance God winked at.”

In the first edition after line 170 is found the following passage subsequently omitted:
Perchance our greatness will increase;
Perchance a darkening future yields
Some reverse from worse to worse,
The blood of men in quiet fields,
And sprinkled on the sheaves of peace.

171-3. This passage originally read:
And O remember him who led your hosts;
Respect his sacred warning; guard your coasts.
His voice is silent, etc.

170, fol. In 1848 Wellington drew attention to the defenceless state of the south coast of England, advocated the complete fortification of the Channel Isles, Plymouth, the increase of the regular forces, and the raising of 150,000 militia. In 1852-'3 there was much agitation in England over the question of defence, owing to a dread of French invasion by Napoleon III. Tennyson strongly sympathized with the movement for additional defence as is shown in the songs he wrote at the time; e.g., "Britons, guard your own," contributed to The Examiner, and printed in the Life.


186. He was born in the spring of 1769.

188. The editor has not been able to discover any place where such an epithet is applied to Alfred.

196. stars. Marks of distinction; peerage, order of the Garter, etc.

197. The Goddess of Fortune is represented in ancient art as bearing a cornucopia (i.e., 'horn of plenty') from which she pours her gifts.

201. not once or twice. Cf. II Kings, vi, 10: "And the King of Israel . . . saved himself there not once or twice."

202. was. "Turned out in the end to be, though it was not expected to be (a Greek and Latin idiom: the imperfect of sudden recognition)." (Rowe and Webb.)

206-8. Milton uses similar imagery with a similar meaning in speaking of the plant which is an antidote to the spells of Comus:
The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,
But in another country, as he said,
Bore a bright golden flower.

217. Cf. Revelation, xxi, 23: "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it."
218-227. In the first edition, these lines read:

He has not failed; he hath prevailed:
So let the men whose hearths he saved from shame
Thro' many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel, etc.

236. For. Here means "on account of." "His kindness to children is well known," says his biographer in the *English Men of Action Series*, and quotes some instances; see *ibid.*, p. 253.


251-62. The first edition reads:

For solemn, too, this day are we,
O friends, we doubt not that for one so true
There must be other nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo,
And Victor must he ever be,
Though worlds on worlds in myriad myriads rolled.

255. Rowe and Webb compare what M. Arnold says of his father in *Rugby Chapel*:

That force
Surely has not been left vain!
Somewhere, surely, afar,
In the sounding labour-house vast
Of being, is practised that strength.

259-61. Cf. *In Memoriam*, cxxiii:

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
O earth, what changes hast thou seen!

The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands;
They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

266-70. These lines are not in the first edition.

271. He is gone. In the first edition: "The man is gone."

278. In the first edition: "But speaks," etc.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE.

On December 2nd, 1854, Tennyson, according to the *Life*, Vol. I, p. 381, "wrote 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' in a few minutes after reading the description in the *Times* in which occurred the phrase 'some one had blundered,' and this was the origin of the metre of the
poem." It appeared in The Examiner for December 9th with the following note: "Written after reading the first report of 'The Times' correspondent, where only 607 sabres are mentioned as having taken part in the charge." In the following year it was printed on a fly-leaf with the following note:

"August 8th, 1855.

"Having heard that the brave soldiers before Sebastopol, whom I am proud to call my countrymen, have a liking for my ballad on the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava, I have ordered a thousand copies to be printed for them. No writing of mine can add to the glory they have acquired in the Crimea; but if what I have heard be true they will not be displeased to receive these copies from me, and to know that those who sit at home love and honour them." It was included in the volume entitled Maud and Other Poems, published in 1855.

