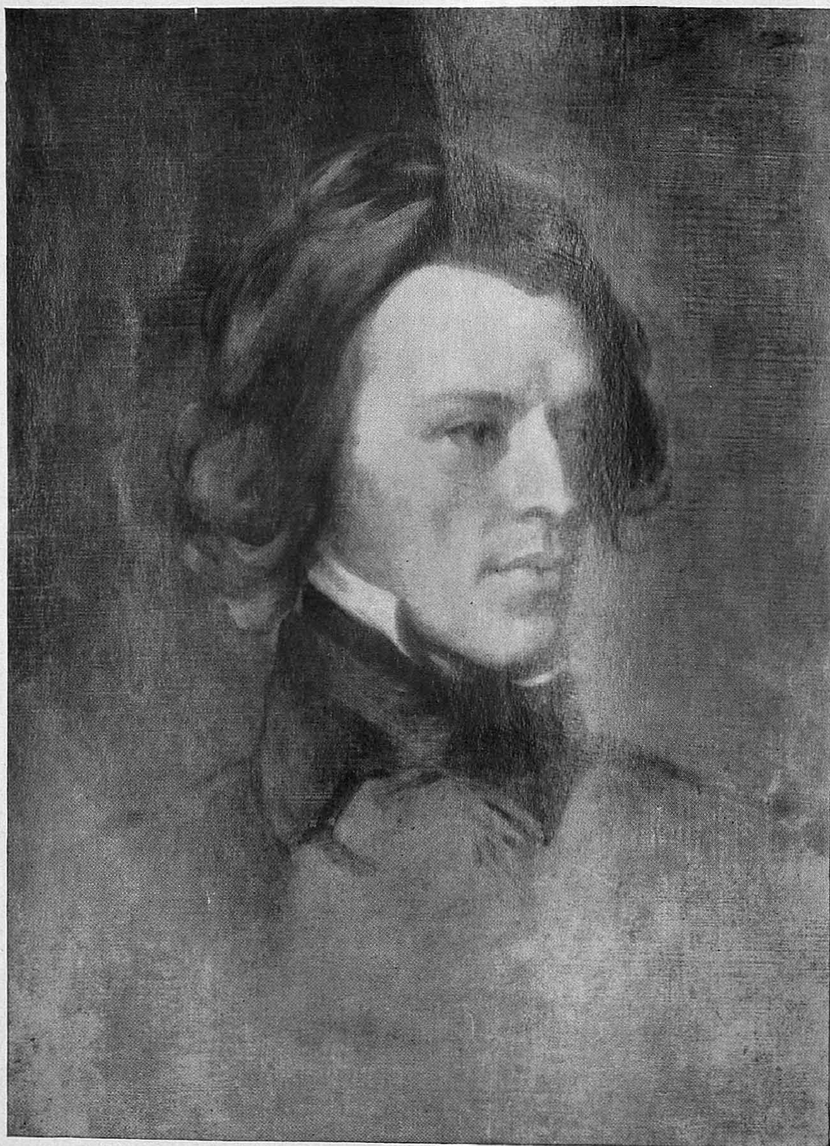

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

From the portrait by Samuel Laurence in the National Portrait Gallery

TENNYSON

Poetry & Prose

With Criticisms by

THE QUARTERLY REVIEW
FITZGERALD, MATTHEW ARNOLD
SIR LESLIE STEPHEN
HAROLD NICOLSON

With an Introduction and Notes by

F. L. LUCAS

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Tennyson by Samuel Laurence . . *Frontispiece*

The frontispiece is a reproduction of the portrait by Samuel Laurence (about 1838) in the National Portrait Gallery. FitzGerald wrote in 1871: 'Very imperfect as Laurence's portrait (of A) is, it is nevertheless the *best* painted portrait I have seen; and certainly the *only* one of old days. "Blubber-lipt" I remember once Alfred called it; so it is; but still the only one of old days, and still the best of all to my thinking.' Those who, like FitzGerald, prefer the early poetry of Tennyson, will prefer an early portrait.

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MY thanks are due to Mr. Charles Tennyson and Messrs. Macmillan for permission to reprint parts of *The Devil and the Lady*; to Mr. Harold Nicolson and Messrs. Constable for extracts from his *Tennyson*; to Messrs. Gerald Duckworth for extracts from Sir Leslie Stephen's *Studies of a Biographer*; to Messrs. Faber & Faber for extracts from *A FitzGerald Friendship*, edited by N. C. Hannay; to the Council of Trinity College, Cambridge, for the extracts from *Letters of Edward FitzGerald*, i and ii, *More Letters of Edward FitzGerald*, and *Letters to Fanny Kemble*; to the Exors. of the late Lord Tennyson for the extracts from *Alfred, Lord Tennyson: A Memoir*, by Hallam, Lord Tennyson; to Messrs. Macmillan for the extract from *Letters of Matthew Arnold*, i, edited by G. W. E. Russell, and *Letters to Fanny Kemble*; to the Oxford University Press for the extracts from *Letters of M. Arnold to A. H. Clough*, edited by H. F. Lowry; to Messrs. Williams & Norgate for the extract from *Some New Letters of Edward FitzGerald*, edited by F. R. Barton; and to the Cambridge University Librarian for photostats of the 1832 version of *The Lady of Shalott*.

INTRODUCTION

For our grandfathers Tennyson was both singer and seer. To-day, for most, the seer is dead. Forgotten—so forgotten as to seem fantastic—are the books and pamphlets and articles on Tennyson's teaching that swarmed in the eighties and nineties—*Atheism and Suicide. A Reply to Mr. Tennyson*; *The Religious Significance of Tennyson's 'Despair'*; *Catholic Musings on 'In Memoriam'*; *Tennyson's Allusions to Christ*; *Tennyson as a Conservative*; *The Philosophy of 'Locksley Hall'*; *Is Tennyson a Spiritualist?*; *Tennyson's Spiritual Service to his Generation*; *Tennyson's Philosophy of the Future Life* (by Brother Azarias); *The Spiritual Sense of 'In Memoriam'*; *Tennyson as a Thinker*; *Tennyson—Poet, Philosopher, Idealist*; *Tennyson and the Meaning of Life*; *Tennyson as the Poet of Evolution*; *Tennyson as the Religious Exponent of his Age*; *A Word with Dissenters about Tennyson*; *Was Tennyson either Gnostic or Agnostic?*; *Sermonettes from Tennyson*. He might have been, one would think, Aristotle and St. John in one. But to-day suicides do not trouble about 'replies to Mr. Tennyson'; he no longer lends inspiration for 'words to Dissenters'; and the public has abated its passion for Sermonettes. Many modern readers (with all due honour for a great writer and an upright and lovable man) remain honestly bewildered that their forebears could derive all this radiant illumination from a mind where they can see only a half-light of nebulous hopefulness, chilled ever and again by gusts of lamenting melancholia.

To draw the conclusion that, because Tennyson was once overrated as a thinker, he should now be underrated as a writer, was hardly logical; but human. And so, in the fifty years since the full moon of an October midnight looked down through the oriel of Aldworth on the dying Tennyson with his Shakespeare clasped in his hand, a frosty fog rose

across his memory. That fog was at its densest in the not very gallant or generous years between the wars, when many English intellectuals seemed to have transferred their admiration from Tennyson to Tennyson's Vivien, as she let her tongue

> Rage like a fire among the noblest names,
> Polluting, and imputing her whole self,
> Defaming and defacing, till she left
> Not even Lancelot brave, nor Galahad clean.

To some the old poet himself appeared, like his old magician in Broceliande,

> Lost to life and use and name and fame.

Yet, though the ancient sage in Tennyson be dead, the old magician lives. Only, for us, his magic in part has changed.

On the whole the poems of his youthful years have aged the least. FitzGerald's judgements, once waved aside by everyone as mere 'crotchets', begin to look less crotchety now. To-day not a few readers would agree with him that Tennyson's climax was indeed that edition of 1842 which flashed on the world, as resplendently as Excalibur, out of the dark years of mourning and poverty, hypochondria and unhappy love, that had passed since Hallam's death in 1833—

> Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps,
> Upon the hidden bases of the hills.

Tennyson had still fifty years to live. His genius also. But thereafter its visits seem rarer; its touch, less rare. His voice became more and more the voice of his age. Indeed, his real vogue began with the *Idylls of the King* in 1859: to-day, despite many a perfect passage, that largest of his works seems far from his greatest—smaller, in fact, than the *Morte d'Arthur* of 1842.

For the fading of his fame since his death, especially the fame of his later work, there seem several reasons. In part

it was inescapable—the Laureate had been smothered with laurels. In part it may be an accident of history. Perhaps the winter of our discontent is too bitter to be fair to that Indian summer of our grandfathers, with its leisurely Alexandrian learning, its complacent Augustan prosperity. Few Victorian writers (except Darwin and Marx) are much honoured as prophets to-day, whether in their own country or out of it. After all, it is doubtful if the Victorians would much honour *us*—we are not exactly what they looked forward to. (But in Elysium, perhaps, Theocritus and Callimachus, Virgil and Horace, Pope and Gray, may find Tennyson's spirit more congenial, more akin to their own, than our harsh world can. For their mellowed learning, their chiselled style, their pleasure in remoulding the brave tales of ruder days into a more perfectly polished form, their delicate love of the country-side amid the encroaching life of cities—all these lived again with a like felicity in him.) While we, after lean years of war and barbarian invasion, have no stomach for fare so rich. In Tennyson's *Palace of Art* the soul is scared from its pleasure-dome to a cottage in the vale by shadowy nightmares of its own guilt—

> On corpses three months old at noon she came,
> That stood against the wall.

But the modern soul has seen too many real corpses stark against the walls of Europe; and smiles a little bitterly. The thought of the Victorians has come to seem a shallow, timid thing—often, indeed (except for Morris and Hardy), they seem less to think than shrink. Yet it would be fair to remember that if their Europe was less Spartan than ours, it was in most ways more civilized. We too (we may hope) represent but another passing mood of history. It is not we who shall hold the Last Judgement.

But, apart from the accidental prejudices of periods, this sense of unreality in Tennyson's work, which remains

probably the most serious hindrance to its enjoyment, is due also, I think, to a real weakness in Tennyson himself. Here too FitzGerald had already at the time put a shrewd finger on the spot—'this cursed inactivity'. Reading Tennyson, Taine formed a fantastic conception of a Sybarite poet, born with a silver spoon in his mouth, as well as a silver voice. Somersby was far indeed from Sybaris. But one can see how Taine got the idea. There *is* a sheltered air about Tennyson's poetry. His world seems often a sort of park. Like Wordsworth, and unlike Arnold, Tennyson resolutely refused to work for a living; even though his poverty left little hope of marrying the woman he loved. Both before and after his startling rise to affluence, his long life reposed almost wholly in country seclusion. Once, indeed, in his youth he made a trip to the Pyrenees with funds for Spanish rebels; and was richly rewarded with the scenery of *Œnone* and *Mariana in the South*. But he had no such episode of real danger or adventure to remember as even Wordsworth's sojourn in the France of the Revolution.

Accordingly he never learnt really to know men and women (apart from the Lincolnshire rustics of his youth), as Byron learnt, or Crabbe, or George Sand, or Baudelaire. He never confronted military or public life, like Goethe, or Chateaubriand, or Stendhal, or Vigny. He never faced even the hardship of travel in less civilized lands, like Chateaubriand and Byron in Greece and the Levant, Flaubert in North Africa and the Levant, William Morris in Iceland. He could not in Greece, he said, have stood 'the vermin'. And so, with all his fondness for Greek themes, he did his Greek travelling in the pages of Edward Lear. He might visit Scandinavia in a yacht with Mr. Gladstone—but what would one see of Scandinavia in a yacht with Mr. Gladstone? No wonder FitzGerald woke little response when he told the author of *Locksley Hall* to go and live 'among savages'. It is hard to imagine Tennyson even facing a Parisian dinner

chez Magny with Sainte-Beuve and Flaubert, Renan and the Goncourts and George Sand. For his letters and sayings, despite Thackeray's praise of his wisdom, show a strangely different order of intellectual daring from theirs. No doubt Matthew Arnold was too fond of talking as if England were a rather dingy suburb of Europe: but it is not hard to see why he found Tennyson 'provincial'.

Does it matter? I believe it mattered a good deal to Tennyson—and so to the world. This is not the sort of life that the Ancients, at their best, believed a writer should lead. It is only since, perhaps, Dryden's day that it has gradually become an accepted convention that a professional writer should do nothing but write, and that it is admirable for a man to spend his active years merely inking paper. Yet no imagination can be a complete substitute for experience; no genius, for knowledge. The poet who looks only in his own heart and writes may for some years produce great lyrics. He may live on his heart as a camel on its hump. But after a while he tends to fade into a lovely voice with little to say—a Narcissus growing ever paler above his own reflections and conversing only with Echo—such a Narcissus as the ageing Wordsworth became, peering at himself in his Lakes. Even the born poet needs to live. At Farringford and Aldworth there bloomed too much lotus.

> I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
> Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy'd
> Greatly, have suffer'd greatly. . . .
> 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.

But the poet of *Ulysses* was seldom to do more than cross the Solent; until, nearly sixty years after, he put out at last to 'cross the bar'.

Explorations of German and Chemistry and Botany were no substitute. His Muse remained a Lady of Shalott, whom no Lancelot could lure into the real world. Year after year, across that exquisite mirror there pass knights and ladies, market-girls and village-churls—figures of a Platonic shadow-show. And yet what weaving! What embroidery! How she sings! And at moments from the one really living soul in that room—the poet's own—there breaks an agonized cry, as the world darkens and the daylight fades—the cry of the 'immeasurable sadness' that lay at the real heart of Tennyson.

In a sense, no doubt, it may be said of all the worlds that writers create—'the best in this kind are but shadows'. But at least less shadowy than this. With Flaubert in Normandy, with Hardy in Wessex, with Morris in the Middle Ages, with Conrad at sea, we feel a different confidence—we feel that they speak of things they really know. But Tennyson, knowing much of books, knew less of life.

Yet there remain certain things that he did master, with a mastery that endures. Here his genius laboured intensely, and not in vain: here he comes into his own. English country, English speech, English metre—these were his kingdom. When he walked, behind those keen, short-sighted eyes the brain was busy building its similes. In his pocket was his note-book. Indefatigably he composed whole pages, whole poems, that he never even wrote down, but let drift up the chimney with the smoke from his clay pipes. Those that he did write down he was ready to rewrite again and again. The contrast, for example, between the 1832 and 1842 versions of *The Lady of Shalott* throws more light than reams of critical theory on the true mind of Tennyson, and on the clear common sense that works hand in hand with genius to make a perfect poem. Or take the sea—no mean subject and no ill test—what English poet has bettered such a series of seascapes as these?

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.

Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea.

All down the lonely coast of Lyonesse,
Each with a beacon-star upon his head,
And with a wild sea-light about his feet,
He saw them—headland after headland flame
Far on into the rich heart of the west:
And in the light the white mermaiden swam,
And strong man-breasted things stood from the sea,
And sent a deep sea-voice thro' all the land,
To which the little elves of chasm and cleft
Made answer, sounding like a distant horn.

So dark a forethought roll'd about his brain,
As on a dull day in an Ocean cave
The blind wave feeling round his long sea-hall
In silence.

O did ye never lie upon the shore,
And watch the curl'd white of the coming wave
Glass'd in the slippery sand before it breaks?

Fall, as the crest of some slow-arching wave,
Heard in dead night along that table-shore,
Drops flat; and after the great waters break
Whitening for half a league, and thin themselves,
Far over sands marbled with moon and cloud,
From less and less to nothing.

And out beyond them flush'd
The long low dune, and lazy-plunging sea.

And the low moan of leaden-colour'd seas.

The sad, sea-sounding wastes of Lyonesse.

A still, salt pool, lock'd in with bars of sand,
  Left on the shore; that hears all night
The plunging seas draw backward from the land
  Their moon-led waters white.

As the sharp wind that ruffles all day long
A little bitter pool about a stone
On the bare coast.

Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang,
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam.

Only the wan wave
Brake in among dead faces, to and fro
Swaying the helpless hands, and up and down
Tumbling the hollow helmets of the fallen,
And shiver'd brands that once had fought with Rome,
And rolling far along the gloomy shores
The voice of days of old and days to be.

The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl,
The league-long roller thundering on the reef.

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

One show'd an iron coast and angry waves.
  You seem'd to hear them climb and fall
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,
  Beneath the windy wall.

As a wild wave in the wild North-sea,
Green-glimmering toward the summit, bears, with all
Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies,
Down on a bark, and overbears the bark,
And him that helms it.

> But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
> Too full for sound and foam,
> When that which drew from out the boundless deep
> Turns again home.

In short, what survives in Tennyson is the painter and musician. The same, after all, is true of another great English poet—Spenser (save that Spenser's was a far less varied and a narrower mind). 'Tennyson's new book', writes Browning in 1870 of the *Holy Grail* volume, 'is all out of my head already. We look at the object of art in poetry so *differently! Here is an Idyll about a knight being untrue to* his friend and yielding to the temptation of that friend's mistress after having engaged to assist him in his suit. I should judge the conflict in the knight's soul the proper subject to describe: Tennyson thinks he should describe the castle, and the effect of the moon on its towers, and anything *but* the soul.' It is like a thrush scratching its head over the queer nocturnal habits of a nightingale. Yet there is no law that poets must prefer souls to moons. Some may feel that Tennyson's moons—such moons as watch the dying Arthur, or Lancelot's coming to the tower of Carbonek—show fewer marks of age by now than most of Browning's souls. Possibly Tennyson was wrong to attempt the *Idylls* at all, for his genius was not epic. But he was hardly wrong to avoid psychology, for his genius was not dramatic either. A writer can seldom do everything: we should be grateful if he is wise enough to concentrate on what he can do well. Yet fault has been found even with Shakespeare for having no new ideas—only verbal witchery. It is always possible to complain of a vine that it does not bear peaches—or Apples of Knowledge.

Disappointment with Tennyson, reaction against him, arise from going to his poetry for what it does not really give. He will not provide the mystic consolation some still find in Wordsworth; he has not the intellectual courage of

Ibsen or Hardy; do not ask him for the passion of the Ballads, or Burns, or Byron, or Emily Brontë; he cannot draw character like Chaucer, or Shakespeare, or even Crabbe; he cannot tell a story, unless it be short like *The Lady of Shalott* or the *Morte d'Arthur*, for the careful, deliberate beauty of his style lacks the speed of the great narrators, from Homer to Morris. What, then, do we go out to see? A reed shaken by the wind? Precisely—as they shake in the lovely desolation of *The Dying Swan*.

> Ever the weary wind went on,
> And took the reed-tops as it went.

To see not so much living people as living things, and things made living; to listen less to human utterance than to wind and wave, bird and tree. The lovers part in *Love and Duty*, with an anguish made keener by the poet's own personal memories—but what a sunrise across the eastern sea! The grief of Oenone left alone on Ida rings out most poignantly, not for Paris, but for the tall, moon-silvered pines that Paris felled for his galleys on the brow of the blue ravine. *In Memoriam* wakens memories, no longer of Hallam, but of dawn-wind in the sycamore, of chestnuts pattering through brown October leaves, of rooks blown about the skies of the breaking year or, high in the April blue, the lark dwindling to a 'sightless song'. What are the desperate dialectics of *The Two Voices* compared with the splendours of its dragon-fly, in his panoply of sapphire mail? What character in *Aylmer's Field* is half as interesting as the rabbit who, when all is over, sits fondling his own harmless face? From *Claribel* to *Crossing the Bar* it is always the same story—it is not for dead woman or mystic Pilot that we care, but for the wild bee's humming, and the beetle's booming, and for that tide 'too full for sound and foam'. The Flower in the Crannied Wall led Tennyson's thoughts up and away to the mystery of God and Man: but from his baffled gropings after

God and Man we turn back to his flowers. He was happiest when he followed that mood recorded by a wilder spirit than his, Emily Brontë:

> To-day I will not seek the shadowy region;
> Its unsustaining vastness waxes drear;
> And visions rising, legion after legion,
> Bring the unreal world too strangely near.
>
> I'll walk, but not in old heroic traces,
> And not in paths of high morality,
> And not among the half-distinguished faces,
> The clouded forms of long-past history.
>
> I'll walk where my own nature would be leading;
> It vexes me to choose another guide;
> Where the grey flocks in ferny glens are feeding,
> Where the wild wind blows on the mountain side.

It is by this outstanding gift that Tennyson has become, for many, an enduring part of Nature itself. For he has filled our ears with echoes of him, he has coloured the vision of our eyes:

> Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible earth,
> Lord of the senses five.

In the trembling of autumn hollyhocks, in the moonlit mists of December, in the larches and lapwings of the spring, in the looming trees of summer darkness and the little chirping cries of summer dawn, his memory is there. Because of him the very earth has become more beautiful.

TENNYSON'S LIFE

1809. Born at Somersby, Lincolnshire (Aug. 6), fourth son of the Rector, Dr. Tennyson.
1811. Arthur Hallam born.
1816–20. Louth Grammar School.
1827. *Poems by Two Brothers* (with Charles Tennyson).
1828–31. Trinity College, Cambridge.
1829. Chancellor's Medal for *Timbuctoo*.
1830. *Poems, chiefly Lyrical*.
Journey with Hallam to the Pyrenees, taking funds for Spanish insurgents against King Ferdinand.
1831. Hallam engaged to Tennyson's sister Emily (February).
Death of Tennyson's father (March).
1832. Review of 1830 volume by Christopher North in *Blackwood's* (May).
Poems (December: dated '1833' on title-page).
1833. Hostile review of *Poems* in the *Quarterly* (April: by Croker, not Lockhart).
Death of Hallam at Vienna (Sept. 15).
1836. The poet's brother, Charles Tennyson Turner, marries Louisa Sellwood, with her elder sister Emily, the future Lady Tennyson, as bridesmaid.
1837. 'O that 'twere possible' (germ of *Maud*) published in *The Tribute*.
Engagement to Emily Sellwood.
Move from Somersby to High Beech, Epping, Essex.
1840. Engagement broken off.
1842. *Poems* (2 vols. Further editions 1843, 1845, 1846, 1848, 1850, 1851, 1853, &c.)
1843. Loses part of capital in Dr. Allen's scheme for wood-carving by machinery.
1845. Pension of £200 granted by Peel.
1847. *The Princess*. (Further editions 1848, 1850, 1851, 1853, 1854, 1856, 1860.)
1850. *In Memoriam* (3 editions, the first anonymous: further editions 1851 (2), 1855, 1856).
Marriage to Emily Sellwood (June).
Poet Laureate (Nov.).
1852. *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*.
1853. Settles at Farringford, Isle of Wight.
1854. *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (1,000 copies printed for the army in the Crimea).