The Times of the 14th November contains the special correspondent's letter referred to by Tennyson's son in the quotation above, and stating that 607 had taken part of whom only 198 returned; but on the preceding day there is an editorial account of the battle based upon the official despatches, which would be the first detailed account that Tennyson would read; and a comparison of the two accounts plainly shows that it was, not unnaturally, the earlier one which most impressed the poet's imagination, and gave suggestions for the details and even the phraseology of the poem. The following extracts give the striking parallelisms:—

"We now know the details of the attack upon Balaclava on the 25th, and with them much that is glorious and much that is reassuring. . . . The disaster, then, of which the mere shadow has darkened so many a household among us for the last ten days is not more, but it is not much less, than the annihilation of the Light Cavalry Brigade. It entered into action about 700 strong and mustered only 191 on its return, though, of course, some afterwards rejoined their comrades. . . . Had there been the smallest use in the movement that has cost us so much,—had it been the necessity of a retreat or part of any plan whatever, we should endeavour to bear this sad loss as we do the heaps of human life lavished in an assault. Even accident could have made it more tolerable. But it was a mere mistake,—evidently a mistake and perceived to be such when it was too late to correct it. The affair then assumed the terrible form of a splendid self-sacrifice. Two great armies, composed of four nations, saw, from the slopes of a vast amphitheatre, seven hundred British cavalry proceed at a rapid pace, and in perfect order, to certain destruction. Such a spectacle was never seen before, and we trust will never be repeated. . . . How far the order itself was the result of a misconception, or was intended to be executed at discretion, does not appear, and will probably afford the subject of painful but vain recrimination. It was interpreted as leaving no discretion at all, and the whole
brigade advanced at a trot for more than a mile, down a valley, with a murderous flank fire of Minié muskets and shell from the hills on both sides. It charged batteries, took guns, sabred the gunners, and charged the Russian cavalry beyond; but, not being supported,—and perhaps under the circumstances it was fortunate that it was not,—and being attacked by cavalry in front and rear, it had to cut its way through them, and return through the same cavalry and the same fire. The brigade was simply pounded by the shot, shell, and Minié bullets from the hills. . . . Causeless as the sacrifice was, it was most glorious. A French general who saw the advance and apprehended at once its fatal issue, exclaimed, 'C'est très magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre.' . . . It is difficult not to regard such a disaster in a light of its own, and to separate it from the general sequence of affairs. Causeless and fruitless, it stands by itself, as a grand heroic deed, surpassing even the spectacle of shipwrecked regiment settling down into the waves, each man still in his rank. The British soldier will do his duty, even to certain death, and is not paralyzed by feeling that he is the victim of some hideous blunder. . . . Splendid as the event was on the Alma, yet that rugged ascent in the face of heights blazing with destruction was scarcely so glorious as the progress of the cavalry through and through the valley of death, with a murderous fire, not only in front, but on both sides, above, and even in the rear."

'BREAK, BREAK, BREAK.'

This poem, first published in 1842, was, we are told in the Life, "made in a Lincolnshire lane at 5 o'clock in the morning between blossoming hedges." In theme, it is no doubt, like that of In Memoriam, associated with the death of Hallam.
APPENDIX.

SELECTIONS FOR "SIGHT" READING.

1.—SONG FOR SAINT CECILIA'S DAY.

From harmony, from heavenly harmony
    This universal frame began.
When Nature underneath a heap
    Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high:
    "Arise ye more than dead!"
Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry
In order to their stations leap,
    And Music's power obey.
From harmony, from heavenly harmony
    This universal frame began:
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in Man.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell?
    When Jubal struck the chorded shell,
His listening brethren stood around,
    And, wondering, on their faces fell
To worship that celestial sound.
Less than a God they thought there could not dwell
    Within the hollow of that shell
That spoke so sweetly and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and quell?

The trumpet's loud clangour
    Excites us to arms,
With shrill notes of anger
    And mortal alarms.
APPENDIX.

The double double double beat
Of the thundering drum
Cries, "Hark! the foes come;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat!"

The soft complaining flute
In dying notes discovers
The woes of hopeless lovers,
Whose dirge is whispered by the warbling lute.

Sharp violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs and desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pains, and height of passion
For the fair disdainful dame.

But O, what art can teach,
What human voice can reach
The sacred organ's praise?
Notes inspiring holy love,
Notes that wing their heavenly ways
To mend the choirs above.

Orpheus could lead the savage race,
And trees uprooted left their place
Sequacious of the lyre;
But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher;
When to her organ vocal breath was given,
An angel heard, and straight appeared—
Mistaking Earth for Heaven!

As from the power of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the blest above;
So, when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour,
The Trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And Music shall untune the sky.

—Dryden.
2.—ODE TO EVENING.

If aught of oaten stop or pastoral song
May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest ear
(Like thy own solemn springs,
Thy springs and dying gales);

O Nymph reserved,—while now the bright-haired Sun
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts
With brede ethereal wove,
O'erhang his wavy bed,

Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed bat
With short shrill shriek flits by on leathern wing,
Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum,—
Now teach me, Maid composed,
To breathe some softened strain,

Whose numbers, stealing through thy darkening vale,
May not unseemly with its stillness suit,
As, musing slow, I hail
Thy genial, loved return!

For when thy folding-star arising shows
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant Hours, and Elves
Who slept in buds the day,

And many a Nymph who wreathes her brow with sedge,
And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier still,
The pensive Pleasures sweet,
Prepare thy shadowy car.

Then let me rove some wild and heathy scene,
Or find some ruin 'midst its dreary dells,
Whose walls more awful nod
By thy religious gleams.
APPENDIX.

Or if chill blustering winds or driving rain
Prevent my willing feet, be mine the hut
    That from the mountain-side
Views wilds, and swelling floods,

And hamlets brown, and dim-discovered spires,
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
    Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil.

While Spring shall pour his showers, as oft he wont,
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest Eve!
    While Summer loves to sport
Beneath thy lingering light!

While sallow Autumn fills thy lap with leaves;
Or Winter, yelling through the troublous air,
    Affrights thy shrinking train,
And rudely rends thy robes:

So long, regardful of thy quiet rule,
Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, smiling Peace,
    Thy gentlest influence own,
And love thy favourite name!

—W. Collins.

3.—INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVENTH BOOK OF PARADISE LOST.

Descend from Heav'n, Urania, by that name
If rightly thou art call'd, whose voice divine
Following, above th' Olympian hill I soar,
Above the flight of Pegasean wing.
The meaning, not the name I call: for thou
Nor of the Muses nine, nor on the top
Of old Olympus dwell'st, but Heav'nly born,
Before the hills appear'd, or fountain flow'd,
Thou with eternal Wisdom didst converse,
Wisdom thy sister, and with her didst play
In presence of th' Almighty Father, pleas'd
4.—SONNET.

With thy celestial song. Up led by thee,
Into the Heav’n of Heav’ns I have presum’d,
An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air,
Thy tempering; with like safety guided down,
Return me to my native element:
Lest from this flying steed unrein’d (as once
Bellerophon, though from a lower clime)
Dismounted, on th’ Aleian field I fall,
Erroneous there to wander and forlorn.
Half yet remains unsung, but narrower bound
Within the visible diurnal sphere;
Standing on earth, not rapt above the pole,
More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchang’d
To hoarse or mute, though fall’n on evil days,
On evil days though fall’n, and evil tongues;
In darkness, and with dangers compast round,
And solitude; yet not alone, while thou
Visit’st my slumbers nightly, or when morn
Purples the east: still govern thou my song,
Urania, and fit audience find, though few.
But drive far off the barbarous dissonance
Of Bacchus and his revellers, the race
Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian bard
In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears
To rapture, till the savage clamour drown’d
Both harp and voice; nor could the Muse defend
Her son. So fail not thou, who thee implores:
For thou art Heav’nly, she an empty dream.

—Milton.

4.—SONNET.

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stol’n on his wing my three-and-twentieth year!
My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew’th.
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth,
That I to manhood am arrived so near,
And inward ripeness doth much less appear
That some more timely-happy spirits indu’th.
Yet, be it less or more, or soon or slow,
APPENDIX.