1855. *Maud and Other Poems* (2 editions: further editions yearly 1856–62, 1864, 1865, 1866 (2), 1867, 1869 (2), 1870, &c.).
1857. *Enid and Nimuë* (privately printed).
1859. *Idylls of the King* (*Enid, Vivien, Elaine, Guinevere*). (Two editions; further editions 1861, 1862, 1863, 1865, 1868 (2), 1869 (2), 1870, &c.)
1860. *Tithonus* (begun in the thirties) in *Cornhill.*
1864. *Enoch Arden.*
1868. Building of Aldworth begun (near Haslemere, Surrey)
Lucretius in *Macmillan's Magazine.*
1869. *The Holy Grail and Other Poems.*
1871. *The Last Tournament* in *Contemporary.*
1872. *Gareth and Lynette.*
1875. *Queen Mary.*
1876. *Harold.*
1878. *The Revenge.*
1879. *Becket.*
1880. *Ballads and Other Poems.*
1883. Peerage accepted.
1885. *Tiresias and Other Poems.*
1889. *Demeter and Other Poems.*
1892. Death at Aldworth (Oct. 6). Burial in Westminster Abbey.
The Death of Œnone and Other Poems.

FROM *THE QUARTERLY REVIEW*

April 1833

THIS is, as some of his marginal notes intimate, Mr. Tennyson's second appearance. By some strange chance we have never seen his first publication, which, if it at all resembles its younger brother, must be by this time so popular that any notice of it on our part would seem idle and presumptuous; but we gladly seize this opportunity of repairing an unintentional neglect, and of introducing to the admiration of our more sequestered readers a new prodigy of genius—another and a brighter star of that galaxy or *milky way* of poetry of which the lamented Keats was the harbinger; and 10 let us take this occasion to sing our palinode on the subject of 'Endymion.' We certainly did not[1] discover in that poem the same degree of merit that its more clear-sighted and prophetic admirers did. We did not foresee the unbounded popularity which has carried it through we know not how many editions; which has placed it on every table; and, what is still more unequivocal, familiarized it in every mouth. All this splendour of fame, however, though we had not the sagacity to anticipate, we have the candour to acknowledge; and we request that the publisher of the new 20 and beautiful edition of Keats's works now in the press, with graphic illustrations by Calcott and Turner, will do us the favour and the justice to notice our conversion in his prolegomena.

. . . . . .

The next piece is a kind of testamentary paper, addressed 'To ——,' a friend, we presume, containing his wishes as to what his friend should do for him when he (the poet) shall

[1] See *Quarterly Review*, vol. xix, p. 204.

be dead—not, as we shall see, that he quite thinks that such a poet can die outright.

> 'Shake hands, my friend, across the brink
> Of that deep grave to which I go.
> Shake hands once more; I cannot sink
> So far—far down, but I shall know
> Thy voice, and answer from below!'

Horace said 'non omnis moriar,' meaning that his fame should survive—Mr. Tennyson is still more vivacious, 'non
10 *omnino* moriar,'—'I will not die at all; my body shall be as immortal as my verse, and however *low I may go*, I warrant you I shall keep all my wits about me,—therefore'

> 'When, in the darkness over me,
> The four-handed mole shall scrape,
> Plant thou no dusky cypress tree,
> Nor wreath thy cap with doleful crape,
> But pledge me in the flowing grape.'

Observe how all ages become present to the mind of a great poet; and admire how naturally he combines the funeral
20 cypress of classical antiquity with the crape hatband of the modern undertaker.

He proceeds:—

> 'And when the sappy field and wood
> Grow green beneath the *showery gray*,
> And rugged barks begin to bud,
> And through damp holts, newflushed with May,
> Ring sudden *laughters* of the jay!'

Laughter, the philosophers tell us, is the peculiar attribute of man—but as Shakespeare found 'tongues in trees and
30 sermons in stones,' this true poet endows all nature not merely with human sensibilities but with human functions—the jay *laughs*, and we find, indeed, a little further on, that the woodpecker *laughs* also; but to mark the distinction between their merriment and that of men, both jays and woodpeckers laugh upon melancholy occasions. We are glad,

moreover, to observe, that Mr. Tennyson is prepared for, and therefore will not be disturbed by, human laughter, if any silly reader should catch the infection from the woodpeckers and jays.

> 'Then let wise Nature work her will,
> And on my clay her darnels grow,
> Come only when the days are still,
> And at my head-stone whisper low,
> And tell me'—

Now, what would an ordinary bard wish to be told under such circumstances?—why, perhaps, how his sweetheart was, or his child, or his family, or how the Reform Bill worked, or whether the last edition of the poems had been sold—*papae*! our genuine poet's first wish is 10

> 'And tell me—*if the woodbines blow!*'

. . . . . .

The 'Lotuseaters'—a kind of classical opium-eaters—are Ulysses and his crew. They land on the 'charmèd island,' and eat of the 'charmèd root,' and then they sing—

> 'Long enough the winedark wave our weary bark did carry.
> This is lovelier and sweeter, 20
> Men of Ithaca, this is meeter,
> In the hollow rosy vale to tarry,
> Like a dreamy Lotuseater—a delicious Lotuseater!
> We will eat the Lotus, 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, 30
> At the limits of the brine,
> The little isle of Ithaca, beneath the day's decline.'—p. 116.

Our readers will, we think, agree that this is admirably characteristic, and that the singers of this song must have made pretty free with the intoxicating fruit. How they got

home you must read in Homer:—Mr. Tennyson—himself, we presume, a dreamy lotus-eater, a delicious lotus-eater—leaves them in full song.

Next comes another class of poems,—Visions. The first is the 'Palace of Art,' or a fine house, in which the poet *dreams* that he sees a very fine collection of well-known pictures. An ordinary versifier would, no doubt, have followed the old routine, and dully described himself as walking into the Louvre, or Buckingham Palace, and there seeing certain 10 masterpieces of painting:—a true poet dreams it. We have not room to hang many of these *chefs-d'œuvre*, but for a few we must find space.—'The Madonna'—

> 'The maid mother by a crucifix,
> In yellow pastures sunny warm,
> Beneath branch work of costly sardonyx
> Sat smiling—*babe in arm.*'—p. 72.

The use of this latter, apparently, colloquial phrase is a deep stroke of art. The form of expression is always used to express an habitual and characteristic action. A knight 20 is described '*lance in rest*'—a dragoon, '*sword in hand*'—so, as the idea of the Virgin is inseparably connected with her child, Mr. Tennyson reverently describes her conventional position—'*babe in arm.*'

His gallery of illustrious portraits is thus admirably arranged:—The Madonna—Ganymede—St. Cecilia—Europa —Deep-haired Milton—Shakspeare—Grim Dante—Michael Angelo—Luther—Lord Bacon—Cervantes—Calderon—King David—'the Halicarnassëan' (*quaere*, which of them?) —Alfred, (not Alfred Tennyson, though no doubt in any 30 other man's gallery *he* would have had a place) and finally—

> 'Isaïah, with fierce Ezekiel,
> Swarth Moses by the Coptic sea,
> Plato, *Petrarca*, Livy, and Raphaël,
> And eastern Confutzee!'

We can hardly suspect the very original mind of Mr.

Tennyson to have harboured any recollections of that celebrated Doric idyll, 'The groves of Blarney,' but certainly there is a strong likeness between Mr. Tennyson's list of pictures and the Blarney collection of statues—

> 'Statues growing that noble place in,
> All heathen goddesses most rare,
> Homer, Plutarch, and Nebuchadnezzar,
> All standing naked in the open air!'

. . . . . .

The other vision is 'A Dream of Fair Women,' in which the heroines of all ages—some, indeed, that belong to the times 10 of 'heathen goddesses most rare'—pass before his view. We have not time to notice them all, but the second, whom we take to be Iphigenia, touches the heart with a stroke of nature more powerful than even the veil that the Grecian painter threw over the head of her father.

> 'dimly I could descry
> The stern blackbearded kings with wolfish eyes,
> Watching to see me die.
>
> The tall masts quivered as they lay afloat;
> The temples, and the people, and the shore; 20
> One drew a sharp knife through my tender throat—
> Slowly,—and *nothing more!*'

What touching simplicity—what pathetic resignation—he cut my throat—'*nothing more!*' One might indeed ask, 'what *more*' she would have? . . .

EDWARD FITZGERALD ON TENNYSON

From Letters

17.3.42. POOR Tennyson has got home some of his proof sheets: and, now that his verses are in hard print, thinks them detestable—There is much I had always told him of—his great fault of being too full and complicated—which he now sees, or fancies he sees, and wishes he had never been 30

persuaded to print. But with all his faults, he will publish such a volume as has not been published since the time of Keats: and which, once published, will never be suffered to die. This is my prophecy: for I live before Posterity.

(*Some New Letters of E. FitzGerald*, ed. F. R. Barton, 1923, p. 55.)

22.5.42. Alfred, whatever he may think, cannot trifle.... His smile is rather a grim one. (Referring to *The Skipping Rope*, &c. in the 1842 volume.)

(*Letters of E. FitzGerald*, 1894, i. p. 115.)

1842. It is a pity he did not publish the new volume separately. The other will drag it down. And why reprint
10 the Merman, the Mermaid, and those everlasting Eleanores, Isabels?—which always were, and are, and must be, a nuisance, though Mrs Butler (who recognised herself in the portrait, of course) said that Eleanore (what a bore) was the finest thing he ever wrote. She has sat for it ever since, I believe. Every woman thinks herself the original of one of that stupid Gallery of Beauties. The sonnet to J.M.K. also remains: there's a beauty too.

(*More Letters*, 1901, p. 17.)

Postmark: 28.2.45. If one could have good Lyrics, I think the World wants them as much as ever. Tennyson's are
20 good: but not of the *kind* wanted. We have surely had enough of men reporting their sorrows: especially when one is aware all the time that the poet wilfully protracts what he complains of, magnifies it in the Imagination, puts it into all the shapes of Fancy: and yet we are to condole with him, and be taught to ruminate our losses & sorrows in the same way. I felt that if Tennyson had got on a horse & ridden 20 miles, instead of moaning over his pipe, he would have been cured of his sorrows in half the time. As it is, it is about 3 years before the Poetic Soul walks itself out of

darkness & Despair into Common Sense—Plato w[d] not have allowed such querulousness to be published in his Republic, to be sure: and when we think of the Miss Barretts, Brownes, Jewsburys &c who will set to work to feel friends' losses in melodious tears, in imitation of A. T's—one must allow Plato was no such prig as some say he was.

(*A FitzGerald Friendship*, ed. N. C. Hannay, 1932, p. 10.)

25.1.48. (To E. B. Cowell.) It came upon me 'come stella in ciel', when in the account of the taking of Amphipolis, Thucydides, *ὃς ταῦτα ξυνέγραψεν*, comes with 7 ships to the rescue! Fancy old Hallam sticking to his gun at a Martello 10 Tower! This was the way to write well; and this was the way to make literature respectable. Oh, Alfred Tennyson, could you but have the luck to be put to such employment! No man would do it better; a more heroic figure to head the defenders of his country could not be.

(*Letters*, i. 233.)

4.5.48. (*The Princess*.) I am considered a great heretic for abusing it; it seems to me a wretched waste of power at a time of life when a man ought to be doing his best; and I almost feel hopeless about Alfred now. I mean about his doing what he was born to do. 20

(*Letters*, i. 237.)

11.48. Tennyson is emerged half-cured, or half-destroyed, from a water establishment: has gone to a new Doctor who gives him iron pills; and altogether this really great man thinks more about his bowels and nerves than about the Laureate wreath he was born to inherit. Not but he meditates new poems; and now the Princess is done, he turns to King Arthur—a worthy subject indeed—and has consulted some histories of him, and spent some time in visiting his traditionary haunts in Cornwall. But I believe the trumpet

can wake Tennyson no longer to do great deeds; I may mistake and prove myself an owl; which I hope may be the case. But how are we to expect heroic poems from a valetudinary? I have told him he should fly from England and go among savages.

(*More Letters*, p. 22.)

19.6.49. That accursed Princess.

(*Letters*, i. 246.)

7.3.50. He has written songs to be stuck between the cantos of the Princess, none of them of the old champagne flavour, as I think.

(*Letters*, i. 254.)

10 31.12.50. (*In Memoriam.*) His poem I never did greatly affect: nor can I learn to do so: it is full of finest things, but it is monotonous, and has that air of being evolved by a Poetical Machine of the highest order. So it seems to be with him now, at least to me, the Impetus, the Lyrical oestrus, is gone. . . . It is the cursed inactivity (very pleasant to me who am no Hero) of this 19th century which has spoiled Alfred, I mean spoiled him for the great work he ought now to be entering upon; the lovely and noble things he has done must remain.

(*Letters*, i. 263.)

20 5.8.63. I was told that Tennyson was writing a sort of Lincolnshire Idyll: I will bet on Miss Ingelow now: he should never have left his old County, and gone up to be suffocated by London Adulation. He has lost that which caused the long roll of the Lincolnshire Wave to reverberate in the measure of Locksley Hall. Don't believe that I rejoice like a Dastard in what I believe to be the Decay of a Great Man: my sorrow has been so much about it that (for one reason)

I have the less cared to meet him of late years, having nothing to say in sincere praise. Nor do I mean that his Decay is all owing to London, etc. He is growing old; and I don't believe much in the Fine Arts thriving on an old tree.

(*Letters*, ii. 47.)

12.64. (Lady Tennyson.) She is a graceful lady, but I think that she and other aesthetic and hysterical Ladies have hurt A.T., who, *quoad* Artist, would have done better to remain single in Lincolnshire, or married a jolly Woman who would have laughed and cried without any reason why. But this is foolish and wicked Talking. 10

(*More Letters*, p. 76.)

11.12.64. You must look out for old Spedding, that melancholy Ruin of the 19th Century, with his half-white-washed Bacon. Perhaps you will see another Ruin—the author of Enoch Arden. Compare that with the Spontaneous *Go* of Palace of Art, Mort d'Arthur, Gardener's Daughter, Locksley Hall, Will Waterproof, Sleeping Palace, Talking Oak, and indeed, one may say, all the two volumes of 1842. As to Maud, I think it the best Poem, as a whole, after 1842.

(*Letters*, ii. 60.)

28.12.69. (*The Holy Grail.*) I am not sure if such a Romance as Arthur's is not best told in the artless old English 20 in which it was told to Arthur's artless successors four hundred years ago; or dished up anew in something of a Ballad Style like his own Lady of Shalott, rather than elaborated into a modern Epic form.

(*Letters*, ii. 111.)

1.70. (To Tennyson, on the *Holy Grail* volume.) I am not sure if the old knights' adventures do not tell upon me better, touched in some lyrical way (like your own 'Lady of Shalott') than when elaborated into epic form. . . . Anyhow, Alfred,

I feel how pure, noble and holy your work is, and whole phrases, lines and sentences of it will abide with me, and, I am sure, with men after me. I read on till the 'Lincolnshire Farmer' drew tears to my eyes. I was got back to the substantial rough-spun Nature I knew; and the old brute, invested by you with the solemn humour of Humanity, like Shakespeare's *Shallow,* became a more pathetic phenomenon than the knights who revisit the world in your other verse. There! I can't help it, and have made a clean breast; and
10 you need only laugh at one more of 'old Fitz's crotchets', which I daresay you anticipated. To compare X— to my own 'paltry poet' is, I say, to compare an old Jew's Curiosity Shop with the Phidian marbles.

(*Tennyson, A Memoir.* By Hallam Lord Tennyson, ii. 95.)

1.11.72. The Spectator, as also the Athenaeum, somewhat over-praise Gareth, I think: but I am glad they do so. . . . The Poem seems to me scarce more worthy of what A.T. was born to do than the other Idylls; but you will almost think it is out of contradiction that I like it better: except, of course, the original Morte. The story of this
20 young knight, who can submit and conquer and do all the Devoir of Chivalry, interests me much more than the Enids, Lily Maids, etc., of former Volumes. But Time *is*—Time *was*—to have done with the whole Concern: pure and noble as all is, and in parts more beautiful than any one else can do.

(*Letters,* ii. 143.)

1875. (*Queen Mary.*) I could only tell the Author that I didn't know what to say about it. At present it has left no impression upon me, whether for Character or Action.

(*More Letters,* p. 179.)

1876. The only song in *The Princess* approved by FitzGerald was 'Blow, Bugle, Blow', commemorating the echoes

at Killarney. 'That is one of Fitz's crotchets,' FitzGerald said to me in 1876, 'and I am considered a great heretic, because like Carlyle I gave up all hopes of him after *The Princess*.'

(*Tennyson, A Memoir*, i. 253.)

24.10.76. When Tennyson was telling me of how The Quarterly abused him (humorously too), and desirous of knowing why one did not care for his later works, etc., I thought if he had lived an active life, as Scott and Shakespeare; or even ridden, shot, drunk, and played the Devil, as Byron, he would have done much more, and talked about 10 it much less. 'You know,' said Scott to Lockhart, 'that I don't care a Curse about what I write', and one sees he did not. I don't believe it was far otherwise with Shakespeare. Even old Wordsworth, wrapt up in his Mountain mists, and proud as he was, was above all this vain Disquietude: proud, not vain, was he: and that a Great Man (as Dante) has some right to be—but not to care what the Coteries say.

(*Letters to Fanny Kemble*, 1895, p. 117.)

9.12.76. I think he might have stopped after 1842, leaving Princesses, Ardens, Idylls, etc., all unborn; all except the Northern Farmer, which makes me cry. 20

(*Letters*, ii. 206.)

6.12.80. (*Ballads and Other Poems.*) You will doubtless see Tennyson's new Volume, which is to my thinking far preferable to his later things, though far inferior to those of near forty years ago: and so, I think, scarce wanted. There is a bit of Translation from an old War Song which shows what a Poet can do when he condescends to such work: and I have always said that 'tis for the old Poets to do some such service for their Predecessors.

(*Letters to Fanny Kemble*, p. 201.)

25.11.82. Annie Thackeray Ritchie writes me from Aldworth, where the Alfreds are all well and jocund in spite of the failure of the Promise of May. I never doubted of there being a noble Design, and many fine things, in it; but I wish nevertheless that A.T. would not have tried the Stage, even if he persists in trying other modes of Publication. I almost wish he was burthened with no bigger volume to Posterity than (as Dickens says) Gray has managed to find his way there with. There was an Article by Wedmore in the
10 Academy on the Play, written with consideration, discrimination (I believe), and respect for the old Dear who *will* go on—like some of Aristophanes' Elders.

(*More Letters*, p. 273.)

MATTHEW ARNOLD ON TENNYSON

From Letters and Lectures

12.47. (To Clough.) Yet to *solve* the Universe as you try to do is as irritating as Tennyson's dawdling with its painted shell is fatiguing to me to witness.

(*Letters of M. Arnold to A. H. Clough*, ed. H. F. Lowry, 1932, p. 63.)

22.11.53. (To John Duke Coleridge.) (On Miltonic echoes in *Sohrab and Rustum.*) Tennyson is another thing; but one has him so in one's head, one cannot help imitating him sometimes: but except in the last two lines I thought I had
20 kept him out of 'Sohrab and Rustum'. Mark any other places you notice, for I should wish to alter such.

(*Life & Correspondence of Lord Coleridge.* By E. H. Coleridge, 1904, i. 211.)

2.8.55. (To Clough.) From the extracts I have seen from Maud, he seems in his old age to be coming to your manner in the Bothie and the Roman poem. That manner, as you

know, I do not like: but certainly, if it is to be used, you use it with far more freedom, vigour and abundance than he does.—Altogether I think this volume a lamentable production, and like so much of our literature thoroughly and intensely *provincial*, not European.

(*Letters to Clough*, p. 147.)

17.12.60. The fault I find with Tennyson in his *Idylls of the King* is that the peculiar charm and aroma of the Middle Age he does not give in them. There is something magical about it, and I will do something with it before I have done. The real truth is that Tennyson, with all his temperament 10 and artistic skill, is deficient in intellectual power; and no modern poet can make very much of his business unless he is pre-eminently strong in this. Goethe owes his grandeur to his strength in this, although it even hurt his poetical operations by its immense predominance.

(*Letters*, ed. G. W. E. Russell, 1901, i. 147.)

9.3.61. (To Clough.) I care for his productions less and less and am convinced both Alfred de Musset and Henri Heine are far more profitable studies, if we are to study contemporaries at all.

(*Letters to Clough*, p. 184.)

1861. (For translating Homer.) It must not be Mr. 20 Tennyson's blank verse.

> For all experience is an arch, wherethro'
> Gleams that untravell'd world, whose distance fades
> For ever and for ever, as we gaze—

it is no blame to the thought of those lines, which belongs to another order of ideas than Homer's, but it is true, that Homer would certainly have said of them, 'It is to consider too curiously to consider so.' It is no blame to their rhythm, which belongs to another order of movement

than Homer's, but it is true, that these three lines by themselves take up nearly as much time as a whole book of the *Iliad*.

(*On Translating Homer.*)

1862. One sees how needful it is to direct incessantly the English translator's attention to the essential characteristics of Homer's poetry, when so accomplished a person as Mr. Spedding, recognising these characteristics as indeed Homer's, admitting them to be essential, is led by the ingrained habits and tendencies of English blank verse thus
10 repeatedly to lose sight of them in translating even a few lines. One sees this yet more clearly, when Mr. Spedding, taking me to task for saying that the blank verse used for rendering Homer 'must not be Mr. Tennyson's blank verse,' declares that in most of Mr. Tennyson's blank verse all Homer's essential characteristics,—'rapidity of movement, *plainness of words and style, simplicity and directness of ideas* and, above all, nobleness of manner, are as conspicuous as in Homer himself.' This shows, it seems to me, how hard it is for English readers of poetry, even the most accomplished,
20 to feel deeply and permanently what Greek plainness of thought and Greek simplicity of expression really are: they admit the importance of these qualities in a general way, but they have no ever-present sense of them; and they easily attribute them to any poetry which has other excellent qualities, and which they very much admire. No doubt there are plainer things in Mr. Tennyson's poetry than the three lines I quoted; in choosing them, as in choosing a specimen of ballad-poetry, I wished to bring out clearly, by a strong instance, the qualities of thought and style to which
30 I was calling attention; but when Mr. Spedding talks of a plainness of thought *like Homer's*, of a plainness of speech *like Homer's*, and says that he finds these constantly in Mr. Tennyson's poetry, I answer that these I do not find there

at all. Mr. Tennyson is a most distinguished and charming poet; but the very essential characteristic of his poetry is, it seems to me, an extreme subtlety and curious elaborateness of thought, an extreme subtlety and curious elaborateness of expression. In the best and most characteristic productions of his genius, these characteristics are most prominent. They are marked characteristics, as we have seen, of the Elizabethan poets; they are marked, though not the essential, characteristics of Shakespeare himself. Under the influences of the nineteenth century, under wholly new 10 conditions of thought and culture, they manifest themselves in Mr. Tennyson's poetry in a wholly new way. But they are still there. The essential bent of his poetry is towards such expressions as

> Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars . . .

or

> O'er the sun's bright eye
> Drew the vast eyelid of an inky cloud . . .

or

> When the cairn'd mountain was a shadow, sunn'd 20
> The world to peace again . . .

or

> The fresh young captains flash'd their glittering teeth,
> The huge bush-bearded barons heaved and blew . . .

or

> He bared the knotted column of his throat,
> The massive square of his heroic breast,
> And arms on which the standing muscle sloped
> As slopes a wild brook o'er a little stone,
> Running too vehemently to break upon it. . . . 30

And this way of speaking is the least *plain*, the most *un-Homeric*, which can possibly be conceived. Homer presents his thought to you just as it wells from the source of his mind: Mr. Tennyson carefully distils his thought before he

will part with it. Hence comes, in the expression of the thought, a heightened and elaborate air. In Homer's poetry it is all natural thoughts in natural words; in Mr. Tennyson's poetry it is all distilled thoughts in distilled words. Exactly this heightening and elaboration may be observed in Mr. Spedding's

> While the steeds *mouth'd their corn aloof* . . .,

(an expression which might have been Mr. Tennyson's), on which I have already commented; and to one who is pene-
10 trated with a sense of the real simplicity of Homer, this subtle sophistication of the thought is, I think, very perceptible even in such lines as these,

> And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
> Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy . . .

which I have seen quoted as perfectly Homeric. Perfect simplicity can be obtained only by a genius of which perfect simplicity is an essential characteristic.