It shall be still in strictest measure even
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which time leads me, and the will of Heaven.
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-master’s eye.               —Milton.

5.—TO CYRIACK SKINNER.

Cyriack, whose grandsire on the royal bench
Of British Themis, with no mean applause,
Pronounced, and in his volumes taught, our laws,
Which others at their bar so often wrench,
To-day deep thoughts resolve with me to drench
In mirth that after no repenting draws;
Let Euclid rest, and Archimedes pause,
And what the Swede intend, and what the French.
To measure life learn thou betimes, and know
Toward solid good what leads the nearest way;
For other things mild Heaven a time ordains,
And disapproves that care, though wise in show,
That with superfluous burden loads the day,
And, when God sends a cheerful hour, refrains.         —Milton.

6.—SONNET.

CXVI.

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth’s unknown, although his height be taken.
Love’s not Time’s fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle’s compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error, and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.                      —Shakespeare.
7.—A DROP OF DEW.

See, how the orient dew,
Shed from the bosom of the morn,
    Into the blowing roses,
(Yet careless of its mansion new,
For the clear region where 'twas born,)
    Round in itself incloses
And, in its little globe's extent,
Frames, as it can, its native element.
    How it the purple flower does slight,
Scarce touching where it lies;
    But gazing back upon the skies,
Shines with a mournful light,
    Like its own tear,
Because so long divided from the sphere.
    Restless it rolls, and unsecure,
Trembling lest it grow impure;
    Till the warm sun pitied its pain,
And to the skies exhales it back again.
    So the soul, that drop, that ray,
Of the clear fountain of eternal day,
    Could it within the human flower be seen,
Remembering still its former height,
    Shuns the sweet leaves, and blossoms green,
And recollecting its own light,
    Does, in its pure and circling thoughts, express
The greater heaven in a heaven less.
    In how coy a figure wound,
Every way it turns away,
    So the world excluding round,
Yet receiving in the day,
    Dark beneath, but bright above,
Here disdaining, there in love.
How loose and easy hence to go;
How girt and ready to ascend;
Moving but on a point below,
    It all about does upwards bend.
APPENDIX.

Such did the manna's sacred dew distil,
White and entire, although congealed and chill;
Congealed on earth; but does, dissolving, run
Into the glories of the almighty sun.

—A. Marvell.

8.—TO

Look at the fate of summer flowers,
Which blow at daybreak, droop ere evensong;
And, grieved for their brief date, confess that ours,
Measured by what we are and ought to be,
Measured by all that, trembling, we foresee,
Is not so long!

If human Life do pass away,
Perishing more swiftly than the flower,
If we are creatures of a winter's day;
What space hath Virgin's beauty to disclose
Her sweets, and triumph o'er the breathing rose?
Not even an hour!

The deepest grove whose foliage hid
The happiest lovers Arcady might boast,
Could not the entrance of this thought forbid:
O be thou wise as they, soul-gifted Maid!
Nor rate too high what must so quickly fade,
So soon be lost.

Then shall love teach some virtuous Youth
'To draw out of the object of his eyes,'
The while on thee they gaze in simple truth,
Hues more exalted, 'a refinèd form,'
That dreads not age, nor suffers from the worm,
And never dies.

—Wordsworth.
9.—TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY.

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH, IN APRIL 1786.

Wee, modest, crimson-tippèd flower,
Thou's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem.
To spare thee now is past my power,
Thou bonnie gem.

Alas! it's no thy neebor sweet,
The bonnie Lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet,
Wi' spreckled breast,
When upward-springing, blithe, to greet
The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce reared above the parent earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flowers our gardens yield,
High sheltering woods and wa's maun shield,
But thou, beneath the random bield
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie stibble-field,
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawy bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!
APPENDIX.

Such is the fate of artless Maid,
Sweet floweret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betrayed,
And guileless trust;
Till she, like thee, all soiled is laid
Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starred!
Unskilful he to note the card
Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering worth is given,
Who long with wants and woes has striven,
By human pride or cunning driven
To misery's brink,
Till, wrenched of every stay but Heaven,
He, ruined, sink!

Even thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine—no distant date;
Stern Ruin's ploughshare drives, elate,
Full on thy bloom;
Till crushed beneath the furrow's weight
Shall be thy doom!

—Burns.

10.—FROM "THE VANITY OF HUMAN WISHES."

On what foundation stands the warrior's pride,
How just his hopes, let Swedish Charles decide:
A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,
No dangers fright him, and no labours tire;
O'er love, o'er fear, extends his wide domain,
Unconquer'd lord of pleasure and of pain;
No joys to him pacific scepters yield,—
War sounds the trump, he rushes to the field;
Behold surrounding kings their pow'rs combine,
And one capitulate, and one resign:
Peace courts his hand, but spreads her charms in vain;
"Think nothing gain'd," he cries, "till naught remain,
On Moscow's walls till Gothic standards fly,
And all be mine beneath the polar sky."
The march begins in military state,
And nations on his eye suspended wait;
Stern Famine guards the solitary coast,
And Winter barricades the realms of Frost:
He comes; nor want nor cold his course delay;
Hide, blushing Glory, hide Pultowa's day:
The vanquish'd hero leaves his broken bands,
And shows his miseries in distant lands;
Condemn'd a needy supplicant to wait,
While ladies interpose and slaves debate.
But did not Chance at length her error mend?
Did no subverted empire mark his end?
Did rival monarchs give the fatal wound?
Or hostile millions press him to the ground?
His fall was destin'd to a barren strand,
A petty fortress, and a dubious hand.
He left the name, at which the world grew pale,
To point a moral, or adorn a tale.

—Dr. Johnson.

11.—ON THE EVE OF THE BATTLE OF QUATRE BRAS.

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gathered then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men;
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage-bell;
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell.

Did ye not hear it?—No; 'twas but the wind,
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
No sleep till morn when Youth and Pleasure meet
APPENDIX.

To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet—
But hark! that heavy sound breaks in once more,
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
Arm! arm! it is—it is—the cannon's opening roar!

Within a windowed niche of that high hall
Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain: he did hear
That sound the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear;
And when they smiled because he deemed it near,
His heart more truly knew that peal too well
Which stretched his father on a bloody bier,
And roused the vengeance blood alone could quell:
He rushed into the field, and, foremost fighting, fell.

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago
Blushed at the praise of their own loveliness;
And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated; who could guess
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise?

And there was mounting in hot haste: the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war;
And the deep thunder, peal on peal, afar:
And near, the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier ere the morning star;
While thronged the citizens with terror dumb,
Or whispering, with white lips—"The foe! they come! they come!"

And wild and high the "Cameron's Gathering" rose!
The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's hills
Have heard, and heard, too, have her Saxon foes:
How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills,
12.—AFTER THE BATTLE.

Savage and shrill! But with the breath which fills
Their mountain-pipe, so fill the mountaineers
With the fierce native daring which instils
The stirring memory of a thousand years,
And Evan's, Donald's fame rings in each clansman's ear!

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
Dewy with nature's tear-drops as they pass,
Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
Over the unreturning brave,—alas!
Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
Which now beneath them, but above shall grow
In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
Of living valour, rolling on the foe
And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low.

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,
The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,
The morn the marshalling in arms,—the day
Battle's magnificently-stern array!
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent
The earth is covered thick with other clay,
Which her own clay shall cover, heaped and pent,
Rider and horse,—friend, foe,—in one red burial blent?

—Byron.
APPENDIX.

There's yet a world where souls are free,
   Where tyrants taint not nature's bliss;
If Death that world's bright opening be,
   O who would live a slave in this?

—T. Moore.

13.—THE POET IN WAR-TIME.

(From "The Biglow Papers.")

Time wuz, the rhymes come crowdin' thick
   Ez office-seekers arter 'lection,
An' into ary place 'ould stick
   Without no bother nor objection;
But sence the war my thoughts hang back
   Ez though I wanted to enlist 'em;
An' subs'tutes,—they don't never lack,
   But then they'll slope afore you've mist 'em.