So true is this, that when a genius essentially subtle, or a genius which, from whatever cause, is in its essence not
20 truly and broadly simple, determines to be perfectly plain, determines not to admit a shade of subtlety or curiosity into its expression, it cannot even then attain real simplicity; it can only attain a semblance of simplicity.[1] French criticism, richer in its vocabulary than ours, has invented a useful word to distinguish this semblance (often very beautiful and valuable) from the real quality. The real quality it calls *simplicité*, the semblance *simplesse*. The one is natural simplicity, the other is artificial simplicity. What is called simplicity in the productions of a genius essentially not

[1] I speak of poetic genius as employing itself upon narrative or dramatic poetry—poetry in which the poet has to go out of himself and to create. In lyrical poetry, in the direct expression of personal feeling, the most subtle genius may, under the momentary pressure of passion, express itself simply. Even here, however, the native tendency will generally be discernible.

simple, is in truth *simplesse*. The two are distinguishable from one another the moment they appear in company. For instance, let us take the opening of the narrative in Wordsworth's *Michael*:

> Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale
> There dwelt a shepherd, Michael was his name;
> An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
> His bodily frame had been from youth to age
> Of an unusual strength; his mind was keen,
> Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs; 10
> And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
> And watchful more than ordinary men.

Now let us take the opening of the narrative in Mr. Tennyson's *Dora*:

> With Farmer Allan at the farm abode
> William and Dora. William was his son,
> And she his niece. He often looked at them,
> And often thought, 'I'll make them man and wife.'

The simplicity of the first of these passages is *simplicité*; that of the second, *simplesse*. Let us take the end of the 20 same two poems; first, of *Michael*:

> The cottage which was named the Evening Star
> Is gone—the ploughshare has been through the ground
> On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
> In all the neighbourhood: yet the oak is left
> That grew beside their door: and the remains
> Of the unfinished sheepfold may be seen
> Beside the boisterous brook of Green-head Ghyll.

And now, of *Dora*:

> So those four abode 30
> Within one house together; and as years
> Went forward, Mary took another mate:
> But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

A heedless critic may call both of these passages simple if he will. Simple, in a certain sense, they both are; but between the simplicity of the two there is all the difference

that there is between the simplicity of Homer and the simplicity of Moschus.

(*On Translating Homer. Last Words.*)

22.9.64. I agree with you in thinking 'Enoch Arden' itself very good indeed—perhaps the best thing Tennyson has done; 'Tithonus' I do not like quite so well. But is it possible for one who has himself published verses to print a criticism on Tennyson in which perfect freedom shall be used? And without perfect freedom what is a criticism worth? I do not think Tennyson a great and powerful spirit in any line—
10 as Goethe was in the line of modern thought, Wordsworth in that of contemplation, Byron even in that of passion; and unless a poet, especially a poet at this time of day, is that, my interest in him is only slight, and my conviction that he will not finally stand high is firm.

(*Letters*, i. 277.)

SIR LESLIE STEPHEN ON TENNYSON

From *Studies of a Biographer* (1899)

TO me, I humbly confess, 'allegory,' rightly or wrongly, means nuisance. The 'meaning' which it sticks on to a poem is precisely what the poem cannot properly 'mean.' The old *Morte d'Arthur*, as it appeared with the charming old setting, was one of the poems which we all knew by heart. One of
20 the charms was surely that the behaviour of the persons was delightfully illogical and absurd. Rather, perhaps, it took one to the world in which true logic demands illogical behaviour. Things take place there according to a law of their own, which is the more attractive just because it is preposterous and apparently arbitrary. When Sir Bedivere throws Excalibur into the lake, the whole proceeding is, as indeed Sir Bedivere very properly perceives and points out, contrary to all commonsense. His reluctance gives us warning

that we have got into the world governed by phantastic laws. Throwing a sword into a lake does not, within ordinary experience, produce a barge occupied by three queens with crowns of gold; just as shooting an albatross does not, as a rule, produce a dead calm and death of a ship's crew by thirst. But though things of dreamland follow laws of their own, even dreamland has laws, and they ought to be observed when once you get there. The 'Ancient Mariner' was ridden by a nightmare, and all things happened to him according to the genuine laws of the nightmare world. 10
Arthur's Round Table was a dream of the mediaeval imagination, and the historian of its adventures should frankly put himself in the corresponding attitude of mind. It lends itself admirably to represent the ideals which were in the mind of the dreamer, and therefore unconsciously determined the constitution of the imaginary world. But when the personages, instead of obeying the laws of their own world, are converted into allegory, they lose their dream reality without gaining the reality of ordinary life. The arbitrariness especially ceases to be delightful when we 20
suspect that the real creatures of the fancy have become the puppets of a judicious moralist. The question, What is the meaning? throws one's mind out of gear. When Sir Bedivere made his second appearance somebody asked Tennyson whether the three queens were not Faith, Hope, and Charity. The poet replied that they were, and that they were not. They might be the Virtues or they might be the Three Graces. There was, he said, an 'allegorical, or perhaps rather a parabolic, drift,' in the poem; but he added there was not a single fact or incident in the *Idylls* which might not be 30
explained without any mystery or allegory whatever. This explanation may be very satisfactory to some readers, and if they are satisfied, their state is the more gracious; but I humbly confess that so soon as genuine inhabitants of Fairy-land can be interpreted as three virtues or three graces, they

cease to fascinate me. In the *Holy Grail* the mystical purpose is most distinctly avowed. We are told to learn what it means by studying the visions of Sir Percival, and his 'subsequent fall and nineteenth-century temptations.' The result of my study is that the visions are turned into waking shams, and leave a residuum of edifying sermon. The intrusion of the nineteenth century is simply disenchantment. If I want to be moral, I should get much more instruction out of *Mme. Bovary* or some other 'masterful transcript of actuality' than
10 out of Tristram and Iseult, and if I want to be romantic, the likeness of King Arthur to the Prince Consort takes all the vigour out of the prehistoric personage. The Prince Consort, no doubt, deserved Tennyson's profound respect; but when we find him masquerading among the knights of the Round Table, his admirable propriety of behaviour looks painfully like insipidity and incapacity for his position.

. . . . . .

When Tennyson is presented to us as giving the true solution of the doubts which beset our time, we should have some positive as well as negative testimony to his merits.
20 We cannot, it is true, expect a full solution. A gentleman is reported to have asked him whether the existence of evil was not the great difficulty. Tennyson certainly could not be expected to throw much light upon Job's difficulties, and seems to have judiciously diverted the conversation by referring to the 'charge of the heavy brigade'. No poet, and indeed no philosopher, can be asked to solve the eternal problems off-hand. What we do see, is that Tennyson, like many noble and deep thinkers, was terribly perplexed by the alternatives apparently offered: by his aversion on one side
30 to certain orthodox dogmas, and by his dread and hatred of some tendencies which claim at least to be scientific. His ideal hero was the man who faced doubts boldly and attained clear convictions of one kind or other. On the other hand, he is always haunted by the fear of depriving your sister of

her 'happy views' (a woefully feeble phrase, by the way, for Tennyson), and praises a philosopher for keeping his doubts to himself. The resulting attitude of mind may not be morbid: certainly it may fairly be called pathetic, and even those who do not sympathise with his doctrine will do well to feel for his distress. It may teach them, at least, what is in any case worth knowing: why their teaching is so repulsive to many tender and delicate minds. But I confess to share Carlyle's regret for the loss of the old heroic tone of the 'Ulysses.' Noble poetry, let us admit, may express either faith or scepticism; a conviction that we know or that we can never know; it may be openly pessimistic, or expressive of an enthusiastic faith in the future; but Tennyson, even in the *In Memoriam*, always seems to me to be like a man clinging to a spar left floating after a shipwreck, knowing that it will not support him, and yet never able to make up his mind to strike out and take his chance of sinking or swimming. That may be infinitely affecting, but it is not the attitude of the poet who can give a war-cry to his followers, or of the philosopher who really dares to 'face the spectres of the mind.'

HAROLD NICOLSON ON TENNYSON

From *Tennyson* (1923)

WE are thus encouraged, as we look back upon the many fluctuations which Tennyson's renown has undergone, to hope that once again he will survive the reaction against him, and that the present estimate of his poetry is but the last of the successive phases through which his reputation has already passed. For indeed, as one turns to the reviews of the 1832 volume, to the reviews of the 1842 volume, to the reviews of 1855, and even to the reviews of 1887, one is struck by the extreme diversity of the opinions expressed. The attacks against his early work centred upon his apparent

affectation, upon the 'feminine feebleness of his polluted muse,' upon the 'occasional absence of refinement, and failure of dignity and decorum.' Fault is found with 'his want of truth in imagery and diction,' with his diffuseness; or, as a writer in the *Quarterly* expresses it, 'Mr. Tennyson is not free from the fault of nimiety.' By 1849 we find the following in *Blackwood's Magazine*: 'Poetry of the highest order, coupled with much affectation, much defective writing, many wilful blunders, renders Alfred Tennyson a very worthy, and a very difficult, subject for the critic.' 'He has,' the same writer says later, 'a morbid horror of the commonplace,' and we are startled a few paragraphs further to learn that the admirers of *The Lady of Shalott* 'must be far gone in dilettantism to make a special favourite of such a caprice as this, with its intolerable vagueness and irritating repetitions.' *In Memoriam*, when it appeared, was attacked among other things for its atheism, and for conveying 'no impression of reality or truthfulness to the mind'; and *Maud* created a storm of indignation for its 'positively hideous cacophony,' for being 'altogether an ill-conceived and worse-expressed screed of bombast,' for being 'outrageously silly,' and, above all, for being 'morbid' and 'degenerate.' When the *Idylls* appeared, critics were not wanting to pronounce them 'immoral'; *Merlin and Vivien* was particularly unpopular, and the readers of that idyll were, as *Blackwood's* reviewer put it, 'truly sorry it should pollute the pages which tell, further on, of the manly—ay, the *Christian*—purity of Arthur.' We find the *Quarterly* in 1859 countering this line of attack with the explanation that 'the brutal element in man, which now only invades the conjugal relation in cases where it is highly concentrated, was then far more widely diffused, and not yet dissociated from alternations and even habits of attachment.' 'We tremble,' says *Blackwood's Magazine* again, in reference to the *Idylls*—'we tremble now and then for the fate of the nineteenth century

in the hands of some future Macaulay. He will have no difficulty in giving us a very bad character, if he ground his judgment on such facts as the admitted popularity of "Traviata" and the passing of the Divorce Bill. And we fear that he will find some additional evidence against us in the very book we are now considering.' *Blackwood's Magazine* had little need, perhaps, to be alarmed; but it is useful for us to realise that as late as the middle 'sixties there were many sincere and not unintelligent people who considered the Laureate to be degenerate, subversive, atheistic and immoral. With the publication of *The Holy Grail* the note changes, and the attack centres upon Tennyson's obscurity. *The Holy Grail* itself was accused of being 'intricate and involved beyond any allowance of symbolic reference or justification,' and as late as the year 1889 we find the *Echo* contending 'that there are long passages in the *Idylls of the King* which are as difficult to understand as the pictures of Mr. G. F. Watts.'

The reaction of the intellectuals against Tennyson had begun earlier: the first notes of this reaction were raised in diffident protest against the immense popularity of the *Enoch Arden* volume of 1864. It is curious to observe the apologetic, tentative way in which the critics, or some of them, ventured to beat against the tide. 'It is true,' writes a critic in the *British Review* for October 1864, 'that at each new gift of Mr. Tennyson to the public the wave of enthusiasm rises higher and higher, until his admirers . . . cease to criticise his talent, and can only heap together epithets of praise, and liken the god of their idolatry to all the chief poets of the world in turn. On this occasion, however, we confess, though with fitting diffidence, that we do not share the rapture of Mr. Tennyson's reviewers.' With this apology the *British Review* proceeds to the heart of the matter: 'We think,' it says, 'that Mr. Tennyson's remarkable subjection to present and external influences explains, in some degree,

both his empire over some, and the indifference to his poetry of other by no means less able judges. . . . His taste follows the fashion of the time, whether for great exhibitions or Gothic manor houses. . . . His preaching—and he is fond of preaching—is tinged by the cheerful paganism of muscular divinity, while his exaltation of doubt above dogma betrays the temper of modern criticism. In short, the age governs Mr. Tennyson's utterances, which are the accepted expression of its complex fashions. . . . Meanwhile, how we enjoy 10 his gifts we need hardly describe to a public whose rapture is so general.'

The *Quarterly* for January 1866, no less cautious in the form of its criticism, proceeded in substance to go even further. 'Mr. Tennyson,' we read, 'does not often rejoice us with any sudden irradiation of the darker chambers of the mind; . . . we are obliged to admit that a want of freedom of inspiration is some drawback upon his charm. . . . In many ways the Laureate's work reminds us of that of our very best modern Gothic architects. The edifice is faultless. 20 Every detail shows a delicate taste, and a love and understanding of the best works of the past, while the structure as a whole shows, if not grandeur, at least beauty in its proportions and simplicity in its effects: yet there lacks, after all, the indescribable freshness and vigour which are more often indeed attributes of times and peoples than of individuals.' By 1869 the same Review could write as follows: 'Mr. Tennyson . . . has not merely been overpraised, but qualities have been ascribed to him the very reverse of his real merits. He has been thought to have a profound original 30 intellect, whereas he has merely a receptive intellect; he has been thought to have dramatic imagination, whereas few poets are more self-contained and self-respective. . . . He has the sobriety of language which is so impressive; but he has not the largeness of grasp . . . there is no long sweep, no single grave conception working itself out in details.'

And again in 1871 we find the *Quarterly* enunciating the opinion that 'what his domestic life has gained in sobriety, his poetry has lost in intensity; and his voice is mild as the sucking dove's when he communes with Nature or rails against mankind.'

Already, therefore, by 1871, a certain alteration is to be noticed in the audience to whom the Laureate appealed. Things had changed since the 'fifties; things had changed singularly since 1842; things had changed most of all from the old Cambridge days when the youth of England gloried 10
in their admiration of Tennyson as in some delicious heresy. His later admirers were, of course, infinitely more numerous, but they were old, or at least middle-aged, and most of them, perhaps, were not very well educated. And as the 'eighties approached, the younger generation appeared almost indifferent to the spiritual elevation, the moral repressions, the tender compromises which the Laureate had so often preached and quite as often practised. But the old man up at Aldworth was not so easily dismissed: in his seventy-second year he astonished them all by writing *Rizpah*. He 20
astonished Swinburne more than anyone; and the famous review which the younger poet published in the *Fortnightly* on February 1, 1881, should have gone far to stem the tide of reaction, and to appease the growing fury of the Laureate. Even in this panegyric, however, hidden among the ecstatic tributes which Swinburne tossed hysterically at the feet of the Laureate, there were some bitter wounding thorns. It was not pleasant to find the dying words of King Arthur described as 'the last deliberate snuffle of the "blameless King,"' or as 'the acme, the apogee, the culmination of all 30
imaginable cant.' It was not fair to have a tender little piece such as *The Ringlet* dragged out and compared unfavourably with the 'splendid and showy puberty of a Musset.' It was not fair that one's sturdy, sensible remarks upon the condition of England and foreign countries should be described

as having 'the shrill unmistakable accent, not of a provincial deputy, but of a provincial schoolboy.' It was true, perhaps, that one's early poems, largely owing to the omission of hyphens, were sometimes a little difficult to scan; but it was really going too far to say that 'there are whole poems of Mr. Tennyson's first period which are no more properly to be called metrical than the more shapeless and monstrous parts of Walt Whitman.' Nor, after a lifetime devoted to the study and perfectioning of prosody, to the production of the
10 completed perfection of each line, was it tolerable to be told that: 'idler men, or men less qualified and disposed to expend such length of time and energy of patience on the composition and modification, the rearrangement and re-vision and reissue, of a single verse or copy of verses, can only look on at such a course of labour with amused or admiring astonishment, and a certain doubt whether the linnets, to whose method of singing Mr. Tennyson com-pares his own, do really go through the training of such a musical gymnasium before they come forth qualified to
20 sing.'

. . . . . .

This haunting wail of fear and loneliness piercing at moments through the undertones of *In Memoriam*, echoes a note which runs through all the poetry of Tennyson, and which, when once apprehended, beats with pitiful persis-tence on the heart. It proceeds from that grey region between the conscious and the unconscious; from that dim glimmer-ing land where mingle the 'Voices of the Dark' and the 'Voices of the Day'; from the uncertain shadow-edges of consciousness in which stir the evanescent memories of
30 childhood or the flitting shapelessness of half-forgotten dreams. It is a cry that mingles with the mystery of wide spaces, of sullen sunsets or of sodden dawns; the cry of a child lost at night time; the cry of some stricken creature in the dark; 'the low moan of an unknown sea':—

The first gray streak of earliest summer-dawn,
The last long stripe of waning crimson gloom,
As if the late and early were but one—
A height, a broken grange, a grove, a flower
Had murmurs 'Lost and gone and lost and gone!'
A breath, a whisper—some divine farewell—
Desolate sweetness—far and far away.

And thus, in that 'ever-moaning battle in the mist' which was the spiritual life of Tennyson, there were sudden penetrating moments when he would obtain:— 10

A glimpse of that dark world where I was born;

when, once again, the 'old mysterious glimmer' would steal into his soul, and when, in a sombre flash of vision, he would see his life:—

all dark and red—a tract of sand,
And someone pacing there alone,
Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,
Lit with a low large moon.

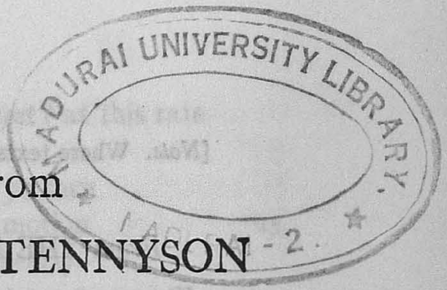
To the vibration of so sad a cadence I should wish to leave him, trusting that the ultimate impression, thus 20 attuned, will prove more poignant and more durable than any hollow reverence for what was once admired. The age of Tennyson is past; the ideals which he voiced so earnestly have fallen from esteem. The day may come, perhaps, when the conventions of that century will once again inspire the thoughtful or animate the weak. But, for the moment, it is not through these that any interest can be evoked. And thus, if we consider it reasonable and right that Tennyson should also stand among the poets, let us, for the present, forget the delicate Laureate of a cautious age; the shallow 30 thought, the vacant compromise; the honeyed idyll, the complacent ode; let us forget the dulled monochrome of his middle years, forget the magnolia and the roses, the indolent

Augusts of his island-home; forget the laurels and the rhododendrons.

Let us recall only the low booming of the North Sea upon the dunes; the grey clouds lowering above the wold; the moan of the night wind on the fen; the far glimmer of marsh-pools through the reeds; the cold, the half-light, and the gloom.

Selections from

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON



[*Note.* Where texts of different editions vary, the final form is given.]

From THE DEVIL AND THE LADY

Written 1823–5 (at age of 14 to 16). Published 1930.

(*The aged wizard* MAGUS, *going on a journey, leaves his young wife* AMORET *to be guarded from temptation by a* DEVIL.)

Amoret. Nay, I'll kneel
And pray thee to depart.
Devil. Out on thee, woman!
Devils are faithful to their trust.
Amoret. Alas!
Am I entrusted then to thee?
Devil. Dost weep?
Is that a tear which stains thy cheek? Nay—now 5
It quivers at the tip-end of thy nose
Which makes it somewhat dubious from which feature
It first had issue.
Amoret. I conjure thee—
Devil. Tears!
The rain of sentiment, the dews of feeling,
The beads of sensibility! 10
They are the coinage of a single wish.
I know that ye can summon them at will.
They are a woman's weapons, sword and shield,
Wherewith she braves remonstrance and breaks hearts—
Those faithful sluices never are drawn dry. 15
Even the withering heat of passion
But leads them forth in greater plenitude.
What! more! I know ye can command them, woman,
Even to the precise number, ten or twenty,
As suits occasion— 20
More yet? Methinks the cavity o' thy skull

Is brine i' th' room o' brains. More yet? at this rate
You'd float a ship o' the line.
This is the cogent stream wherewith ye turn
The mill-wheel of men's love (whose motion 25
Guides all the inner workings o' the heart)
And grind what grist ye please.

Amoret. I pray thee—

Devil. Get thee to bed—yet stay—but one word more—
Let there be no somnambulations,
No colloquy of soft-tongued whisperings 30
Like the low hum of the delighted bee
I' th' calyx of a lily—no kerchief-waving!
No footfalls i' th' still night! Lie quietly,
Without the movement of one naughty muscle,
Still as a kernel in its stone, and lifeless 35
As the dull yoke within its parent shell,
Ere yet the *punctum saliens* vivify it.
I know ye are perverse, and ever wish,
Maugre my wholesome admonitions,
To run obliquely like the bishop at chess, 40
But I'll cry 'check' to ye, I warrant ye
I'll prove a 'stalemate' to ye.

(MAGUS *returning encounters the* DEVIL *who, the better to fulfil his trust, has disguised himself to impersonate* AMORET.)

[*Enter* DEVIL, *still veil'd*

Magus. Ha! Amoret, awake, abroad so early
Blanching the roses of thy cheeks. What now!
The grey cock hath not crow'd, the glow-worm still 45
Leads on unpal'd his train of emerald light.

Devil. Good faith, most venerable necromancer,
The roses of my visage are not blanch'd
But rather have attain'd (be thou my judge)
Unto a depth of dusky colouring. [*Unveils* 50

Magus. How now, my Hellish Minister, dark child

Of bottomless Hades; what rude waggery,
What jejune undigested joke is this?
To quilt thy fuscous haunches with the flounc'd,
Frilled, finical delicacy of female dress. 55
How hast thou dar'd to girdle thy brown sides
And prop thy monstrous vertebræ with stays?
Speak out, thou petticoated Solecism.
Thou hairy trifler! what mad pranks have sent
Thy diabolical wits a wool-gathering? 60
Devil. A linen-gathering I grant you, Master.
Magus. Certes, it seems your Devilship to-night
Is unaccountably facetious!
Speak and beware the magic of my spells!
Or I will rive yon mighty Cedar-Tree 65
Sheer from its topmost windiest branch unto
The lowest fang o' th' root—between each half
I'll place thy sinful carcase and again
When the cleft stem shall close without a fissure
Thy bunching body shall be quash'd as flat 70
As spider in a hinge.

(MAGUS *explains how his journey was thwarted by a storm.*)

Each hoar wave
With crisped undulation arching rose,
Thence falling in white ridge with sinuous slope
Dash'd headlong to the shore and spread along
The sands its tender fringe of creamy spray. 75
Thereat my shallop lightly I unbound,
Spread my white sail and rode exulting on
The placid murmurings of each feathery wave
That hurried into sparkles round the cleaving
Of my dark Prow; but scarcely had I past 80
The third white line of breakers when a squall
Fell on me from the North, an inky Congress
O' the Republican clouds unto the zenith

Rush'd from th' horizon upwards with the speed
Of their own thunder-bolts. 85
The seas divided and dim Phantasies
Came thronging thickly round me, with hot eyes
Unutterable things came flitting by me;
Semblance of palpability was in them,
Albeit the wavering lightnings glitter'd thro' 90
Their shadow'd immaterialities.
Black shapes clung to my boat; a sullen owl
Perch'd on the Prow, and overhead the hum
As of infernal Spirits in mid Heaven
Holding aerial council caught mine ear. 95
Then came a band of melancholy sprites,
White as their shrouds and motionlessly pale
Like some young Ashwood when the argent Moon
Looks in upon its many silver stems.
And thrice my name was syllabled i' th' air 100
And thrice upon the wave, like that loud voice
Which thro' the deep dark night i' th' olden time
Came sounding o'er the lone Ionian.

CLARIBEL

A MELODY

Poems (1830)

I

WHERE Claribel low-lieth
The breezes pause and die,
Letting the rose-leaves fall:
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,
Thick-leaved, ambrosial, 5
With an ancient melody
Of an inward agony,
Where Claribel low-lieth.

II

At eve the beetle boometh
  Athwart the thicket lone: 10
At noon the wild bee hummeth
  About the moss'd headstone:
At midnight the moon cometh,
  And looketh down alone.
Her song the lintwhite swelleth, 15
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,
  The callow throstle lispeth,
The slumbrous wave outwelleth,
  The babbling runnel crispeth,
The hollow grot replieth 20
  Where Claribel low-lieth.

MARIANA

Poems (1830)

'Mariana in the moated grange.'
Measure for Measure.

WITH blackest moss the flower-plots
  Were thickly crusted, one and all:
The rusted nails fell from the knots
  That held the pear to the gable-wall.
The broken sheds look'd sad and strange: 5
  Unlifted was the clinking latch;
  Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.
    She only said, 'My life is dreary,
      He cometh not,' she said; 10
    She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
      I would that I were dead!'

7

Her tears fell with the dews at even;
  Her tears fell ere the dews were dried;
She could not look on the sweet heaven, 15
  Either at morn or eventide.
After the flitting of the bats,
  When thickest dark did trance the sky,
  She drew her casement-curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats. 20
    She only said, 'The night is dreary,
      He cometh not,' she said;
    She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
      I would that I were dead!'

Upon the middle of the night, 25
  Waking she heard the night-fowl crow:
The cock sung out an hour ere light:
  From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her: without hope of change,
  In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn, 30
  Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange.
    She only said, 'The day is dreary,
      He cometh not,' she said;
    She said, 'I am aweary, aweary, 35
      I would that I were dead!'

About a stone-cast from the wall
  A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
  The cluster'd marish-mosses crept. 40
Hard by a poplar shook alway,
  All silver-green with gnarled bark:
  For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.

She only said, 'My life is dreary, 45
He cometh not,' she said;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!'

And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and away, 50
In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,
And wild winds bound within their cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell 55
Upon her bed, across her brow.
She only said, 'The night is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!' 60

All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges creak'd;
The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,
Or from the crevice peer'd about. 65
Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without.
She only said, 'My life is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said; 70
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!'

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof 75
The poplar made, did all confound

Her sense; but most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower. 80
Then, said she, 'I am very dreary,
He will not come,' she said;
She wept, 'I am aweary, aweary,
Oh God, that I were dead!'

SONG

Poems (1830)

I

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours
Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers:
To himself he talks;
For at eventide, listening earnestly,
At his work you may hear him sob and sigh 5
In the walks;
Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks
Of the mouldering flowers:
Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly; 10
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

II

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,
As a sick man's room when he taketh repose
An hour before death; 15
My very heart faints and my whole soul grieves
At the moist rich smell of the rotting leaves,
And the breath
Of the fading edges of box beneath,
And the year's last rose. 20

10

Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
  Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
  Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

THE DYING SWAN

Poems (1830)

I

THE plain was grassy, wild and bare,
Wide, wild, and open to the air,
Which had built up everywhere
  An under-roof of doleful gray.
With an inner voice the river ran, 5
Adown it floated a dying swan,
    And loudly did lament.
  It was the middle of the day.
Ever the weary wind went on,
    And took the reed-tops as it went. 10

II

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,
And white against the cold-white sky,
Shone out their crowning snows.
  One willow over the river wept,
And shook the wave as the wind did sigh; 15
Above in the wind was the swallow,
    Chasing itself at its own wild will,
    And far thro' the marish green and still
    The tangled water-courses slept,
Shot over with purple, and green, and yellow. 20

III

The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul
Of that waste place with joy
Hidden in sorrow: at first to the ear
The warble was low, and full, and clear;
And floating about the under-sky, 25
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach stole
Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear;
But anon her awful jubilant voice,
With a music strange and manifold,
Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold; 30
As when a mighty people rejoice
With shawms, and with cymbals, and harps of gold,
And the tumult of their acclaim is roll'd
Thro' the open gates of the city afar,
To the shepherd who watcheth the evening star. 35
And the creeping mosses and clambering weeds,
And the willow-branches hoar and dank,
And the wavy swell of the soughing reeds,
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank,
And the silvery marish-flowers that throng 40
The desolate creeks and pools among,
Were flooded over with eddying song.

A DIRGE

Poems (1830)

I

Now is done thy long day's work;
Fold thy palms across thy breast,
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.
Let them rave.
Shadows of the silver birk 5
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

II

Thee nor carketh care nor slander;
Nothing but the small cold worm
Fretteth thine enshrouded form. 10
Let them rave.
Light and shadow ever wander
O'er the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

III

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed; 15
Chaunteth not the brooding bee
Sweeter tones than calumny?
Let them rave.
Thou wilt never raise thine head
From the green that folds thy grave. 20
Let them rave.

IV

Crocodiles wept tears for thee;
The woodbine and eglatere
Drip sweeter dews than traitor's tear.
Let them rave. 25
Rain makes music in the tree
O'er the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

V

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep,
Bramble roses, faint and pale, 30
And long purples of the dale.
Let them rave.
These in every shower creep
Thro' the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave. 35

VI

The gold-eyed kingcups fine;
The frail bluebell peereth over
Rare broidry of the purple clover.
        Let them rave.
Kings have no such couch as thine, 40
As the green that folds thy grave.
        Let them rave.

VII

Wild words wander here and there:
God's great gift of speech abused
Makes thy memory confused: 45
        But let them rave.
The balm-cricket carols clear
In the green that folds thy grave.
        Let them rave.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

(Earliest Version)

Poems (1832)

PART THE FIRST

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 manytowered Camelot. 5
The yellowleavèd waterlily,
The greensheathèd daffodilly,
Tremble in the water chilly,
Round about Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens shiver, 10
The sunbeam-showers break and quiver
In the stream that runneth ever
By the island in the river,
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls and four gray towers 15
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

Underneath the bearded barley,
The reaper, reaping late and early, 20
Hears her ever chanting cheerly,
Like an angel, singing clearly,
O'er the stream of Camelot.
Piling the sheaves in furrows airy,
Beneath the moon, the reaper weary 25
Listening whispers, ''tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott.'

15

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

(Final Version)

Poems (1842) with a few subsequent changes

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; 5
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, 10
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers, 15
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 20
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? 25
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

The little isle is all inrailed
With a rose-fence, and overtrailed
With roses: by the marge unhailed 30
The shallop flitteth silkensailed,
Skimming down to Camelot.
A pearlgarland winds her head:
She leaneth on a velvet bed,
Full royally apparellèd, 35
The Lady of Shalott.

PART THE SECOND

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, 40
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be;
Therefore she weaveth steadily,
Therefore no other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott. 45

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. 50
And, as the mazy web she whirls,
She sees the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market-girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad, 55
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd lad,
Or longhaired page, in crimson clad,
Goes by to towered Camelot.

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly 30
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 35
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 40
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. 45

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: 50
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, 55
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, 60
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: 65
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, came from Camelot.
Or, when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers, lately wed: 70
'I am half-sick of shadows,' said
The Lady of Shalott.

PART THE THIRD

A bowshot from her bower-eaves.
He rode between the barleysheaves:
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves, 75
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Launcelot.
A redcross knight for ever kneeled
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field, 80
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glittered free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden galaxy.
The bridle-bells rang merrily, 85
As he rode down from Camelot.
And, from his blazoned baldric slung,
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And, as he rode, his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott. 90

And sometimes thro' the mirror blue 60
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, 65
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; 70
'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, 75
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, 80
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 85
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. 90

All in the blue unclouded weather,
Thickjewelled shone the saddle-leather.
The helmet, and the helmet-feather
Burned like one burning flame together,
As he rode down from Camelot. 95
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over green Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed. 100
On burnished hooves his warhorse trode.
From underneath his helmet flowed
His coalblack curls, as on he rode,
As he rode down from Camelot.
From the bank, and from the river, 105
He flashed into the crystal mirror,
'Tirra lirra, tirra lirra,'
Sang Sir Launcelot.

She left the web: she left the loom:
She made three paces thro' the room: 110
She saw the waterflower bloom:
She saw the helmet and the plume:
She looked down to Camelot.
Out flew the web, and floated wide,
The mirror cracked from side to side, 115
'The curse is come upon me,' cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART THE FOURTH

In the stormy eastwind straining
The pale-yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining, 120
Heavily the low sky raining
Over towered Camelot:

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. 95
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; 100
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 105
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, 110
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; 115
'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, 120
Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot;

Outside the isle a shallow boat
Beneath a willow lay afloat,
Below the carven stern she wrote, 125
THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

A cloudwhite crown of pearl she dight.
All raimented in snowy white
That loosely flew, (her zone in sight,
Clasped with one blinding diamond bright,) 130
Her wide eyes fixed on Camelot,
Though the squally eastwind keenly
Blew, with folded arms serenely
By the water stood the queenly
Lady of Shalott. 135

With a steady, stony glance—
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Beholding all his own mischance,
Mute, with a glassy countenance—
She looked down to Camelot. 140
It was the closing of the day,
She loosed the chain, and down she lay,
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

As when to sailors while they roam, 145
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 boathead wound along 150
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her chanting her deathsong,
The Lady of Shalott.

Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote 125
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seēr in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance 130
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. 135

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: 140
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, 145
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 150
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

A longdrawn carol, mournful, holy,
She chanted loudly, chanted lowly, 155
Till her eyes were darkened wholly,
And her smooth face sharpened slowly
Turned to towered Camelot:
For ere she reached upon the tide
The first house by the waterside, 160
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By gardenwall and gallery,
A pale, pale corpse she floated by, 165
Deadcold, between the houses high,
Dead into towered Camelot.
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
To the plankèd wharfage came:
Below the stern they read her name, 170
'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, 175
The wellfed wits at Camelot.
'The web was woven curiously,
The charm is broken utterly,
Draw near and fear not—this is I,
The Lady of Shalott.' 180

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery, 155
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, 160
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; 165
And they cross'd 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, 170
The Lady of Shalott.'

ŒNONE

Partly written 1830. *Poems* (1842): much altered from version in *Poems* (1832).

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 5
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 10
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 Œnone, wandering forlorn 15
Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck
Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest.
She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade 20
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 noonday quiet holds the hill:
The grasshopper is silent in the grass: 25
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,
Rests like a shadow, and the winds are dead.
The purple flower droops: the golden bee
Is lily-cradled: I alone awake.
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love, 30

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 35
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, 40
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,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die. 45
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, 50
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 55
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 60
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, 65
That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd
And listen'd, the full-flowing river of speech
Came down upon my heart.
'"My own Œnone,
Beautiful-brow'd Œnone, my own soul,
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingrav'n 70
'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. 75
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: 80
But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,
Delivering, that to me, by common voice
Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,
Pallas and Aphroditè, claiming each
This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave 85
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 90
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, 95
Lotos 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'. 100

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and lean'd
Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.
Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom 105
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 110
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, 115
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; 120
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, 125
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 130
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 135
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 140
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, 145
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. 150
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, 155
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, 160
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, 165
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 Aphroditè beautiful, 170
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 175
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, 180
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, 185
And I beheld great Herè'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. 190

'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, 195
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 200
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 205
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 210
Low in the valley. Never, never more
Shall lone Œnone see the morning mist
Sweep thro' them; never see them overlaid
With narrow moon-lit slips of silver cloud,
Between the loud stream and the trembling stars. 215

'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 220
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. 225

'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? 230
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, 235
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. 240

'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, 245
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, 250
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 255

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 260
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 PALACE OF ART

Poems (1842): much altered from version in *Poems* (1832).

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-house,
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.
I said, 'O Soul, make merry and carouse,
Dear soul, for all is well.'

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnish'd brass 5
I chose. The ranged ramparts bright
From level meadow-bases of deep grass
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf
The rock rose clear, or winding stair. 10
My soul would live alone unto herself
In her high palace there.

And 'while the world runs round and round,' I said,
'Reign thou apart, a quiet king,
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his stedfast shade 15
Sleeps on his luminous ring.'

To which my soul made answer readily:
  'Trust me, in bliss I shall abide
In this great mansion, that is built for me,
    So royal-rich and wide.' 20

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Four courts I made, East, West and South and North,
  In each a squared lawn, wherefrom
The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth
    A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran a row 25
  Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty woods,
Echoing all night to that sonorous flow
    Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery
  That lent broad verge to distant lands, 30
Far as the wild swan wings, to where the sky
    Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one swell
  Across the mountain stream'd below
In misty folds, that floating as they fell 35
    Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue seem'd
  To hang on tiptoe, tossing up
A cloud of incense of all odour steam'd
    From out a golden cup. 40

So that she thought, 'And who shall gaze upon
  My palace with unblinded eyes,
While this great bow will waver in the sun,
    And that sweet incense rise?'

For that sweet incense rose and never fail'd, 45
  And, while day sank or mounted higher,
The light aërial gallery, golden-rail'd,
    Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd and traced,
  Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires 50
From shadow'd grots of arches interlaced,
    And tipt with frost-like spires.

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Full of long-sounding corridors it was,
  That over-vaulted grateful gloom,
Thro' which the livelong day my soul did pass, 55
    Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace stood,
  All various, each a perfect whole
From living Nature, fit for every mood
    And change of my still soul. 60

For some were hung with arras green and blue,
  Showing a gaudy summer-morn,
Where with puff'd cheek the belted hunter blew
    His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red—a tract of sand, 65
  And some one pacing there alone,
Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,
    Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry waves.
  You seem'd to hear them climb and fall 70
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,
    Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow
  By herds upon an endless plain,
The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,   75
    With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.
  In front they bound the sheaves. Behind
Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,
    And hoary to the wind.   80

And one a foreground black with stones and slags,
  Beyond, a line of heights, and higher
All barr'd with long white cloud the scornful crags,
    And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home—gray twilight pour'd   85
  On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
Softer than sleep—all things in order stored,
    A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,
  As fit for every mood of mind,   90
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was there
    Not less than truth design'd.

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Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,
  In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,
Beneath branch-work of costly sardonyx   95
    Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,
  Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair
Wound with white roses, slept St. Cecily;
    An angel look'd at her.   100

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise
  A group of Houris bow'd to see
The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes
    That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son 105
  In some fair space of sloping greens
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,
    And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,
  To list a foot-fall, ere he saw 110
The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian king to hear
    Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,
  And many a tract of palm and rice,
The throne of Indian Cama slowly sail'd 115
    A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasp'd,
  From off her shoulder backward borne:
From one hand droop'd a crocus: one hand grasp'd
    The mild bull's golden horn. 120

Or else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy thigh
  Half-buried in the Eagle's down,
Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky
    Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone: but every legend fair 125
  Which the supreme Caucasian mind
Carved out of Nature for itself, was there,
    Not less than life, design'd.

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Then in the towers I placed great bells that swung,
  Moved of themselves, with silver sound; 130
And with choice paintings of wise men I hung
    The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,
  Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild;
And there the world-worn Dante grasp'd his song, 135
    And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest;
  A million wrinkles carved his skin;
A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,
    From cheek and throat and chin. 140

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set
  Many an arch high up did lift,
And angels rising and descending met
    With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd 145
  With cycles of the human tale
Of this wide world, the times of every land
    So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,
  Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads and stings; 150
Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro
    The heads and crowns of kings;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break or bind
  All force in bonds that might endure,
And here once more like some sick man declined, 155
    And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod: and those great bells
  Began to chime. She took her throne:
She sat betwixt the shining Oriels,
    To sing her songs alone. 160

And thro' the topmost Oriels' coloured flame
  Two godlike faces gazed below;
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,
    The first of those who know.

And all those names, that in their motion were 165
  Full-welling fountain-heads of change,
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazon'd fair
    In diverse raiment strange:

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber, emerald, blue,
  Flush'd in her temples and her eyes, 170
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon, drew
    Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong
  Her low preamble all alone,
More than my soul to hear her echo'd song 175
    Throb thro' the ribbed stone;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,
  Joying to feel herself alive,
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible earth,
    Lord of the senses five; 180

Communing with herself: 'All these are mine,
  And let the world have peace or wars,
'Tis one to me.' She—when young night divine
    Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils— 185
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,
And pure quintessences of precious oils
In hollow'd moons of gems,

To mimic heaven; and clapt her hands and cried,
'I marvel if my still delight 190
In this great house so royal-rich, and wide,
Be flatter'd to the height.

'O all things fair to sate my various eyes!
O shapes and hues that please me well!
O silent faces of the Great and Wise, 195
My Gods, with whom I dwell!

'O God-like isolation which art mine,
I can but count thee perfect gain,
What time I watch the darkening droves of swine
That range on yonder plain. 200

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

Then of the moral instinct would she prate 205
And of the rising from the dead,
As hers by right of full-accomplish'd Fate;
And at the last she said:

'I take possession of man's mind and deed,
I care not what the sects may brawl. 210
I sit as God holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all.'

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Full oft the riddle of the painful earth
  Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,
Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth, 215
    And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prosper'd: so three years
  She prosper'd: on the fourth she fell,
Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,
    Struck thro' with pangs of hell. 220

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,
  God, before whom ever lie bare
The abysmal deeps of Personality,
    Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she turn'd her sight 225
  The airy hand confusion wrought,
Wrote, 'Mene, mene,' and divided quite
    The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude
  Fell on her, from which mood was born 230
Scorn of herself; again, from out that mood
    Laughter at her self-scorn.

'What! is not this my place of strength,' she said,
  'My spacious mansion built for me,
Whereof the strong foundation-stones were laid 235
    Since my first memory?'

But in dark corners of her palace stood
  Uncertain shapes; and unawares
On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of blood,
    And horrible nightmares, 240

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame,
  And, with dim fretted foreheads all,
On corpses three-months-old at noon she came,
    That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light 245
  Or power of movement, seem'd my soul,
'Mid onward-sloping motions infinite
    Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of sand,
  Left on the shore; that hears all night 250
The plunging seas draw backward from the land
    Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry dance
  Join'd not, but stood, and standing saw
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance 255
    Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had curl'd.
  'No voice,' she shriek'd in that lone hall,
'No voice breaks thro' the stillness of this world:
    One deep, deep silence all!' 260

She, mouldering with the dull earth's mouldering sod,
  Inwrapt tenfold in slothful shame,
Lay there exiled from eternal God,
    Lost to her place and name;

And death and life she hated equally, 265
  And nothing saw, for her despair,
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,
    No comfort anywhere;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,
  And ever worse with growing time, 270
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,
    And all alone in crime:

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round
  With blackness as a solid wall,
Far off she seem'd to hear the dully sound 275
    Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller walking slow,
  In doubt and great perplexity,
A little before moon-rise hears the low
    Moan of an unknown sea; 280

And knows not if it be thunder, or a sound
  Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry
Of great wild beasts; then thinketh, 'I have found
    A new land, but I die.'

She howl'd aloud, 'I am on fire within. 285
  There comes no murmur of reply.
What is it that will take away my sin,
    And save me lest I die?'

So when four years were wholly finished,
  She threw her royal robes away. 290
'Make me a cottage in the vale,' she said,
    'Where I may mourn and pray.

'Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are
  So lightly, beautifully built:
Perchance I may return with others there 295
    When I have purged my guilt.'

THE LOTOS-EATERS

Poems (1842): much altered from version in *Poems* (1832).

'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, 5
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, 10
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, 15
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd: and, dew'd with showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
In the red West: thro' mountain clefts the dale 20
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 seem'd the same!
And round about the keel with faces pale, 25
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 whoso did receive of them, 30
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, 35
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 evermore 40
Most weary seem'd 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.' 45

Choric Song

I

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, 50
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, 55
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, 60
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, 65
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, 70
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 75
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, 80
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. 85
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? 90

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? 95
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 100
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, 105
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, 110
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 115
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 120

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. 125
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, 130
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, 135
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— 140
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: 145
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 Lotos-dust is
blown.

We have had enough of action, and of motion we, 150
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. 155
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, 160
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, 165
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. 170
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.

MORTE D'ARTHUR

Written by 1835. *Poems* (1842).

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 Lyonnesse about their Lord,
King Arthur: then, because his wound was deep, 5
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. 10
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 15
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 20
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 25
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, 30
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: 35
But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere:
Watch what thou seëst, and lightly bring me word.'
  To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus, 40
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 45
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, 50
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: 55
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, 60
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. 65
  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, 70
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: 75
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 80
I bad 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, 85
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, 90
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 95
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, 100
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 105
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, 110
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: 115
'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,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me! 120
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, 125
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: 130
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, 135
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 140
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 145
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?' 150
  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, 155
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 160
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 165
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 170
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. 175
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.' 180
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. 185
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— 190
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 195
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 200
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 205
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, 210
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 215
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. 220
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. 225
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, 230
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; 235
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, 240
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, 245
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 250
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. 255
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seëst—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, 260
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 265
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 270
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

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. 70

TITHONUS

Begun about the same time as *Ulysses*, finished 1859. Published 1860.