Nothin' don't seem like wut it wuz;
   I can't see wut there is to hender,
An' yit my brains jes' go buzz, buzz,
   Like bumblebees agin a winder:
'Fore these times come, in all airth's row,
   Ther' wuz one quiet place, my head in,
Where I could hide an' think,—but now
   It's all one teeter, hopin', dreadin'.

Where's Peace? I start, some clear-blown night,
   When gaunt stone walls grow numb an' number,
An', creakin' 'cross the snow-crus' white,
   Walk the col' starlight into summer;
Up grows the moon, an' swell by swell
   Thru' the pale pasturs silvers dimmer
Than the last smile thet strives to tell
   O' love gone heavenward in its shimmer.

I hev ben gladder o' sech things
   Than cocks o' Spring or bees o' clover;
They filled my heart with livin' springs,
   But now they seem to freeze 'em over;
Sights innercent ez babes on knee,
Peaceful ez eyes o' pastur'd cattle,
Jes' cos they be so, seem to me
To rile me more with thoughts o' battle.

Indoors an' out by spells I try;
Ma'am Natur' keeps her spin-wheel goin',
But leaves my natur' stiff and dry
Ez fiels o' clover arter mowin';
An' her jes' keepin' on the same,
Calmer 'n a clock, and never carin',
An' findin' nary thing to blame,
Is wus than ef she took to swearin'.

Snow-flakes come whisperin' on the pane,—
The charm makes blazin' logs so pleasant,—
But I can't hark to wut they're say'n',
With Grant or Sherman ollers present;
The chimbleys shudder in the gale,
Thet lulls, then suddin takes to flappin'
Like a shot hawk; but all's ez stale
To me ez so much sperit-rappin'.

Under the yaller-pines I house,
When sunshine makes 'em all sweet-scented,
An' hear among their furry boughs
The baskin' west-wind purr contented,
While 'way o'er head, ez sweet an' low
Ez distant bells thet ring for meetin',
The wedged wil' geese their bugles blow,
Further an' further south retreatin'.

Or up the slippery knob I strain
An' see a hundred hills like islans
Lift their blue woods in broken chain
Out o' the sea o' snowy silence;
The farm-smokes, sweetes' sight on airth,
Slow thru the winter air a-shrinkin',
Seem kin o' sad, an' roun' the hearth
Of empty places set me thinkin'.
Beaver roars hoarse with meltin' snows,
An' rattles di'mons from his granite:
Time wuz, he snatched away my prose,
An' into psalms or satires ran it;
But he, nor all the rest thet once
Started my blood to country-dances,
Can't set me goin' more 'n a dunce
Thet hain't no use for dreams an' fancies.

Rat-tat-tat-tattle thru the street
I hear the drummers makin' riot,
An' I set thinkin' o' the feet
Thet follered once, an' now are quiet,—
White feet ez snowdrops innercent,
Thet never knowed the paths o' Satan,
Whose comin' step ther's ears thet won't,
No, not lifelong, leave off awaitin'.

Why, hain't I held 'em on my knee?
Didn't I love to see 'em growin',
Three likely lads ez wal could be,
Hahnsome an' brave an' not tu knowin'?
I set an' look into the blaze
Whose natur', jes like theirn, keeps climbin',
Ez long'z it lives, in shinin' ways,
An' half despise myself for rhymin'.

Wut's words to them whose faith an' truth
On War's red techstone rang true metal,
Who ventur'd life an' love an' youth
For the gret prize o' death in battle?
To him who, deadly hurt, agen
Flashed on afore the charge's thunder,
Tippin' with fire the bolt of men
Thet rived the Rebel line asunder?

T'ain't right to hev the young go fust,
All throbbin' full o' gifts an' graces,
Leavin' life's paupers dry es dust
To try an' make b'lieve fill their places.
14.—EXTREME UNCTION.