The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapours weep their burthen to the ground,
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies the swan.
Me only cruel immortality 5
Consumes: I wither slowly in thine arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,
A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream
The ever-silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn. 10

Alas! for this grey shadow, once a man—
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,
Who madest him thy chosen, that he seem'd
To his great heart none other than a God!
I ask'd thee, 'Give me immortality.' 15
Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,
Like wealthy men who care not how they give.
But thy strong Hours indignant work'd their wills,
And beat me down and marr'd and wasted me,
And tho' they could not end me, left me maim'd 20
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,
Immortal age beside immortal youth,
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide, 25
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears
To hear me? Let me go: take back thy gift:

Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance 30
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart; there comes
A glimpse of that dark world where I was born.
Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure, 35
And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the gloom,
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team
Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise, 40
And shake the darkness from their loosen'd manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful
In silence, then before thine answer given
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek. 45

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,
And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?
'The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts.'

Ay me! ay me! with what another heart 50
In days far-off, and with what other eyes
I used to watch—if I be he that watch'd—
The lucid outline forming round thee; saw
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood 55
Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm

With kisses balmier than half-opening buds
Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd 60
Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,
Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East:
How can my nature longer mix with thine? 65
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes
Of happy men that have the power to die, 70
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
Release me, and restore me to the ground;
Thou seëst all things, thou wilt see my grave:
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn;
I earth in earth forget these empty courts, 75
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

LOCKSLEY HALL

Poems (1842)

Comrades, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early
morn:
Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the
bugle-horn.

'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call,
Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley
Hall;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy
tracts, 5
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the mellow
shade,
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid. 10

Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth
sublime
With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of Time;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed;
When I clung to all the present for the promise that it
closed:

When I dipt into the future far as human eye could see; 15
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that
would be.

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's
breast;
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another
crest;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove;
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts
of love. 20

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be for one
so young,
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observance
hung.

And I said, 'My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the truth
to me,
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to thee.'

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a colour and a
light, 25
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night.

And she turn'd—her bosom shaken with a sudden storm of sighs—
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel eyes—

Saying, 'I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do me wrong;'
Saying, 'Dost thou love me, cousin?' weeping, 'I have loved thee long.' 30

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his glowing hands;
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

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

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the copses ring, 35
And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the fulness of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships,
And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O my Amy, mine no more!
O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the barren, barren shore!

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs have sung, 41
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue!

Is it well to wish thee happy?—having known me—to decline
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart than mine!

Yet it shall be: thou shalt lower to his level day by day, 45
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathise with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is: thou art mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel force,
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse. 50

What is this? his eyes are heavy: think not they are glazed with wine.
Go to him: it is thy duty: kiss him: take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is overwrought:
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to understand— 55
Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's disgrace,
Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth!
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth! 60

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule!
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead of the fool!

Well—'tis well that I should bluster!—Hadst thou less unworthy proved—
Would to God—for I had loved thee more than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but bitter fruit? 65
I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart be at the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length of years should come
As the many-winter'd crow that leads the clanging rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the records of the mind?
Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew her, kind? 70

I remember one that perish'd: sweetly did she speak and move:
Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love she bore?
No—she never loved me truly: love is love for evermore.

Comfort? comfort scorn'd of devils! this is truth the poet sings, 75
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be put to proof,
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring at the wall,
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows rise and fall. 80

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his drunken sleep,
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the 'Never, never,' whisper'd by the phantom years,
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine ears;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy pain, 85
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow: get thee to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace; for a tender voice will cry.
'Tis a purer life than thine; a lip to drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down: my latest rival brings thee rest.
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's breast. 90

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness not his due.
Half is thine and half is his: it will be worthy of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part,
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daughter's heart.

'They were dangerous guides the feelings—she herself was not exempt— 95
Truly, she herself had suffer'd'—Perish in thy self-contempt!

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy! wherefore should I care?
I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon days like these?
Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but to golden keys. 100

Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all the markets overflow.
I have but an angry fancy: what is that which I should do?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's ground,
When the ranks are roll'd in vapour, and the winds are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that Honour feels, 105
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that earlier page.
Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife,
When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my life; 110

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would yield,
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer drawn,
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then, 115
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of men:

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new:
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do:

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be; 120

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm, 125
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throbb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were furl'd
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law. 130

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweeping thro' me left me dry,
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the jaundiced eye;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out of joint:
Science moves, but slowly slowly, creeping on from point to point:

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion creeping nigher, 135
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his youthful joys,
Tho' the deep heart of existence beat for ever like a boy's? 140

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on the shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is more and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a laden breast,
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the bugle-horn, 145
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for their scorn:

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moulder'd string?
I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness! woman's pleasure, woman's pain—
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shallower brain: 150

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, match'd with mine,
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for some retreat
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-starr'd;— 155
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander far away,
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise. 160

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer
from the crag;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-
fruited tree—
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this
march of mind, 165
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake
mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have scope and
breathing space;
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive, and they shall
run,
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in the
sun; 170

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows of the
brooks,
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy! but I *know* my words are
wild,
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian
child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious
gains, 175
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower
pains!

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were sun or
clime?
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time—

I that rather held it better men should perish one by one,
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's moon in Ajalon! 180

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range,
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day:
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not), help me as when life begun: 185
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the Sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set.
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley Hall!
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree fall. 190

Comes a vapour from the margin, blackening over heath and holt,
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or snow;
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.

THE TWO VOICES

Begun 1833. *Poems* (1842).

A STILL small voice spake unto me,
'Thou art so full of misery,
Were it not better not to be?'

Then to the still small voice I said;
'Let me not cast in endless shade 5
What is so wonderfully made.'

To which the voice did urge reply;
'To-day I saw the dragon-fly
Come from the wells where he did lie.

'An inner impulse rent the veil 10
Of his old husk: from head to tail
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

'He dried his wings: like gauze they grew;
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew
A living flash of light he flew.' 15

I said, 'When first the world began,
Young Nature thro' five cycles ran,
And in the sixth she moulded man.

'She gave him mind, the lordliest
Proportion, and, above the rest, 20
Dominion in the head and breast.'

Thereto the silent voice replied;
'Self-blinded are you by your pride:
Look up thro' night: the world is wide.

'This truth within thy mind rehearse, 25
That in a boundless universe
Is boundless better, boundless worse.

'Think you this mould of hopes and fears
Could find no statelier than his peers
In yonder hundred million spheres?' 30

It spake, moreover, in my mind:
'Tho' thou wert scatter'd to the wind,
Yet is there plenty of the kind.'

Then did my response clearer fall:
'No compound of this earthly ball 35
Is like another, all in all.'

To which he answer'd scoffingly;
'Good soul! suppose I grant it thee,
Who'll weep for thy deficiency?

'Or will one beam be less intense, 40
When thy peculiar difference
Is cancell'd in the world of sense?'

I would have said, 'Thou canst not know,'
But my full heart, that work'd below,
Rain'd thro' my sight its overflow. 45

Again the voice spake unto me:
'Thou art so steep'd in misery,
Surely 'twere better not to be.

'Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,
Nor any train of reason keep: 50
Thou canst not think, but thou wilt weep.'

I said, 'The years with change advance:
If I make dark my countenance,
I shut my life from happier chance.

'Some turn this sickness yet might take, 55
Ev'n yet.' But he: 'What drug can make
A wither'd palsy cease to shake?'

I wept, 'Tho' I should die, I know
That all about the thorn will blow
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow; 60

'And men, thro' novel spheres of thought
Still moving after truth long sought,
Will learn new things when I am not.'

'Yet,' said the secret voice, 'some time,
Sooner or later, will gray prime 65
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

'Not less swift souls that yearn for light,
Rapt after heaven's starry flight,
Would sweep the tracts of day and night.

'Not less the bee would range her cells, 70
The furzy prickle fire the dells,
The foxglove cluster dappled bells.'

I said that 'all the years invent;
Each month is various to present
The world with some development. 75

'Were this not well, to bide mine hour,
Tho' watching from a ruin'd tower
How grows the day of human power?'

'The highest-mounted mind,' he said,
'Still sees the sacred morning spread 80
The silent summit overhead.

'Will thirty seasons render plain
Those lonely lights that still remain,
Just breaking over land and main?

'Or make that morn, from his cold crown 85
And crystal silence creeping down,
Flood with full daylight glebe and town?

'Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set
In midst of knowledge, dream'd not yet. 90

'Thou hast not gain'd a real height,
Nor art thou nearer to the light,
Because the scale is infinite.

''Twere better not to breathe or speak,
Than cry for strength, remaining weak, 95
And seem to find, but still to seek.

'Moreover, but to seem to find
Asks what thou lackest, thought resign'd,
A healthy frame, a quiet mind.'

I said, 'When I am gone away, 100
"He dared not tarry," men will say,
Doing dishonour to my clay.'

'This is more vile,' he made reply,
'To breathe and loathe, to live and sigh,
Than once from dread of pain to die. 105

'Sick art thou—a divided will
Still heaping on the fear of ill
The fear of men, a coward still.

'Do men love thee? Art thou so bound
To men, that how thy name may sound 110
Will vex thee lying underground?

'The memory of the wither'd leaf
In endless time is scarce more brief
Than of the garner'd Autumn-sheaf.

'Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust; 115
The right ear, that is fill'd with dust,
Hears little of the false or just.'

'Hard task, to pluck resolve,' I cried,
'From emptiness and the waste wide
Of that abyss, or scornful pride! 120

'Nay—rather yet that I could raise
One hope that warm'd me in the days
While still I yearn'd for human praise.

'When, wide in soul and bold of tongue,
Among the tents I paused and sung, 125
The distant battle flash'd and rung.

'I sung the joyful Pæan clear,
And, sitting, burnish'd without fear
The brand, the buckler, and the spear—

'Waiting to strive a happy strife, 130
To war with falsehood to the knife,
And not to lose the good of life—

'Some hidden principle to move,
To put together, part and prove,
And mete the bounds of hate and love— 135

'As far as might be, to carve out
Free space for every human doubt,
That the whole mind might orb about—

'To search thro' all I felt or saw,
The springs of life, the depths of awe, 140
And reach the law within the law:

'At least, not rotting like a weed,
But, having sown some generous seed,
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

'To pass, when Life her light withdraws, 145
Not void of righteous self-applause,
Nor in a merely selfish cause—

'In some good cause, not in mine own,
To perish, wept for, honour'd, known,
And like a warrior overthrown; 150

'Whose eyes are dim with glorious tears,
When, soil'd with noble dust, he hears
His country's war-song thrill his ears:

'Then dying of a mortal stroke,
What time the foeman's line is broke, 155
And all the war is roll'd in smoke.'

'Yea!' said the voice, 'thy dream was good,
While thou abodest in the bud.
It was the stirring of the blood.

'If Nature put not forth her power 160
About the opening of the flower,
Who is it that could live an hour?

'Then comes the check, the change, the fall,
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.
There is one remedy for all. 165

'Yet hadst thou, thro' enduring pain,
Link'd month to month with such a chain
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

'Thou hadst not between death and birth
Dissolved the riddle of the earth. 170
So were thy labour little-worth.

'That men with knowledge merely play'd,
I told thee—hardly nigher made,
Tho' scaling slow from grade to grade;

'Much less this dreamer, deaf and blind, 175
Named man, may hope some truth to find,
That bears relation to the mind.

'For every worm beneath the moon
Draws different threads, and late and soon
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon. 180

'Cry, faint not: either Truth is born
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,
Or in the gateways of the morn.

'Cry, faint not, climb: the summits slope
Beyond the furthest flights of hope, 185
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to cope.

'Sometimes a little corner shines,
As over rainy mist inclines
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

'I will go forward, sayest thou, 190
I shall not fail to find her now.
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

'If straight thy track, or if oblique,
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou dost strike,
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like; 195

'And owning but a little more
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,
Calling thyself a little lower

'Than angels. Cease to wail and brawl!
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl? 200
There is one remedy for all.'

'O dull, one-sided voice,' said I,
'Wilt thou make everything a lie,
To flatter me that I may die?

'I know that age to age succeeds, 205
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,
A dust of systems and of creeds.

'I cannot hide that some have striven,
Achieving calm, to whom was given
The joy that mixes man with Heaven: 210

'Who, rowing hard against the stream,
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
And did not dream it was a dream;

'But heard, by secret transport led,
Ev'n in the charnels of the dead, 215
The murmur of the fountain-head—

'Which did accomplish their desire,
Bore and forebore, and did not tire,
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

'He heeded not reviling tones, 220
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
Tho' cursed and scorn'd, and bruised with stones:

'But looking upward, full of grace,
He pray'd, and from a happy place
God's glory smote him on the face.' 25

The sullen answer slid betwixt:
'Not that the grounds of hope were fix'd,
The elements were kindlier mix'd.'

I said, 'I toil beneath the curse,
But, knowing not the universe, 230
I fear to slide from bad to worse.

'And that, in seeking to undo
One riddle, and to find the true,
I knit a hundred others new:

'Or that this anguish fleeting hence, 235
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,
Be fix'd and froz'n to permanence:

'For I go, weak from suffering here:
Naked I go, and void of cheer:
What is it that I may not fear?' 240

'Consider well,' the voice replied,
'His face, that two hours since hath died;
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride?

'Will he obey when one commands?
Or answer should one press his hands? 245
He answers not, nor understands.

'His palms are folded on his breast:
There is no other thing express'd
But long disquiet merged in rest.

'His lips are very mild and meek: 250
Tho' one should smite him on the cheek,
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

'His little daughter, whose sweet face
He kiss'd, taking his last embrace,
Becomes dishonour to her race— 255

'His sons grow up that bear his name,
Some grow to honour, some to shame,—
But he is chill to praise or blame.

'He will not hear the north-wind rave,
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave 260
From winter rains that beat his grave.

'High up the vapours fold and swim:
About him broods the twilight dim:
The place he knew forgetteth him.'

'If all be dark, vague voice,' I said, 265
'These things are wrapt in doubt and dread,
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead.

'The sap dries up: the plant declines.
A deeper tale my heart divines.
Know I not Death? the outward signs? 270

'I found him when my years were few;
A shadow on the graves I knew,
And darkness in the village yew.

'From grave to grave the shadow crept:
In her still place the morning wept: 275
Touch'd by his feet the daisy slept.

'The simple senses crown'd his head:
"Omega! thou art Lord," they said,
"We find no motion in the dead."

'Why, if man rot in dreamless ease, 280
Should that plain fact, as taught by these,
Not make him sure that he shall cease?

'Who forged that other influence,
That heat of inward evidence,
By which he doubts against the sense? 285

'He owns the fatal gift of eyes,
That read his spirit blindly wise,
Not simple as a thing that dies.

'Here sits he shaping wings to fly:
His heart forbodes a mystery: 290
He names the name Eternity.

'That type of Perfect in his mind
In Nature can he nowhere find.
He sows himself on every wind.

'He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend, 295
And thro' thick veils to apprehend
A labour working to an end.

'The end and the beginning vex
His reason: many things perplex,
With motions, checks, and counterchecks. 300

'He knows a baseness in his blood
At such strange war with something good,
He may not do the thing he would.

'Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn,
Vast images in glimmering dawn, 305
Half shown, are broken and withdrawn

'Ah! sure within him and without,
Could his dark wisdom find it out,
There must be answer to his doubt,

'But thou canst answer not again. 310
With thine own weapon art thou slain,
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

'The doubt would rest, I dare not solve.
In the same circle we revolve.
Assurance only breeds resolve.' 315

As when a billow, blown against,
Falls back, the voice with which I fenced
A little ceased, but recommenced.

'Where wert thou when thy father play'd
In his free field, and pastime made, 320
A merry boy in sun and shade?

'A merry boy they call'd him then,
He sat upon the knees of men
In days that never come again.

'Before the little ducts began 325
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran
Their course, till thou wert also man:

'Who took a wife, who rear'd his race,
Whose wrinkles gather'd on his face,
Whose troubles number with his days: 330

'A life of nothings, nothing-worth,
From that first nothing ere his birth
To that last nothing under earth!'

'These words,' I said, 'are like the rest;
No certain clearness, but at best 335
A vague suspicion of the breast:

'But if I grant, thou mightst defend
The thesis which thy words intend—
That to begin implies to end;

'Yet how should I for certain hold, 340
Because my memory is so cold,
That I first was in human mould?

'I cannot make this matter plain,
But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,
A random arrow from the brain. 345

'It may be that no life is found,
Which only to one engine bound
Falls off, but cycles always round.

'As old mythologies relate,
Some draught of Lethe might await 350
The slipping thro' from state to state.

'As here we find in trances, men
Forget the dream that happens then,
Until they fall in trance again.

'So might we, if our state were such 355
As one before, remember much,
For those two likes might meet and touch.

'But, if I lapsed from nobler place,
Some legend of a fallen race
Alone might hint of my disgrace; 360

'Some vague emotion of delight
In gazing up an Alpine height,
Some yearning toward the lamps of night;

'Or if thro' lower lives I came—
Tho' all experience past became 365
Consolidate in mind and frame—

'I might forget my weaker lot;
For is not our first year forgot?
The haunts of memory echo not.

'And men, whose reason long was blind, 370
From cells of madness unconfined,
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

'Much more, if first I floated free,
As naked essence, must I be
Incompetent of memory: 375

'For memory dealing but with time,
And he with matter, could she climb
Beyond her own material prime?

'Moreover, something is or seems,
That touches me with mystic gleams, 380
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—

'Of something felt, like something here;
Of something done, I know not where;
Such as no language may declare.'

The still voice laugh'd. 'I talk,' said he, 385
'Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee
Thy pain is a reality.'

'But thou,' said I, 'hast missed thy mark,
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal ark,
By making all the horizon dark. 390

'Why not set forth, if I should do
This rashness, that which might ensue
With this old soul in organs new?

'Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human breath 395
Has ever truly long'd for death.

''Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,
Oh life, not death, for which we pant;
More life, and fuller, that I want.'

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn. 400
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,
'Behold, it is the Sabbath morn.'

And I arose, and I released
The casement, and the light increased
With freshness in the dawning east. 405

Like soften'd airs that blowing steal,
Where meres begin to uncongeal,
The sweet church bells began to peal.

On to God's house the people prest:
Passing the place where each must rest, 410
Each enter'd like a welcome guest.

One walk'd between his wife and child,
With measured footfall firm and mild,
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood 415
Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good,
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,
The little maiden walk'd demure,
Pacing with downward eyelids pure. 420

These three made unity so sweet,
My frozen heart began to beat,
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wander'd on:
I spoke, but answer came there none: 425
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,
A little whisper silver-clear,
A murmur, 'Be of better cheer.'

As from some blissful neighbourhood, 430
A notice faintly understood,
'I see the end, and know the good.'

A little hint to solace woe,
A hint, a whisper breathing low,
'I may not speak of what I know. 435

Like an Æolian harp that wakes
No certain air, but overtakes
Far thought with music that it makes:

Such seem'd the whisper at my side:
'What is it thou knowest, sweet voice?' I cried. 440
'A hidden hope,' the voice replied:

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour
From out my sullen heart a power
Broke, like the rainbow from the shower,

To feel, altho' no tongue can prove, 445
That every cloud, that spreads above
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,
And Nature's living motion lent
The pulse of hope to discontent. 450

I wonder'd at the bounteous hours,
The slow result of winter showers:
You scarce could see the grass for flowers.

I wonder'd, while I paced along:
The woods were fill'd so full with song, 455
There seem'd no room for sense of wrong;

And all so variously wrought,
I marvell'd how the mind was brought
To anchor by one gloomy thought;

And wherefore rather I made choice 460
To commune with that barren voice,
Than him that said, 'Rejoice! Rejoice!'

SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE

A FRAGMENT

Poems (1842)

LIKE souls that balance joy and pain,
With tears and smiles from heaven again
The maiden Spring upon the plain
Came in a sun-lit fall of rain.
    In crystal vapour everywhere 5
Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,
And far, in forest-deeps unseen,
The topmost elm-tree gather'd green
    From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song: 10
Sometimes the throstle whistled strong:
Sometimes the sparhawk, wheel'd along,
Hush'd all the groves from fear of wrong:
    By grassy capes with fuller sound
In curves the yellowing river ran, 15
And drooping chestnut-buds began
To spread into the perfect fan,
    Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere 20
Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,
With blissful treble ringing clear.
She seem'd a part of joyous Spring:
A gown of grass-green silk she wore,
Buckled with golden clasps before; 25
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore
Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,
Now by some tinkling rivulet
In mosses mixt with violet 30
Her cream-white mule his pastern set:
And fleeter now she skimm'd the plains
Than she whose elfin prancer springs
By night to eery warblings,
When all the glimmering moorland rings 35
With jingling bridle-reins.

As fast she fled thro' sun and shade,
The happy winds upon her play'd,
Blowing the ringlet from the braid:
She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd 40
The rein with dainty finger-tips,
A man had given all other bliss,
And all his worldly worth for this,
To waste his whole heart in one kiss
Upon her perfect lips. 45

A FAREWELL

Written 1837. *Poems* (1842).

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
Thy tribute wave deliver:
No more by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea, 5
  A rivulet then a river:
No where by thee my steps shall be,
  For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree,
  And here thine aspen shiver; 10
And here by thee will hum the bee,
  For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
  A thousand moons will quiver;
But not by thee my steps shall be, 15
  For ever and for ever.

THE VISION OF SIN

Poems (1842)

I

I HAD a vision when the night was late:
A youth came riding toward a palace-gate.
He rode a horse with wings, that would have flown,
But that his heavy rider kept him down.
And from the palace came a child of sin, 5
And took him by the curls, and led him in,
Where sat a company with heated eyes,
Expecting when a fountain should arise:
A sleepy light upon their brows and lips—
As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse, 10
Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and capes—
Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid shapes,
By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine, and piles of grapes.

II

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,
Gathering up from all the lower ground; 15
Narrowing in to where they sat assembled
Low voluptuous music winding trembled,
Wov'n in circles: they that heard it sigh'd,
Panted hand-in-hand with faces pale,
Swung themselves, and in low tones replied; 20
Till the fountain spouted, showering wide
Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail;
Then the music touch'd the gates and died;
Rose again from where it seem'd to fail,
Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing gale; 25
Till thronging in and in, to where they waited,
As 'twere a hundred-throated nightingale,
The strong tempestuous treble throbb'd and palpitated;
Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,
Caught the sparkles, and in circles, 30
Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,
Flung the torrent rainbow round:
Then they started from their places,
Moved with violence, changed in hue,
Caught each other with wild grimaces, 35
Half-invisible to the view,
Wheeling with precipitate paces
To the melody, till they flew,
Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,
Twisted hard in fierce embraces, 40
Like to Furies, like to Graces,
Dash'd together in blinding dew:
Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,
The nerve-dissolving melody
Flutter'd headlong from the sky. 45

III

And then I look'd up toward a mountain-tract,
That girt the region with high cliff and lawn:
I saw that every morning, far withdrawn
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn, 50
Unheeded: and detaching, fold by fold,
From those still heights, and, slowly drawing near,
A vapour heavy, hueless, formless, cold,
Came floating on for many a month and year,
Unheeded: and I thought I would have spoken, 55
And warn'd that madman ere it grew too late:
But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine was broken,
When that cold vapour touch'd the palace gate,
And link'd again. I saw within my head
A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean as death, 60
Who slowly rode across a wither'd heath,
And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said:

IV

'Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin!
Here is custom come your way;
Take my brute, and lead him in, 65
Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

'Bitter barmaid, waning fast!
See that sheets are on my bed;
What! the flower of life is past:
It is long before you wed. 70

'Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,
At the Dragon on the heath!
Let us have a quiet hour,
Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

'I am old, but let me drink; 75
Bring me spices, bring me wine;
I remember, when I think,
That my youth was half divine.

'Wine is good for shrivell'd lips,
When a blanket wraps the day, 80
When the rotten woodland drips,
And the leaf is stamp'd in clay.

'Sit thee down, and have no shame,
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee:
What care I for any name? 85
What for order or degree?

'Let me screw thee up a peg:
Let me loose thy tongue with wine;
Callest thou that thing a leg?
Which is thinnest? thine or mine? 90

'Thou shall not be saved by works:
Thou hast been a sinner too:
Ruin'd trunks on wither'd forks,
Empty scarecrows, I and you!

'Fill the cup, and fill the can: 95
Have a rouse before the morn:
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

'We are men of ruin'd blood;
Therefore comes it we are wise. 100
Fish are we that love the mud,
Rising to no fancy-flies.

'Name and fame! to fly sublime
Thro' the courts, the camps, the schools,
Is to be the ball of Time, 105
Bandied by the hands of fools.

'Friendship!—to be two in one—
  Let the canting liar pack!
Well I know, when I am gone,
  How she mouths behind my back. 110

'Virtue!—to be good and just—
  Every heart, when sifted well,
Is a clot of warmer dust,
  Mix'd with cunning sparks of hell.

'O! we two as well can look 115
  Whited thought and cleanly life
As the priest, above his book
  Leering at his neighbour's wife.

'Fill the cup, and fill the can:
  Have a rouse before the morn: 120
Every moment dies a man,
  Every moment one is born.

'Drink, and let the parties rave:
  They are fill'd with idle spleen;
Rising, falling, like a wave, 125
  For they know not what they mean.

'He that roars for liberty
  Faster binds a tyrant's power;
And the tyrant's cruel glee
  Forces on the freer hour. 130

'Fill the can, and fill the cup:
  All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
  And is lightly laid again.

'Greet her with applausive breath, 135
  Freedom, gaily doth she tread;
In her right a civic wreath,
  In her left a human head.

'No, I love not what is new;
  She is of an ancient house: 140
And I think we know the hue
  Of that cap upon her brows.

'Let her go! her thirst she slakes
  Where the bloody conduit runs,
Then her sweetest meal she makes 145
  On the first-born of her sons.

'Drink to lofty hopes that cool—
  Visions of a perfect State:
Drink we, last, the public fool,
  Frantic love and frantic hate. 150

'Chant me now some wicked stave,
  Till thy drooping courage rise,
And the glow-worm of the grave
  Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

'Fear not thou to loose thy tongue, 155
  Set thy hoary fancies free;
What is loathsome to the young
  Savours well to thee and me.

'Change, reverting to the years,
  When thy nerves could understand 160
What there is in loving tears,
  And the warmth of hand in hand.

'Tell me tales of thy first love—
  April hopes, the fools of chance;
Till the graves begin to move, 165
  And the dead begin to dance.

'Fill the can, and fill the cup:
  All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
  And is lightly laid again. 170

'Trooping from their mouldy dens
  The chap-fallen circle spreads:
Welcome, fellow-citizens,
  Hollow hearts and empty heads!

'You are bones, and what of that? 175
  Every face, however full,
Padded round with flesh and fat,
  Is but modell'd on a skull.

'Death is king, and Vivat Rex!
  Tread a measure on the stones, 180
Madam—if I know your sex,
  From the fashion of your bones.

'No, I cannot praise the fire
  In your eye—nor yet your lip:
All the more do I admire 185
  Joints of cunning workmanship.

'Lo! God's likeness—the ground-plan—
  Neither modell'd, glazed, nor framed:
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,
  Far too naked to be shamed! 190

'Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,
  While we keep a little breath!
Drink to heavy Ignorance!
  Hob-and-nob with brother Death!

'Thou art mazed, the night is long, 195
  And the longer night is near:
What! I am not all as wrong
  As a bitter jest is dear.

'Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,
  When the locks are crisp and curl'd; 200
Unto me my maudlin gall
  And my mockeries of the world.

'Fill the cup, and fill the can:
  Mingle madness, mingle scorn!
Dregs of life, and lees of man: 205
  Yet we will not die forlorn.'

V

The voice grew faint: there came a further change:
Once more uprose the mystic mountain-range:
Below were men and horses pierced with worms,
And slowly quickening into lower forms; 210
By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of dross,
Old plash of rains, and refuse patch'd with moss.
Then some one spake: 'Behold! it was a crime
Of sense avenged by sense that wore with time.'
Another said: 'The crime of sense became 215
The crime of malice, and is equal blame.'
And one: 'He had not wholly quench'd his power;
A little grain of conscience made him sour.'
At last I heard a voice upon the slope
Cry to the summit, 'Is there any hope?' 220
To which an answer peal'd from that high land,
But in a tongue no man could understand;
And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

'BREAK, BREAK, BREAK'

Poems (1842)

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, 5
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; 10
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 15
Will never come back to me.

From THE PRINCESS

Published 1847

'TEARS, IDLE TEARS'

'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. 5

'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. 10

'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. 15

'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.' 20

'COME DOWN, O MAID'

'Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height:
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang),
In height and cold, the splendour of the hills?
But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine, 5
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize, 10
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk
With Death and Morning on the silver horns,
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice, 15
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors:
But follow; let the torrent dance thee down
To find him in the valley; let the wild
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave 20
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,
That like a broken purpose waste in air:
So waste not thou; but come; for all the vales
Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth 25
Arise to thee; the children call, and I
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,

Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms, 30
And murmuring of innumerable bees.'

'THE SPLENDOUR FALLS ON CASTLE WALLS'

Added in 3rd edition of *The Princess*, 1850.

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 5
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! 10
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, 15
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

MABLETHORPE

Written 1837. Published 1850.

HERE often when a child I lay reclined:
I took delight in this fair strand and free;
Here stood the infant Ilion of the mind,
And here the Grecian ships all seem'd to be.

And here again I come, and only find 5
The drain-cut level of the marshy lea,
Gray sand-banks, and pale sunsets, dreary wind,
Dim shores, dense rains, and heavy-clouded sea.

From IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII

Written 1833–50. Published 1850.

II

OLD Yew, which graspest at the stones
That name the under-lying dead,
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again, 5
And bring the firstling to the flock;
And in the dusk of thee, the clock
Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,
Who changest not in any gale, 10
Nor branding summer suns avail
To touch thy thousand years of gloom:

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
I seem to fail from out my blood 15
And grow incorporate into thee.

III

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
O priestess in the vaults of Death,
O sweet and bitter in a breath,
What whispers from thy lying lip?

'The stars,' she whispers, 'blindly run; 5
A web is wov'n across the sky;
From out waste places comes a cry,
And murmurs from the dying sun:

'And all the phantom, Nature, stands—
With all the music in her tone, 10
A hollow echo of my own,—
A hollow form with empty hands.'

And shall I take a thing so blind,
Embrace her as my natural good;
Or crush her, like a vice of blood, 15
Upon the threshold of the mind?

VII

Dark house, by which once more I stand
Here in the long unlovely street,
Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more— 5
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
The noise of life begins again, 10
And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

XI

Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground:

Calm and deep peace on this high wold, 5
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold:

Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers, 10
And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main:

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the fall;
And in my heart, if calm at all, 15
If any calm, a calm despair:

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep. 20

XV

To-night the winds begin to rise
And roar from yonder dropping day:
The last red leaf is whirl'd away,
The rooks are blown about the skies;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd, 5
The cattle huddled on the lea;
And wildly dash'd on tower and tree
The sunbeam strikes along the world:

And but for fancies, which aver
That all thy motions gently pass 10
Athwart a plane of molten glass,
I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud;
And but for fear it is not so,
The wild unrest that lives in woe 15
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,
And onward drags a labouring breast,
And topples round the dreary west,
A looming bastion fringed with fire. 20

XIX

The Danube to the Severn gave
The darken'd heart that beat no more;
They laid him by the pleasant shore,
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills; 5
The salt sea-water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,
And hush'd my deepest grief of all, 10
When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
Is vocal in its wooded walls;
My deeper anguish also falls, 15
And I can speak a little then.

XXI

I sing to him that rests below,
And, since the grasses round me wave,
I take the grasses of the grave,
And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then, 5
And sometimes harshly will he speak:
'This fellow would make weakness weak,
And melt the waxen hearts of men.'

Another answers, 'Let him be,
He loves to make parade of pain, 10
That with his piping he may gain
The praise that comes to constancy.'

A third is wroth: 'Is this an hour
For private sorrow's barren song,
When more and more the people throng 15
The chairs and thrones of civil power?

'A time to sicken and to swoon,
When Science reaches forth her arms
To feel from world to world, and charms
Her secret from the latest moon?' 20

Behold, ye speak an idle thing:
Ye never knew the sacred dust:
I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing:

And one is glad; her note is gay, 25
For now her little ones have ranged;
And one is sad; her note is changed,
Because her brood is stol'n away.

XXIII

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,
Or breaking into song by fits,
Alone, alone, to where he sits,
The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds, 5
I wander, often falling lame,
And looking back to whence I came,
Or on to where the pathway leads;

And crying, How changed from where it ran
Thro' lands where not a leaf was dumb; 10
But all the lavish hills would hum
The murmur of a happy Pan:

When each by turns was guide to each,
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,
And Thought leapt out to wed with Thought 15
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech;

And all we met was fair and good,
And all was good that Time could bring,
And all the secret of the Spring
Moved in the chambers of the blood; 20

And many an old philosophy
On Argive heights divinely sang,
And round us all the thicket rang
To many a flute of Arcady.

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 5
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 10
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 15
Than never to have loved at all.

XXVIII

The time draws near the birth of Christ:
The moon is hid; the night is still;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round, 5
From far and near, on mead and moor,
Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,
That now dilate, and now decrease, 10
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
I almost wish'd no more to wake,
And that my hold on life would break 15
Before I heard those bells again:

But they my troubled spirit rule,
For they controll'd me when a boy;
They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,
The merry merry bells of Yule. 20

XXXI

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
And home to Mary's house return'd,
Was this demanded—if he yearn'd
To hear her weeping by his grave?

'Where wert thou, brother, those four days?' 5
There lives no record of reply,
Which telling what it is to die
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbours met,
The streets were fill'd with joyful sound, 10
A solemn gladness even crown'd
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unreveal'd;
He told it not; or something seal'd 15
The lips of that Evangelist.

XXXIV

My own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live for evermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is;

This round of green, this orb of flame, 5
Fantastic beauty; such as lurks
In some wild Poet, when he works
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?
'Twere hardly worth my while to choose 10
Of things all mortal, or to use
A little patience ere I die;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,
Like birds the charming serpent draws,
To drop head-foremost in the jaws 15
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

XXXV

Yet if some voice that man could trust
Should murmur from the narrow house,
'The cheeks drop in; the body bows;
Man dies: nor is there hope in dust:'

Might I not say? 'Yet even here, 5
But for one hour, O Love, I strive
To keep so sweet a thing alive:'
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
The sound of streams that swift or slow 10
Draw down Æonian hills, and sow
The dust of continents to be;

And Love would answer with a sigh,
'The sound of that forgetful shore
Will change my sweetness more and more, 15
Half-dead to know that I shall die.'

O me, what profits it to put
An idle case? If Death were seen
At first as Death, Love had not been,
Or been in narrowest working shut, 20

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape
Had bruised the herb and crush'd the grape,
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

XXXIX

Old warder of these buried bones,
And answering now my random stroke
With fruitful cloud and living smoke,
Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless head, 5
To thee too comes the golden hour
When flower is feeling after flower;
But Sorrow—fixt upon the dead,

And darkening the dark graves of men,—
What whisper'd from her lying lips? 10
Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,
And passes into gloom again.

L

Be near me when my light is low,
When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
And tingle; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame 5
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust;
And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
And men the flies of latter spring, 10
That lay their eggs, and sting and sing
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
To point the term of human strife,
And on the low dark verge of life 15
The twilight of eternal day.

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; 5
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 10
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, 15
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. 20

LVI

'So careful of the type?' but no.
From scarped cliff and quarried stone
She cries, 'A thousand types are gone:
I care for nothing, all shall go.

'Thou makest thine appeal to me: 5
I bring to life, I bring to death:
The spirit does but mean the breath:
I know no more.' And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes, 10
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed
And love Creation's final law—
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw 15
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed—

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or seal'd within the iron hills? 20

No more? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tare each other in their slime,
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail! 25
 O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
 What hope of answer, or redress?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

LXIV

Dost thou look back on what hath been,
 As some divinely gifted man,
 Whose life in low estate began
And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar, 5
 And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
 And breasts the blows of circumstance,
And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known
 And lives to clutch the golden keys, 10
 To mould a mighty state's decrees,
And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,
 Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope
 The pillar of a people's hope, 15
The centre of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
 When all his active powers are still,
 A distant dearness in the hill,
A secret sweetness in the stream, 20

The limit of his narrower fate,
 While yet beside its vocal springs
 He play'd at counsellors and kings,
With one that was his earliest mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea 25
 And reaps the labour of his hands,
 Or in the furrow musing stands;
'Does my old friend remember me?'

LXVII

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

Thy marble bright in dark appears, 5
    As slowly steals a silver flame
    Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away;
    From off my bed the moonlight dies; 10
    And closing eaves of wearied eyes
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray:

And then I know the mist is drawn
    A lucid veil from coast to coast,
    And in the dark church like a ghost 15
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

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' 5
    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, 10
    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 15
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers?

XCV

. . . Till now the doubtful dusk 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:

And suck'd from out the distant gloom 5
A breeze began to tremble o'er
The large leaves of the sycamore,
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung 10
The heavy-folded rose, and flung
The lilies to and fro, and said

'The dawn, the dawn,' and died away;
And East and West, without a breath,
Mixt their dim lights, like life and death, 15
To broaden into boundless day.

CI

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall sway,
The tender blossom flutter down,
Unloved, that beech will gather brown,
This maple burn itself away;

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair, 5
Ray round with flames her disk of seed,
And many a rose-carnation feed
With summer spice the humming air;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
    The brook shall babble down the plain, 10
    At noon or when the lesser wain
Is twisting round the polar star;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,
    And flood the haunts of hern and crake;
    Or into silver arrows break 15
The sailing moon in creek and cove;

Till from the garden and the wild
    A fresh association blow,
    And year by year the landscape grow
Familiar to the stranger's child; 20

As year by year the labourer tills
    His wonted glebe, or lops the glades;
    And year by year our memory fades
From all the circle of the hills.

CXV

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
    Now burgeons every maze of quick
    About the flowering squares, and thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long, 5
    The distance takes a lovelier hue,
    And drown'd in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
    The flocks are whiter down the vale, 10
    And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
    In yonder greening gleam, and fly
    The happy birds, that change their sky 15
To build and brood; that live their lives

From land to land; and in my breast
Spring wakens too; and my regret
Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest. 20

CXXIII

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
O earth, what changes hast thou seen!
There where the long street roars, hath been
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow 5
From form to form, and nothing stands;
They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
And dream my dream, and hold it true; 10
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,
I cannot think the thing farewell.

CXXIV

That which we dare invoke to bless;
Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt;
He, They, One, All; within, without;
The Power in darkness whom we guess;

I found Him not in world or sun, 5
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye;
Nor thro' the questions men may try,
The petty cobwebs we have spun:

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,
I heard a voice 'believe no more' 10
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep;

A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath the heart 15
Stood up and answer'd 'I have felt.'

No, like a child in doubt and fear:
But that blind clamour made me wise;
Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near; 20

And what I am beheld again
What is, and no man understands;
And out of darkness came the hands
That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

THE EAGLE

Published 1851

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls, 5
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

'COME NOT WHEN I AM DEAD'

Published 1851

Come not, when I am dead,
To drop thy foolish tears upon my grave,
To trample round my fallen head,
And vex the unhappy dust thou wouldst not save.
There let the wind sweep and the plover cry; 5
But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime
I care no longer, being all unblest:
Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of Time,
And I desire to rest. 10
Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where I lie:
Go by, go by.

TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN GREECE

Published 1853

ILLYRIAN woodlands, echoing falls
Of water, sheets of summer glass,
The long divine Peneïan pass,
The vast Akrokeraunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair, 5
With such a pencil, such a pen,
You shadow forth to distant men,
I read and felt that I was there:

And trust me while I turn'd the page,
And track'd you still on classic ground, 10
I grew in gladness till I found
My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever pour'd
And glisten'd—here and there alone
The broad-limb'd Gods at random thrown 15
By fountain-urns;—and Naiads oar'd

A glimmering shoulder under gloom
Of cavern pillars; on the swell
The silver lily heaved and fell;
And many a slope was rich in bloom 20

From him that on the mountain lea
By dancing rivulets fed his flocks
To him who sat upon the rocks,
And fluted to the morning sea.

THE DAISY

Written 1853. Published 1855.

O LOVE, what hours were thine and mine,
In lands of palm and southern pine;
  In lands of palm, of orange-blossom,
Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine.

What Roman strength Turbìa show'd 5
In ruin, by the mountain road;
  How like a gem, beneath, the city
Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd.

How richly down the rocky dell
The torrent vineyard streaming fell 10
  To meet the sun and sunny waters,
That only heaved with a summer swell.

What slender campanili grew
By bays, the peacock's neck in hue;
  Where, here and there, on sandy beaches 15
A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew.

How young Columbus seem'd to rove,
Yet present in his natal grove,
  Now watching high on mountain cornice,
And steering, now, from a purple cove, 20

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim;
Till, in a narrow street and dim,
  I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,
And drank, and loyally drank to him.

Nor knew we well what pleased us most, 25
Not the clipt palm of which they boast;
  But distant colour, happy hamlet,
A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen
A light amid its olives green; 30
Or olive-hoary cape in ocean;
Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed
Of silent torrents, gravel-spread;
And, crossing, oft we saw the glisten 35
Of ice, far up on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, tho' white and cold,
Those niched shapes of noble mould,
A princely people's awful princes,
The grave, severe Genovese of old. 40

At Florence too what golden hours,
In those long galleries, were ours;
What drives about the fresh Cascinè,
Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers.

In bright vignettes, and each complete, 45
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,
Or palace, how the city glitter'd,
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet.

But when we crost the Lombard plain
Remember what a plague of rain; 50
Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma;
At Lodi, rain, Piacenza, rain.

And stern and sad (so rare the smiles
Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard piles;
Porch-pillars on the lion resting, 55
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,
The height, the space, the gloom, the glory!
A mount of marble, a hundred spires!

I climb'd the roofs at break of day;
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.
  I stood among the silent statues,
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-fair, 65
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there
  A thousand shadowy-pencill'd valleys
And snowy dells in a golden air.

Remember how we came at last
To Como; shower and storm and blast 70
  Had blown the lake beyond his limit,
And all was flooded; and how we past

From Como, when the light was gray,
And in my head, for half the day,
  The rich Virgilian rustic measure 75
Of Lari Maxume, all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,
As on The Lariano crept
  To that fair port below the castle
Of Queen Theodolind, where we slept; 80

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake
A cypress in the moonlight shake,
  The moonlight touching o'er a terrace
One tall Agavè above the lake.

What more? we took our last adieu, 85
And up the snowy Splugen drew,
  But ere we reach'd the highest summit
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,
And now it tells of Italy. 90
  O love, we two shall go no longer
To lands of summer across the sea;

So dear a life your arms enfold
Whose crying is a cry for gold:
  Yet here to-night in this dark city, 95
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and dry,
This nurseling of another sky
  Still in the little book you lent me,
And where you tenderly laid it by: 100

And I forgot the clouded Forth,
The gloom that saddens Heaven and Earth,
  The bitter east, the misty summer
And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain, 105
Perchance, to charm a vacant brain,
  Perchance, to dream you still beside me,
My fancy fled to the South again.

TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE

Written 1854. Published 1855.

Come, when no graver cares employ,
Godfather, come and see your boy:
  Your presence will be sun in winter,
Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few, 5
Who give the Fiend himself his due,
  Should eighty-thousand college-councils
Thunder 'Anathema,' friend, at you;

Should all our churchmen foam in spite
At you, so careful of the right, 10
  Yet one lay-hearth would give you welcome
(Take it and come) to the Isle of Wight;

Where, far from noise and smoke of town,
I watch the twilight falling brown
  All round a careless-order'd garden   15
Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You'll have no scandal while you dine,
But honest talk and wholesome wine,
  And only hear the magpie gossip
Garrulous under a roof of pine: 20

For groves of pine on either hand,
To break the blast of winter, stand;
  And further on, the hoary Channel
Tumbles a billow on chalk and sand;

Where, if below the milky steep   25
Some ship of battle slowly creep,
  And on thro' zones of light and shadow
Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin
Which made a selfish war begin;   30
  Dispute the claims, arrange the chances;
Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win:

Or whether war's avenging rod
Shall lash all Europe into blood;
  Till you should turn to dearer matters,   35
Dear to the man that is dear to God;

How best to help the slender store,
How mend the dwellings, of the poor;
  How gain in life, as life advances,
Valour and charity more and more.   40

Come, Maurice, come: the lawn as yet
Is hoar with rime, or spongy-wet;
  But when the wreath of March has blossom'd,
Crocus, anemone, violet,

Or later, pay one visit here, 45
For those are few we hold as dear;
  Nor pay but one, but come for many,
Many and many a happy year.

From MAUD

Published 1855

Part I

XXII

I

Come into the garden, Maud,
  For the black bat, night, has flown,
Come into the garden, Maud,
  I am here at the gate alone;
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad, 5
  And the musk of the rose is blown.

II

For a breeze of morning moves,
  And the planet of Love is on high,
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves
  On a bed of daffodil sky, 10
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
  To faint in his light, and to die.

III

All night have the roses heard
  The flute, violin, bassoon;
All night has the casement jessamine stirr'd 15
  To the dancers dancing in tune;
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
  And a hush with the setting moon.

IV

I said to the lily, 'There is but one
  With whom she has heart to be gay. 20
When will the dancers leave her alone?
  She is weary of dance and play.'
Now half to the setting moon are gone,
  And half to the rising day;
Low on the sand and loud on the stone 25
  The last wheel echoes away.

V

I said to the rose, 'The brief night goes
  In babble and revel and wine.
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
  For one that will never be thine? 30
But mine, but mine,' so I sware to the rose,
  'For ever and ever, mine.'

VI

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,
  As the music clash'd in the hall;
And long by the garden lake I stood, 35
  For I heard your rivulet fall
From the lake to the meadow and on to the wood,
  Our wood, that is dearer than all;

VII

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet
  That whenever a March-wind sighs 40
He sets the jewel-print of your feet
  In violets blue as your eyes,
To the woody hollows in which we meet
  And the valleys of Paradise.

VIII

The slender acacia would not shake 45
 One long milk-bloom on the tree;
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake
 As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;
But the rose was awake all night for your sake,
 Knowing your promise to me; 50
The lilies and roses were all awake,
 They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

IX

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
 Come hither, the dances are done,
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls, 55
 Queen lily and rose in one;
Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,
 To the flowers, and be their sun.