Nothin’ but tells us wut we miss,
    Ther’s gaps our lives can’t never fay in;
And *that* world seems so far from this
    Lef’ fur us loafers to grow gray in!

*          *          *          *

Come, Peace! not like a mourner bowed
    For honour lost an’ dear ones wasted,
But proud, to meet a people proud,
    With eyes that tell o’ triumph tasted!
Come, with han’ grippin’ on the hilt,
    An’ step that proves ye Victory’s daughter!
Longin’ for you, our sperits wilt
    Like shipwrecked men’s on rafts for water.

Come, while our country feels the lift
    Of a gret instinct shoutin’ forwards,
An’ knows thet freedom ain’t a gift
    That tarries long in hans o’ cowards!
Come, sech ez mothers prayed for, when
    They kissed their cross with lips that quivered,
An’ bring fair wages for brave men,—
    A nation saved, a race delivered!

—J. R. Lowell.

14.—EXTREME UNCTION.

Go! leave me, Priest; my soul would be
    Alone with the consoler, Death;
Far sadder eyes than thine will see
    This crumbling clay yield up its breath;
These shrivelled hands have deeper stains
    Than holy oil can cleanse away,—
Hands that have plucked the world’s coarse gains
    As erst they plucked the flowers of May.

Call, if thou canst, to these gray eyes
    Some faith from youth’s traditions wrung;
This fruitless husk which dustward dries
    Has been a heart once, has been young;
APPENDIX.

On this bowed head the awful Past  
  Once laid its consecrating hands;  15
The Future in its purpose vast  
  Paused, waiting my supreme commands.

But look! whose shadows block the door?  
  Who are those two that stand aloof?  
See! on my hands this freshening gore  
  Writes o'er again its crimson proof!  20
My looked-for death-bed guests are met;  
  There my dead Youth doth wring its hands,  
And there, with eyes that goad me yet,  
  The ghost of my Ideal stands!

God bends from out the deep and says,—  
  "I gave thee the great gift of life;  25
Wast thou not called in many ways?  
  Are not my earth and heaven at strife?
I gave thee of my seed to sow,  
  Bringest thou me my hundred-fold?"
Can I look up with face aglow,  
  And answer, "Father here is gold?"

I have been innocent; God knows  
  When first this wasted life began,  35
Not grape with grape more kindly grows  
  Than I with every brother-man:
Now here I gasp; what lose my kind,  
  When this fast ebbing breath shall part?
What bands of love and service bind  
  This being to the world's sad heart?

Christ still was wandering o'er the earth  
  Without a place to lay His head;  40
He found free welcome at my hearth,  
  He shared my cup and broke my bread:
Now, when I hear those steps sublime  
  That bring the other world to this,  
My snake-turned nature, sunk in slime,  
  Starts sideway with defiant hiss.
Upon the hour when I was born,
    God said, "Another man shall be,"
And the great Maker did not scorn
    Out of himself to fashion me;
He sunned me with his ripening looks,
    And Heaven's rich instincts in me grew,
As effortless as woodland nooks
    Send violets up and paint them blue.

Yes, I who now, with angry tears,
    Am exiled back to brutish clod,
Have borne unquenched for fourscore years
    A spark of the eternal God:
And to what end? How yield I back
    The trust for such high uses given?
Heaven's light hath but revealed a track
    Whereby to crawl away from Heaven.

Men think it is an awful sight
    To see a soul just set adrift
On that drear voyage from whose night
    The ominous shadows never lift;
But 'tis more awful to behold
    A helpless infant newly born,
Whose little hands unconscious hold
    The keys of darkness and of morn.

Mine held them once; I flung away
    Those keys that might have open set
The golden sluices of the day,
    But clutch the keys of darkness yet;—
I hear the reapers singing go
    Into God's harvest; I, that might
With them have chosen, here below
    Grope shuddering at the gates of night.