X

There has fallen a splendid tear
 From the passion-flower at the gate. 60
She is coming, my dove, my dear;
 She is coming, my life, my fate;
The red rose cries, 'She is near, she is near;'
 And the white rose weeps, 'She is late;'
The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I hear;' 65
 And the lily whispers, 'I wait.'

XI

She is coming, my own, my sweet;
 Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and beat,
 Were it earth in an earthy bed; 70

My dust would hear her and beat,
  Had I lain for a century dead;
Would start and tremble under her feet,
  And blossom in purple and red.

Part II

IV

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 5
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. 10

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 15
What and where they be.

From SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION OF THE ILIAD IN BLANK VERSE

Published 1863

As when in heaven the stars about the moon
Look beautiful, when all the winds are laid,

And every height comes out, and jutting peak
And valley, and the immeasurable heavens
Break open to their highest, and all the stars 5
Shine, and the Shepherd gladdens in his heart:
So many a fire between the ships and stream
Of Xanthus blazed before the towers of Troy,
A thousand on the plain; and close by each
Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire; 10
And eating hoary grain and pulse the steeds,
Fixt by their cars, waited the golden dawn.

NORTHERN FARMER

OLD STYLE

Written 1861. Published 1864.

I

WHEER 'asta beän saw long and meä liggin' 'ere aloän?
Noorse? thourt nowt o' a noorse: whoy, Doctor's abeän an' agoän:
Says that I moänt 'a naw moor aäle: but I beänt a fool:
Git ma my aäle, fur I beänt a-gawin' to breäk my rule.

II

Doctors, they knaws nowt, fur a says what's nawways true: 5
Naw soort o' koind o' use to saäy the things that a do.
I've 'ed my point o' aäle ivry noight sin' I beän 'ere.
An' I've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight for foorty year.

III

Parson's a beän loikewoise, an' a sittin' 'ere o' my bed.
'The amoighty's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my friend,' a said. 10
An' a towd ma my sins, an's toithe were due, an' I gied it in hond;
I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy the lond.

IV

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot sa mooch to larn.
But a cast oop, thot a did, 'bout Bessy Marris's barne.
Thaw a knaws I hallus voäted wi' Squoire an' choorch an'
staäte, 15
An i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver agin the raäte.

V

An' I hallus coom'd to 's chooch afoor moy Sally wur deäd,
An' 'eärd 'um a bummin' awaäy loike a buzzard-clock ower
my 'eäd,
An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd but I thowt a 'ad summut
to saäy,
An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said an' I coom'd
awaäy. 20

VI

Bessy Marris's barne! tha knaws she laäid it to meä.
Mowt a beän, mayhap, for she wur a bad un, sheä.
'Siver, I kep 'um, I kep 'um, my lass, tha mun understond;
I done moy duty boy 'um as I 'a done boy the lond.

VII

But Parson a cooms an' a goäs, an' a says it eäsy an' freeä 25
'The amoighty's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my friend,'
says 'eä.
I weänt saäy men be loiars, thaw summun said it in 'aäste:
But 'e reäds wonn sarmin a weeäk, an' I 'a stubb'd Thurna-
by waäste.

VIII

D'ya moind the waäste, my lass? naw, naw, tha was not
born then;
Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eärd 'um mysen; 30
Moäst loike a butter-bump, fur I 'eärd 'um about an' about,
But I stubb'd 'um oop wi' the lot, an' raäved an' rembled
'um out.

IX

Keäper's it wur; fo' they fun 'um theer a-laäid of 'is faäce
Down i' the woild 'enemies afoor I coom'd to the plaäce.
Noäks or Thimbleby—toäner 'ed shot 'um as deäd as a
naäil. 35
Noäks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize—but git ma my aäle.

X

Dubbut looök at the waäste: theer warn't not feeäd for a cow;
Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an' looök at it now—
Warnt worth nowt a haäcre, an' now theer's lots o' feeäd,
Fourscoor yows upon it an' some on it down i' seeäd. 40

XI

Nobbut a bit on it's left, an' I meän'd to 'a stubb'd it at fall,
Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd plow thruff it an' all,
If godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let ma aloän,
Meä, wi' haäte hoonderd haäcre o' Squoire's, an' lond o'
my oän.

XII

Do godamoighty knaw what a's doing a-taäkin' o' meä? 45
I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän an' yonder a peä;
An' Squoire 'ull be sa mad an' all—a' dear a' dear!
And I 'a managed for Squoire coom Michaelmas thutty year.

XIII

A mowt 'a taäen owd Joänes, an 'ant not a aäpoth o' sense,
Or a mowt 'a taäen young Robins—a niver mended a fence:
But godamoighty a moost taäke meä an' taäke ma now 51
Wi' aäf the cows to cauve an' Thurnaby hoälms to plow!

XIV

Loook 'ow quoloty smoiles when they seeäs ma a passin' boy,
Says to thessén naw doubt 'what a man a beä sewer-loy!'
Fur they knaws what I beän to Squoire sin fust a coom'd to
the 'All; 55
I done moy duty by Squoire an' I done moy duty boy hall.

XV

Squoire's i' Lunnon, an' summun I reckons 'ull 'a to wroite,
For whoä's to howd the lond ater meä thot muddles ma quoit;
Sartin-sewer I beä, thot a weänt niver give it to Joänes,
Naw, nor a moänt to Robins—a niver rembles the stoäns. 60

XVI

But summun 'ull come ater meä mayhap wi' 'is kittle o' steäm
Huzzin' an' maäzin' the blessed feälds wi' the Divil's oän teäm.
Sin' I mun doy I mun doy, thaw loife they says is sweet,
But sin' I mun doy I mun doy, for I couldn abeär to see it.

XVII

What atta stannin' theer fur, an' doesn bring ma the aäle? 65
Doctor's a 'toättler, lass, an a's hallus i' the owd taäle;
I weänt breäk rules fur Doctor, a knaws naw moor nor a floy;
Git ma my aäle I tell tha, an' if I mun doy I mun doy.

IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ

Written 1861. Published 1864.

All along the valley, stream that flashest white,
Deepening thy voice with the deepening of the night,
All along the valley, where thy waters flow,
I walk'd with one I loved two and thirty years ago.
All along the valley, while I walk'd to-day, 5
The two and thirty years were a mist that rolls away;
For all along the valley, down thy rocky bed,
Thy living voice to me was as the voice of the dead,
And all along the valley, by rock and cave and tree,
The voice of the dead was a living voice to me. 10

REQUIESCAT

Published 1864

Fair is her cottage in its place,
  Where yon broad water sweetly slowly glides.
It sees itself from thatch to base
  Dream in the sliding tides.

And fairer she, but ah how soon to die! 5
  Her quiet dream of life this hour may cease.
Her peaceful being slowly passes by
  To some more perfect peace.

'FLOWER IN THE CRANNIED WALL'

Published 1869

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but *if* I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all, 5
I should know what God and man is.

THE REVENGE

A BALLAD OF THE FLEET

Published 1878

I

At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay,
And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird, came flying from far
  away:
'Spanish ships of war at sea! we have sighted fifty-three!'
Then sware Lord Thomas Howard: ''Fore God I am no
  coward;
But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are out of gear, 5
And the half my men are sick. I must fly, but follow quick.
We are six ships of the line; can we fight with fifty-three?'

II

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: 'I know you are no coward;
You fly them for a moment to fight with them again.
But I've ninety men and more that are lying sick ashore. 10
I should count myself the coward if I left them, my Lord Howard,
To these Inquisition dogs and the devildoms of Spain.'

III

So Lord Howard past away with five ships of war that day,
Till he melted like a cloud in the silent summer heaven;
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick men from the land 15
Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford in Devon,
And we laid them on the ballast down below;
For we brought them all aboard,
And they blest him in their pain, that they were not left to Spain, 20
To the thumbscrew and the stake, for the glory of the Lord.

IV

He had only a hundred seamen to work the ship and to fight,
And he sailed away from Flores till the Spaniard came in sight,
With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the weather bow.
'Shall we fight or shall we fly? 25
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die!
There'll be little of us left by the time this sun be set.'
And Sir Richard said again: 'We be all good English men.
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children of the devil, 30
For I never turn'd my back upon Don or devil yet.'

V

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and we roar'd a hurrah, and so
The little Revenge ran on sheer into the heart of the foe,
With her hundred fighters on deck, and her ninety sick below;
For half of their fleet to the right and half to the left were seen, 35
And the little Revenge ran on thro' the long sea-lane between.

VI

Thousands of their soldiers look'd down from their decks and laugh'd,
Thousands of their seamen made mock at the mad little craft
Running on and on, till delay'd
By their mountain-like San Philip that, of fifteen hundred tons, 40
And up-shadowing high above us with her yawning tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and we stay'd.

VII

And while now the great San Philip hung above us like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall
Long and loud, 45
Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And two upon the larboard and two upon the starboard lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from them all.

VIII

But anon the great San Philip, she bethought herself and went 50
Having that within her womb that had left her ill content;

And the rest they came aboard us, and they fought us hand
to hand,
For a dozen times they came with their pikes and musque-
teers,
And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a dog that shakes
his ears
When he leaps from the water to the land. 55

IX

And the sun went down, and the stars came out far over the
summer sea,
But never a moment ceased the fight of the one and the
fifty-three.
Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built gal-
leons came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her battle-
thunder and flame;
Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back with her
dead and her shame. 60
For some were sunk and many were shatter'd, and so could
fight us no more—
God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the world
before?

X

For he said 'Fight on! fight on!'
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck;
And it chanced that, when half of the short summer night
was gone, 65
With a grisly wound to be drest he had left the deck,
But a bullet struck him that was dressing it suddenly dead,
And himself he was wounded again in the side and the head,
And he said 'Fight on! fight on!'

XI

And the night went down, and the sun smiled out far over
the summer sea, 70

And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay round us all in
a ring;
But they dared not touch us again, for they fear'd that we
still could sting,
So they watch'd what the end would be.
And we had not fought them in vain,
But in perilous plight were we, 75
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were slain,
And half of the rest of us maim'd for life
In the crash of the cannonades and the desperate strife;
And the sick men down in the hold were most of them stark
and cold,
And the pikes were all broken or bent, and the powder was
all of it spent; 80
And the masts and the rigging were lying over the side;
But Sir Richard cried in his English pride,
'We have fought such a fight for a day and a night
As may never be fought again!
We have won great glory, my men! 85
And a day less or more
At sea or ashore,
We die—does it matter when?
Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—sink her, split her in
twain!
Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands of Spain!' 90

XII

And the gunner said 'Ay, ay,' but the seamen made reply:
'We have children, we have wives,
And the Lord hath spared our lives.
We will make the Spaniard promise, if we yield, to let
us go;
We shall live to fight again and to strike another blow.' 95
And the lion there lay dying, and they yielded to the
foe.

XIII

And the stately Spanish men to their flagship bore him then,
Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir Richard caught
at last,
And they praised him to his face with their courtly foreign
grace;
But he rose upon their decks, and he cried: 100
'I have fought for Queen and Faith like a valiant man and
true;
I have only done my duty as a man is bound to do:
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville die!'
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

XIV

And they stared at the dead that had been so valiant and
true, 105
And had holden the power and glory of Spain so cheap
That he dared her with one little ship and his English few;
Was he devil or man? He was devil for aught they knew,
But they sank his body with honour down into the deep,
And they mann'd the Revenge with a swarthier alien
crew, 110
And away she sail'd with her loss and long'd for her own;
When a wind from the lands they had ruin'd awoke from
sleep,
And the water began to heave and the weather to moan,
And or ever that evening ended a great gale blew,
And a wave like the wave that is raised by an earthquake
grew, 115
Till it smote on their hulls and their sails and their masts and
their flags,
And the whole sea plunged and fell on the shot-shatter'd
navy of Spain,
And the little Revenge herself went down by the island crags
To be lost evermore in the main.

139

TO VIRGIL

Published 1882

I

ROMAN Virgil, thou that singest
    Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire,
Ilion falling, Rome arising,
    wars, and filial faith, and Dido's pyre:

II

Landscape-lover, lord of language 5
    more than he that sang the Works and Days,
All the chosen coin of fancy
    flashing out from many a golden phrase;

III

Thou that singest wheat and woodland,
    tilth and vineyard, hive and horse and herd; 10
All the charm of all the Muses
    often flowering in a lonely word;

IV

Poet of the happy Tityrus
    piping underneath his beechen bowers;
Poet of the poet-satyr 15
    whom the laughing shepherd bound with flowers;

V

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying
    in the blissful years again to be,
Summers of the snakeless meadow,
    unlaborious earth and oarless sea; 20

VI

Thou that seëst Universal
    Nature moved by Universal Mind;
Thou majestic in thy sadness
    at the doubtful doom of human kind;

VII

Light among the vanish'd ages; 25
star that gildest yet this phantom shore;
Golden branch amid the shadows,
kings and realms that pass to rise no more;

VIII

Now thy Forum roars no longer,
fallen every purple Cæsar's dome— 30
Tho' thine ocean-roll of rhythm
sound for ever of Imperial Rome—

IX

Now the Rome of slaves hath perish'd,
and the Rome of freemen holds her place,
I, from out the Northern Island 35
sunder'd once from all the human race,

X

I salute thee, Mantovano,
I that loved thee since my day began,
Wielder of the stateliest measure
ever moulded by the lips of man. 40

'FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE'

Written 1880. Published 1883.

Row us out from Desenzano, to your Sirmione row!
So they row'd, and there we landed—'O venusta Sirmio!'
There to me thro' all the groves of olive in the summer glow,
There beneath the Roman ruin where the purple flowers grow,
Came that 'Ave atque Vale' of the Poet's hopeless woe, 5
Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen-hundred years ago,
'Frater Ave atque Vale'—as we wander'd to and fro
Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the Garda Lake below
Sweet Catullus's all-but-island, olive-silvery Sirmio!

EARLY SPRING

'An early poem, slightly altered.' Published 1883.

I

ONCE more the Heavenly Power
  Makes all things new,
And domes the red-plow'd hills
  With loving blue;
The blackbirds have their wills, 5
  The throstles too.

II

Opens a door in Heaven;
  From skies of glass
A Jacob's ladder falls
  On greening grass, 10
And o'er the mountain-walls
  Young angels pass.

III

Before them fleets the shower,
  And burst the buds,
And shine the level lands, 15
  And flash the floods;
The stars are from their hands
  Flung thro' the woods.

IV

The woods with living airs
  How softly fann'd, 20
Light airs from where the deep,
  All down the sand,
Is breathing in his sleep,
  Heard by the land.

V

O follow, leaping blood, 25
The season's lure!
O heart, look down and up
Serene, secure,
Warm as the crocus cup,
Like snowdrops, pure! 30

VI

Past, Future glimpse and fade
Thro' some slight spell,
A gleam from yonder vale,
Some far blue fell,
And sympathies, how frail, 35
In sound and smell!

VII

Till at thy chuckled note,
Thou twinkling bird,
The fairy fancies range,
And, lightly stirr'd, 40
Ring little bells of change
From word to word.

VIII

For now the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new,
And thaws the cold, and fills 45
The flower with dew;
The blackbirds have their wills,
The poets too.

TO E. FITZGERALD

(PROLOGUE TO *TIRESIAS*)

Written 1876–83. Published 1885.

OLD Fitz, who from your suburb grange,
  Where once I tarried for a while,
Glance at the wheeling Orb of change,
  And greet it with a kindly smile;
Whom yet I see as there you sit 5
  Beneath your sheltering garden-tree,
And while your doves about you flit,
  And plant on shoulder, hand and knee,
Or on your head their rosy feet,
  As if they knew your diet spares 10
Whatever moved in that full sheet
  Let down to Peter at his prayers;
Who live on milk and meal and grass;
  And once for ten long weeks I tried
Your table of Pythagoras, 15
  And seem'd at first 'a thing enskied'
(As Shakespeare has it) airy-light
  To float above the ways of men,
Then fell from that half-spiritual height
  Chill'd, till I tasted flesh again 20
One night when earth was winter-black,
  And all the heavens flash'd in frost;
And on me, half-asleep, came back
  That wholesome heat the blood had lost,
And set me climbing icy capes 25
  And glaciers, over which there roll'd
To meet me long-arm'd vines with grapes
  Of Eshcol hugeness; for the cold
Without, and warmth within me, wrought
  To mould the dream; but none can say 30

That Lenten fare makes Lenten thought,
  Who reads your golden Eastern lay,
Than which I know no version done
  In English more divinely well;
A planet equal to the sun 35
  Which cast it, that large infidel
Your Omar; and your Omar drew
  Full-handed plaudits from our best
In modern letters, and from two,
  Old friends outvaluing all the rest, 40
Two voices heard on earth no more;
  But we old friends are still alive,
And I am nearing seventy-four,
  While you have touch'd at seventy-five,
And so I send a birthday line 45
  Of greeting; and my son, who dipt
In some forgotten book of mine
  With sallow scraps of manuscript,
And dating many a year ago,
  Has hit on this, which you will take 50
My Fitz, and welcome, as I know
  Less for its own than for the sake
Of one recalling gracious times,
  When, in our younger London days,
You found some merit in my rhymes, 55
  And I more pleasure in your praise.

(EPILOGUE TO *TIRESIAS*)

Written 1883–5. Published 1885.

'ONE height and one far-shining fire'
  And while I fancied that my friend
For this brief idyll would require
  A less diffuse and opulent end,

And would defend his judgment well, 5
  If I should deem it over nice—
The tolling of his funeral bell
  Broke on my Pagan Paradise,
And mixt the dream of classic times
  And all the phantoms of the dream, 10
With present grief, and made the rhymes,
  That miss'd his living welcome, seem
Like would-be guests an hour too late,
  Who down the highway moving on
With easy laughter find the gate 15
  Is bolted, and the master gone.
Gone into darkness, that full light
  Of friendship! past, in sleep, away
By night, into the deeper night!
  The deeper night? A clearer day 20
Than our poor twilight dawn on earth—
  If night, what barren toil to be!
What life, so maim'd by night, were worth
  Our living out? Not mine to me
Remembering all the golden hours 25
  Now silent, and so many dead,
And him the last; and laying flowers,
  This wreath, above his honour'd head,
And praying that, when I from hence
  Shall fade with him into the unknown, 30
My close of earth's experience
  May prove as peaceful as his own.

CROSSING THE BAR

Written 1889. Published 1889.

SUNSET and evening star,
  And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
  When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep, 5
  Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
  Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
  And after that the dark! 10
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
  When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
  The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face 15
  When I have crost the bar.

FROM THE *MEMOIR* BY HIS SON

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

DIM mystic sympathies with tree and hill reaching far back into childhood. A known landskip is to me an old friend, that continually talks to me of my own youth and half-forgotten things, and indeed does more for me than many an old friend that I know. An old park is my delight, and I could tumble about it for ever.

(*Memoir*, i. 172.)

HE wrote: 'A kind of waking trance I have frequently had, quite up from boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has generally come upon me thro' repeating my own name two or three times to myself silently, till all at once, as it 10 were out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, the individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being, and this not a confused state, but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, the weirdest of the weirdest, utterly beyond words, where death was an almost laughable impossibility, the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction but the only true life.' 'This might,' he said, 'be the state which St. Paul describes, "Whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell."' 20

He continued: 'I am ashamed of my feeble description. Have I not said the state is utterly beyond words? But in a moment, when I come back to my normal state of "sanity", I am ready to fight for *mein liebes Ich*, and hold that it will last for æons of æons.'

(*Memoir*, i. 320.)

CRITICAL

THE reference in the following letter from my father is to an article on 'English Metrical Critics' contributed by Mr.

Patmore to the *North British Review* for 1857 (Vol. xxvii, pp. 127–61).

This is the passage referred to:

The six-syllable 'iambic' is the most solemn of all our English measures. It is scarcely fit for anything but a dirge; the reason being, that the final pause in this measure is greater, when compared with the length of the line, than in any other verse. Here is an example, which we select on account of the peculiar illustration of its nature as a 'dimeter brachy-catalectic', which is supplied by the *filling up* of the measure in the seventh line:

> How strange it is to wake
> And watch, while others sleep,
> Till sight and hearing ache
> For objects that may keep
> The awful inner sense
> Unroused, lest it should mark
> The life that haunts the emptiness
> And horror of the dark.

We have only to *fill up* the measure in every line as well as the seventh, in order to change this verse from the slowest and most mournful, to the most rapid and high-spirited of all English metres, the common eight-syllable quatrain; a measure particularly recommended by the early critics, and continually chosen by poets of all times for erotic poetry, on account of its joyous air.

It will be seen that my father's second specimen is constructed by 'filling up' Mr. Patmore's lines in the manner that he suggests.

MY DEAR C. P.

Specimen of the 'most solemn' English metre.

> How glad am I to walk
> With Susan on the shore!
> How glad am I to talk!
> I kiss her o'er and o'er.

I clasp her slender waist,
  We kiss, we are so fond,
When she and I are thus embraced,
  There's not a joy beyond.

Is this C. P.'s most solemn?

Specimen of the 'most high-spirited' metre.

How strange it is, O God, to wake,
  To watch and wake while others sleep,
Till heart and sight and hearing ache
  For common objects that would keep 10
Our awful inner ghostly sense
  Unroused, lest it by chance should mark
The life that haunts the emptiness
  And horrors of the formless dark.

Is this C. P.'s rapid and high-spirited? A. T.

(*Memoir*, i. 469–70.)

He also wrote to Mr. Swinburne about 'Atalanta in Calydon':

MY DEAR SIR,

Accept my congratulations on the success of your Greek 20 play. I had some strong objections to parts of it, but these I think have been modified by a reperusal, and at any rate I daresay you would not care to hear them; here however is one. Is it *fair* for a Greek chorus to abuse the Deity something in the *style* of the Hebrew prophets?

Altogether it is many a long day since I have read anything so fine; for it is not only carefully written, but it has both strength and splendour, and shows moreover that you have a fine metrical invention which I envy you.

Yours very truly, A. TENNYSON. 30

(*Memoir*, i. 496.)

ONE night, after he had been reading aloud several of his poems, all of them short, he passed one of them to me and

said, 'What is the matter with that poem?' I read it and answered, 'I see nothing to complain of.' He laid his fingers on two stanzas of it, the third and fifth, and said, 'Read it again.' After doing so I said, 'It has now more completeness and totality about it; but the two stanzas you cover are among its best.' 'No matter,' he rejoined, 'they make the poem too longbacked; and they must go, at any sacrifice.' 'Every short poem,' he remarked, 'should have a definite shape, like the curve, sometimes a single, sometimes a double 10 one, assumed by a severed tress or the rind of an apple when flung on the floor.'

(From Aubrey de Vere. *Memoir*, i. 506–7.)