O glorious Youth, that once wast mine!
    O high Ideal! all in vain
Ye enter at this ruined shrine
    Whence worship ne'er shall rise again;
The bat and owl inhabit here,
The snake nests in the altar-stone,
The sacred vessels moulder near,
The image of the God is gone.

—J. R. Lowell.

15.—ALL SAINTS.

One feast, of holy days the crest,
    I, though no Churchman, love to keep,
All-Saints,—the unknown good that rest
    In God's still memory folded deep;
The bravely dumb that did their deed,
    And scorned to blot it with a name,
Men of the plain heroic breed,
    That loved Heaven's silence more than fame.

Such lived not in the past alone,
    But thread to-day the unheeding street,
And stairs to Sin and Famine known
    Sing with the welcome of their feet;
The den they enter grows a shrine,
    The grimy sash an oriel burns,
Their cup of water warms like wine,
    Their speech is filled from heavenly urns.

About their brows to me appears
    An aureole traced in tenderest light,
The rainbow-gleam of smiles through tears
    In dying eyes, by them made bright,
Of souls that shivered on the edge
    Of that chill ford repassed no more,
And in their mercy felt the pledge
    And sweetness of the farther shore.

—J. R. Lowell.

16.—SONNET.

It is not to be thought of that the flood
Of British freedom, which to the open sea
Of the world's praise from dark antiquity
Hath flowed, "with pomp of waters, unwithstood,"
18.—Selections from Tennyson's "In Memoriam."

Roused though it be full often to a mood
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,
That this most famous stream in bogs and sands
Should perish; and to evil and to good
Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
Armoury of the invincible knights of old:
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held.—In everything we are sprung
Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

—Wordsworth.

17.—Sonnet.

Mutability.

From low to high doth dissolution climb,
And sink from high to low, along a scale
Of awful notes, whose concord shall not fail:
A musical but melancholy chime
Which they can hear who meddle not with crime,
Nor avarice, nor over-anxious care.
Truth fails not; but her outward forms that bear
The longest date do melt like frosty rime,
That in the morning whitened hill and plain
And is no more; drop like the tower sublime
Of yesterday, which royally did wear
His crown of weeds, but could not even sustain
Some casual shout that broke the silent air,
Or the unimaginable touch of Time.

—Wordsworth.

18.—Selections from Tennyson's "In Memoriam."

I.

I held it truth, with him who sings
   To one clear harp in divers tones,
   That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.
APPENDIX.

But who shall so forecast the years
And find in loss a gain to match?
Or reach a hand thro' time to catch
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,
Let darkness keep her raven gloss:
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn
The long result of love, and boast,
'Behold the man that loved and lost,
But all he was is overworn.'

XXVII.

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

LIV.

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;
That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.

LXXVI.

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,
And in a moment set thy face
Where all the starry heavens of space
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end;

Take wings of foresight; lighten thro'
The secular abyss to come,
And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb
Before the mouldering of a yew;

And if the matin songs, that woke
The darkness of our planet, last,
Thine own shall wither in the vast,
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy bowers
With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain;
And what are they when these remain
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers?
APPENDIX.

LXXXVI.

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

The round of space, and rapt below
    Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,
And shadowing down the horned flood
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
    The full new life that feeds thy breath
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas
    On leagues of odour streaming far,
To where in yonder orient star
A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

CXIV.

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail
    Against her beauty? May she mix
With men and prosper! Who shall fix
Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire:
    She sets her forward countenance
And leaps into the future chance,
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—
    She cannot fight the fear of death.
What is she, cut from love and faith,
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst
    All barriers in her onward race
For power. Let her know her place;
She is the second, not the first.
A higher hand must make her mild,
If all be not in vain; and guide
Her footsteps, moving side by side
With wisdom, like the younger child:

For she is earthly of the mind,
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.
O, friend, who camest to thy goal
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,
Who grewest not alone in power
And knowledge, but by year and hour
In reverence and in charity.

CXXXI.

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,

That we may lift from out of dust
A voice as unto him that hears,
A cry above the conquer'd 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 loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.