ABOUT his blank verse he said something of this kind to me: 'The English public think that blank verse is the easiest thing in the world to write, mere prose cut up into five-foot lines; whereas it is one of the most difficult. In a blank verse you can have from three up to eight beats;[1] but, if you vary the beats unusually, your ordinary newspaper critic sets up a howl. The varying of the beats, of the construction of the feet, of the emphasis, of the extra-metrical syllables 20 and of the pauses, helps to make the greatness of blank verse. There are many other things besides, for instance a fine ear for vowel-sounds, and the kicking of the geese out of the boat (i.e. doing away with sibilations); but few educated men really understand the structure of blank verse. I never put two 'ss' together in any verse of mine. My line is not, as often quoted,

And freedom broadens slowly down—

but

And freedom slowly broadens down.

30 People sometimes say how "studiedly alliterative" Tennyson's verse is. Why, when I spout my lines first, they come

[1] As an example of rapid blank verse he would give the passage in 'Balin and Balan' from 'He rose, descended, met' to 'face to ground.'

out so alliteratively that I have sometimes no end of trouble to get rid of the alliteration.'

(*Memoir*, ii. 14–15.)

CHAUCER was to him a kindred spirit, as a lover of nature and as a word-painter of character: and he enjoyed reading him aloud more than any poet except Shakespeare and Milton.

When he talked of the 'grand style' of poetic diction he would emphasize his opinion that he considered that of Milton even finer than that of Virgil, 'the lord of language'. 'Verse should be *beau comme la prose.*' 10

'Browning,' he said, 'never greatly cares about the glory of words or beauty of form: he has told me that the world must take him as it finds him. As for his obscurity in his great imaginative analyses, I believe it is a mistake to explain poetry too much, people have really a pleasure in discovering their own interpretations. He has a mighty intellect, but sometimes I cannot read him. He seldom attempts the marriage of sense with sound, although he shows a spontaneous felicity in the adaptation of words to ideas and feelings. I wish I had written his two lines: 20

"The little more and how much it is,
The little less and what worlds away."

He has plenty of music in him, but he cannot get it out.'

He would cite 'Rabbi Ben Ezra,' 'Death in the Desert,' 'Caliban upon Setebos,' 'The Englishman in Italy,' and 'A Grammarian's Funeral,' as poems of fine thought, and 'Mr Sludge, the Medium' as an example of exceeding ingenuity of mind. The last, however, he said to Browning, is 'two-thirds too long'.

Among modern sonnets he liked some of Rossetti's, Mrs. 30 Browning's 'Sonnets from the Portuguese,' and Charles Turner's. For Christina Rossetti, as a true artist, he expressed profound respect.

Of Shelley he said: 'He is often too much in the clouds for me. I admire his "Alastor," "Adonais," "Prometheus Unbound," and "Epipsychidion," and some of his short lyrics are exquisite. As for "The Lover's Tale," that was written before I had ever seen a Shelley, though it is called Shelleyan.'

Of Swinburne: 'He is a reed through which all things blow into music.'

He was not a great reader of William Morris; but he liked
10 *The Life and Death of Jason.*

Keats he placed on a lofty pinnacle. 'He would have been among the very greatest of us if he had lived. There is something of the innermost soul of poetry in almost everything he ever wrote.' He gave the unfinished 'Eve of St Mark,' and the following lines from the 'Ode to a Nightingale' in illustration:

> 'Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
> Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
> She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
> 20 The same that oft-times hath
> Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.'

'If the beginning of "Hyperion", as now published, were shorter,' he said, 'it would be a deal finer: that is, if from "Not so much" to "feathered grass" were omitted.'

He felt what Cowper calls the 'musical finesse' of Pope, and admired single lines and couplets very much; but he found the 'regular da da, da da' of his heroic metre monotonous. He quoted

> 30 'What dire offence from amorous causes springs.'

'"Amrus causiz springs," horrible! I would sooner die than write such a line!! Archbishop Trench (not then archbishop) was the only critic who said of my first volume, "What a singular absence of the 's'!"'

'Pope here and there has a real insight into Nature, for example about the spider, which

> "Feels at each thread and lives along the line."

His lancet touches are very fine.

> "Now night descending, the proud scene was o'er,
> But lived in Settle's numbers one day more."'

'What a difference,' he would add, 'between Pope's little poisonous barbs, and Dryden's strong invective! And how much more real poetic force there is in Dryden!

'Look at Pope: 10

> "He said, observant of the blue-eyed maid,
> Then in the sheath return'd the shining blade":

'Then at Dryden:

> "He said; with surly faith observed her word,
> And in the sheath reluctant plunged the sword."

'The "Elegy on the Unfortunate Lady" is good, but I do not find much human feeling in him, except perhaps in "Eloisa to Abelard."'

He liked Crabbe much, and thought that there was great force in his homely tragic stories. 'He has a world of his 20 own. There is a "tramp, tramp, tramp," a merciless sledge-hammer thud about his lines which suits his subjects.' And in speaking of him he would cite Byron's

> 'Nature's sternest painter yet the best.'

In early boyhood he had been possessed by Byron's poetry, but he could not read it in later life, except perhaps 'The Vision of Judgment,' and parts of 'Childe Harold,' and of 'Don Juan.' He would say: 'Byron is not an artist or a thinker, or a creator in the higher sense, but a strong personality: he is endlessly clever, and is now unduly depre- 30 ciated.'

'One must distinguish,' he would add, 'Keats, Shelley, and Byron from the great sage poets of all, who are both

great thinkers and great artists, like Æschylus, Shakespeare, Dante, and Goethe. Goethe lacked the divine intensity of Dante, but he was among the wisest of mankind as well as a great artist. He could not quite overcome the harshnesses of the German language. "Kennst du das Land?" is a perfect poem, but "Beschützer ziehn" is a hideous sound in the middle. Goethe was supposed to be cold. I can only say that when told of his son's death he seemed quite calm, but shortly afterwards from repressed emotion he broke a blood-
10 vessel.'

'Goethe thought it a sign of weakness to lose faith in Immortality, and said, "I hope that I shall never be so weak-minded as to let my belief in a future life be torn from me." "Edel sei der Mensch" is one of the noblest of all poems.'

He had a hearty admiration for Wordsworth, the purity and nobility of whose teaching he highly reverenced. 'He seems to me,' my father would say, 'at his best on the whole the greatest English poet since Milton. He is often too diffuse
20 and didactic for me: for instance, in "Tintern Abbey" the repetition of "that blessed mood, that serene and blessed mood" becomes ridiculous. The line

> "Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns"

is almost the grandest in the English language, giving the sense of the abiding in the transient.'

Of Gray he said, 'Gray in his limited sphere is great, and has a wonderful ear.' The following he held to be 'among the most liquid lines in any language':

> 'Though he inherit
> 30 Nor the pride, nor ample pinion
> That the Theban eagle bear,
> Sailing with supreme dominion
> Through the azure deep of air.'

Also:

> 'And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds.'

He liked Collins' and Campbell's *Odes*. 'I admire the "Ode to Evening,"' he said, 'but what a bad, hissing line is that in the poem on the death of Thomson,

> "The year's best sweets shall duteous rise."'

'Campbell's unquantitative line

> "The sentinel stars set their watch in the sky"

is as bad as the following line is good:

> "The weary to sleep and the wounded to die."'

Of Shakespeare's sonnets he would say, 'Henry Hallam made a great mistake about them: they are noble. Look how beautiful such lines as these are:

> "The summer flower is to the summer sweet,
> Though to itself it only live and die,"

and

> "And peace proclaims olives of endless age."'

Of Shakespeare's blank verse he said, 'Almost any prose can be cut up into blank verse, but blank verse becomes the finest vehicle of thought in the language of Shakespeare and Milton. As far as I am aware, no one has noticed what great Æschylean lines there are in Shakespeare, particularly in *King John*: for instance,

> "The burning crest
> Of the old, feeble, and day-wearied sun,"

or again,

> "The sepulchre
> Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws."'

He would say, 'There are three repartees in Shakespeare which always bring tears to my eyes from their simplicity.

'One is in *King Lear* when Lear says to Cordelia, "So young and so untender," and Cordelia lovingly answers, "So young, my lord, and true." And in *The Winter's Tale*, when Florizel takes Perdita's hand to lead her to the dance, and says, "So turtles pair that never mean to part," and the little Perdita

answers, giving her hand to Florizel, "I'll swear for 'em." And in *Cymbeline*, when Imogen in tender rebuke says to her husband,

> "Why did you throw your wedded lady from you?
> Think that you are upon a rock; and now
> Throw me again!"

and Posthumus does not ask forgiveness, but answers, kissing her,

> "Hang there like fruit, my soul,
> 10 Till the tree die."'

After reading *Pericles*, Act v. aloud:

'That is glorious Shakespeare: most of the rest of the play is poor, and not by Shakespeare, but in that act the conception of Marina's character is exquisite.'

Of *Henry VI.* he said, 'I am certain that *Henry VI.* is in the main not Shakespeare's, though here and there he may have put in a touch, as he undoubtedly did in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. There is a great deal of fine Shakespeare in that. Spedding insisted that Shakespeare, among the many plays 20 that he edited for the stage, had corrected a play on Sir Thomas More in the British Museum. It is a poor play, but Spedding believed that the corrections were possibly in Shakespeare's actual handwriting.'

'I have no doubt that much of *Henry VIII.* also is not Shakespeare. It is largely written by Fletcher, with passages unmistakeably by Shakespeare, notably the two first scenes in the first Act, which are sane and compact in thought, expression and simile. I could swear to Shakespeare in the *Field of the Cloth of Gold:*

> 30 "To-day the French
> All clinquant, all in gold like heathen gods,
> Shone down the English; and to-morrow they
> *Made Britain India; every man that stood*
> *Show'd like a mine.*"'

'*Hamlet* is the greatest creation in literature that I know of: though there may be elsewhere finer scenes and passages of poetry. Ugolino and Paolo and Francesca in Dante equal anything anywhere. It is said that Shakespeare was such a poor actor that he never got beyond his ghost in this play, but then the ghost is the most real ghost that ever was. The Queen did not think that Ophelia committed suicide, neither do I.'

'Is there a more delightful love-poem than *Romeo and Juliet*? yet it is full of conceits. 10

'One of the most passionate things in Shakespeare is Romeo's speech:

> "Amen, amen! but come what sorrow can,
> It cannot countervail the exchange of joy
> That one short minute gives me in her sight," etc.

More passionate than anything in Shelley. No one has drawn the true passion of love like Shakespeare.'

For inimitably natural talk between husband and wife he would quote the scene between Hotspur and Lady Percy (*King Henry IV.*, Pt. I.), and would exclaim: 'How deli- 20 ciously playful is that—

> "In faith, I'll break thy little finger, Harry,
> An if thou wilt not tell me all things true"!'

'Macbeth is not, as is too often represented, a noisy swash-buckler; he is a full-furnished, ambitious man. In the scene with Duncan, the excess of courtesy adds a touch to the tragedy. It is like Clytemnestra's profusion to Agamemnon; who, by the way, always strikes me as uncommonly cold and haughty to his wife whom he had not seen for years.'

'*King Lear* cannot possibly be acted, it is too titanic. At 30 the beginning of the play, Lear, in his old age, has grown half mad, choleric and despotic, and therefore cannot brook Cordelia's silence. This play shows a state of society where men's passions are savage and uncurbed. No play like this

anywhere—not even the *Agamemnon*—is so terrifically human.'

'Actors do not comprehend that Shakespeare's greatest villains, Iago among them, have always a touch of conscience. You see the conscience working—therein lies one of Shakespeare's pre-eminences. Iago ought to be acted as the "honest Iago", not the stage villain; he is the essentially jealous man, not Othello.'

Parts of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* he considered were by
10 Shakespeare. 'For instance such lines as these bear his impress:

"That makes the stream seem flowers,"

and

"Who dost pluck
With hand armipotent from forth blue clouds
The mason'd turrets: that both mak'st and break'st
The stony girths of cities."'

Of Marlowe too he was very fond, and would often quote Ford's *Broken Heart.*

20 On American poets: 'I know several striking poems by American poets, but I think that Edgar Poe is (taking his poetry and prose together) the most original American genius.' When asked to write an epitaph of one line for Poe's monument in Westminster Churchyard, Baltimore, he answered: 'How can so strange and so fine a genius, and so sad a life, be exprest and compress in one line?'

He said of writing poetry: 'Simple poems with simple thoughts and in simple language are most difficult to write. I might say that in blank verse "The easiest things are
30 hardest to be done": and the converse is often true with me, "The hardest things are easiest to be done." I feared for years to touch the subject of the "Holy Grail," and when I began finished it in a fortnight.'

(*Memoir*, ii. 284–93.)

NOTES

PAGE XXI. THE QUARTERLY REVIEW. This article was formerly attributed to Lockhart—a view still taken in recent times by Saintsbury, Mr. Harold Nicolson, and Miss M. C. Hildyard (*Lockhart's Literary Criticism*, 1931). But Prothero (Centenary article in the *Quarterly*, 1909), Raleigh, Gordon, and Sir Herbert Grierson have assigned it to Croker.

Prothero adduced letters between Croker and Lockhart about Stirling's praise of Tennyson in the 1842 *Quarterly*, which annoyed Croker as a public disclaimer of 'my opinions'. Lockhart as editor urged soothingly that Croker need not be upset by a young enthusiast—he had not minded when Gifford as editor had printed kinder articles on the *Waverley* novels than Croker's own previous notices had been. Lockhart's wording strongly implies that the 1833 review of Tennyson was Croker's. Grierson (*Times Literary Supplement*, 24.4.37) supported this by finding an earlier letter of Lockhart's, dated Jan. 23, 1833, acknowledging and approving a 'revised article' by Croker on Tennyson, which it is plausible to identify with that printed two months later.

On the other hand as late as 1923 Saintsbury (*Collected Essays*, ii, 'Lockhart') still maintained 'there can be no manner of doubt it is Lockhart's'. Mr. John Murray, he added, had told him Prothero's attribution to Croker was 'all but certainly a mistake', explaining how it happened. But Saintsbury, with singular nonchalance, gave not a detail of this evidence. Murray, indeed, wrote a note in the *Quarterly* Contributors' Register stating that in the 1842 correspondence with Lockhart Croker was referring to 'another article'. But what article? The present Sir John Murray kindly informs me that he cannot trace his father's grounds for assigning the review to Lockhart.

In the Cambridge University Library I have found a sumptuously bound nine-volume collection of Croker's contributions to the *Quarterly*, annotated in ink—it is clear, by Croker himself. He seems to have had the collection bound up between 1853 and his death in 1857. He has included the Tennyson review (in proof-form, for its pages are numbered 1–15, instead of 81–96 as published). There is no note, as there *is* with some other articles, stating that any part of it was not his own

work. In fine, Lockhart may have cut or added: Croker seems mainly responsible. Note, too, the direct reference to Croker's attack on *Endymion*; the allusion to *The Groves of Blarney*—as Prothero pointed out, Croker was Irish; and the minute verbal criticism, illustrated by *short* quotations.[1]

John Wilson Croker (1780–1857) was not, however, the complete fool that this article, and Macaulay, would suggest. He was a friend of Wellington and Peel; M.P. from 1807 to 1832 (he would have no more to do with Parliament after the Reform Bill); Secretary of the Admiralty from 1809 to 1830; editor of Boswell; and author of some 260 articles in the *Quarterly*. Though he is now remembered chiefly as the bludgeoner of Keats and the victim of Macaulay and Disraeli (who satirized him as Rigby in *Coningsby*), we may also recall in his favour Lord Elgin's testimony that he bore a chief part in acquiring the Elgin Marbles for the nation. (He does *not*, however, seem, as often asserted, to have invented the term 'Conservative'.)

This review of Tennyson remains of interest both for its effect on the poet, who published nothing more for nine years, and as a specimen of a style of criticism once common, but now, fortunately, almost extinct (though Saintsbury, for some reason, found it 'extremely clever, being, perhaps, the very best example of politely cruel criticism in existence'.)

PAGE XXI, l. 3. *his first publication*: the *Poems* of 1830 are meant.

l. 9. *galaxy or milky way*: Galaxy comes from Lat. *galaxias*, Greek γαλαξίας (from γάλα, milk). Here, of course, with a further sense of infantile, namby-pamby writing.

l. 12. '*Endymion*': flayed by Croker in the *Quarterly* for April 1818.

ll. 16–22. The 'many editions' of Keats and the 'illustrations by Calcott and Turner' are of course apocryphal—the whole passage being a piece of elephantine irony.

PAGE XXIV, l. 28. '*the Halicarnassèan*' (quaere, *which of them*?): Halicarnassus on the south-west coast of Asia Minor produced Herodotus the historian and Dionysius the critic. Only pedantry could doubt that the far more famous Herodotus was meant here.

[1] This view is now, I find, confirmed by letters published in U.S.A. during the war. See M. F. Brightfield, *J. W. Croker* (1940), pp. 349–52, 426–8.

PAGE XXV, l. 14. *the Grecian painter*: Timanthes of Cythnus or Sicyon (*c.* 400 B.C.), whose famous *Sacrifice of Iphigenia* showed various shades of grief on the faces of Calchas, Odysseus, and Menelaus, but reticently veiled the supreme agony of her father Agamemnon by representing him with his face hidden in his mantle.

PAGE XXVI. EDWARD FITZGERALD ON TENNYSON. l. 18. It seems clear that this passage of 1845 must refer to the still unpublished *In Memoriam* (cf. 'friends' losses' and '3 years', which recalls the three Christmases of the poem).

PAGE XXVII, l. 3. *Miss Barretts*: Elizabeth Barrett, the future Mrs. Browning.

l. 3. *Brownes*: possibly Frances Browne, author of *Granny's Wonderful Chair* (1857), who produced a volume of verse, *The Star of Attéghéi*, in 1844.

l. 4. *Jewsburys*: Geraldine Jewsbury, now best known from Mrs. Carlyle's letters. Her novel *Zoe* appeared in 1845. See Virginia Woolf, *The Common Reader* (Second Series).

l. 7. *come stella in ciel*: 'like a star in Heaven'.

l. 9. ὃς ταῦτα ξυνέγραψεν, 'who wrote this work'. Thucydides, the historian, was with 7 ships at Thasos when, in 424 B.C., the Spartan Brasidas took Amphipolis (near Salonika). He arrived to the rescue only in time to save the port of Eion and went into exile in consequence of his ill success. (See Thuc. iv. 104.)

PAGE XXVIII, l. 21. *Miss Ingelow*: Jean Ingelow (1820–97), now remembered for her *High-tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire*.

PAGE XXIX, l. 11. *Spedding*: James Spedding (1808–81) was a friend of FitzGerald's and a fellow 'Apostle' with Tennyson at Trinity. He gave up a promising career as civil servant and devoted his life, in FitzGerald's phrase, 'to re-edit Bacon's works, which did not want any such re-edition, and to vindicate his character which could not be vindicated'.

PAGE XXX, l. 11. *X*——: obviously Browning.

PAGE XXXI, ll. 5–17. An outstandingly wise passage.

PAGE XXXII. MATTHEW ARNOLD ON TENNYSON. l. 24. *the Bothie . . . the Roman poem*: Clough's *Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich* and *Amours de Voyage*. Apart from a certain familiar colloquialism it is not easy to see in either much resemblance to *Maud*.

PAGE XXXIII, ll. 22–5. The lines from *Ulysses* are, of course, misquoted; as Arnold's quotations were apt to be.

PAGE XXXIV, ll. 1–3. An 'enormous and disgusting hyperbole'.

PAGE XXXVI, l. 3. *natural words*: considering that Homer is written in an artificial mixture of dialects, of great elaboration, this seems a good deal exaggerated.

ll. 23–8. This distinction between *simplicité* and *simplesse* seems a pure mare's nest of Arnold's. There is no ground for saying that *simplesse* = 'affected simplicity', so far as I can find.

PAGE XXXVIII, l. 2. *Moschus*: of Syracuse, pastoral poet of the late third century B.C., famous for his *Lament for Bion* (a fellow poet), which has influenced *Lycidas*, *Adonais*, and *Thyrsis*.

PAGE XXXVIII. It has been suggested (Tinker and Lowry, *The Poetry of Matthew Arnold*, pp. 209–11) that there is also a reference to Tennyson in a stanza of *The Scholar Gipsy* (published 1853).

> Yes, we await it, but it still delays,
>   And then we suffer; and amongst us One
>   Who most has suffer'd, takes dejectedly
> His seat upon the intellectual throne;
>   And all his store of sad experience he
>   Lays bare of wretched days;
> Tells us his misery's birth and growth and signs,
>   And how the dying spark of hope was fed,
>   And how the breast was sooth'd, and how the head,
>   And all his hourly varied anodynes.
>
> This for our wisest: and we others pine. . . .

Arnold, indeed, has said he was thinking of Goethe. Quiller Couch's edition suggests Carlyle. But it is curious, though not conclusive, that the 'intellectual throne' comes from Tennyson's *Palace of Art*:

> Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,
>   And intellectual throne.

Arnold was far from thinking Tennyson 'our wisest'; but the phrase could be ironic; and the Laureateship and *In Memoriam* were both recent. On the other hand the echo of *The Palace of Art* may be unconscious; and Arnold may not have had any

one figure definitely in mind. An allusion to Tennyson seems possible but unproven.

PAGE 1. THE DEVIL AND THE LADY. Begun by Tennyson at 14, but never completed, this little play was first published by Mr. Charles Tennyson in 1930. Its promise is amazing; especially when contrasted with the dull mediocrity of *Poems by Two Brothers* four years later. Tennyson never bettered some of its blank verse, such as:

> Like some young Ashwood when the argent Moon
> Looks in upon its many silver stems.

The general knowledge is also astonishing for a child. No less surprisingly this boyish work shows a gracefully mischievous gaiety of which Tennyson's later poetry would never have suggested him capable—as if Prospero had once been Puck.

l. 54. *fuscous*: dusky.

l. 103. *lone Ionian*: the voice saying 'Great Pan is dead' was heard in the time of Tiberius near the islet of Paxos, south of Corfu in the Ionian Sea (Plutarch, *De Defectu Oraculorum*, 419 B–D).

PAGE 5. CLARIBEL: 'All these ladies were evolved, like the camel, from my own consciousness' (Tennyson).

l. 15. *lintwhite*: linnet.

PAGE 6. MARIANA. l. 4. *pear* was originally 'peach'; but was altered as not desolate enough for the general setting.

l. 50. *And the shrill | winds | were úp | and awáy*: note the effective quickening of the rhythm by the substitution of anapaests (⏑⏑–) for iambi (⏑–) in the first and last feet.

PAGE 9. SONG. Written in the Rectory Garden at Somersby; and a favourite with Edgar Allan Poe.

PAGE 12. A DIRGE. l. 23. *eglatere*: eglantine.

l. 29. *pleached*: intertwined.

l. 31. *long purples*: here purple vetch.

ll. 36–7. Sense is obscure. I suggest a comma after 'over', no stop after 'fine'.

l. 47. *balm-cricket*: a confusion of the German *Baumgrille*, 'tree-cricket'. The word, derived by Tennyson from a school-book, seems to have a dubious right to exist at all in English.

PAGE 14. THE LADY OF SHALOTT. Based on a story in the early Italian collection known as *Il Novellino* or *Cento Novelle*

Antiche—'Come la Damigiella di Scalot morì per amore di Lancialotto del Lac'. (See E. G. Gardner, *The Arthurian Legend in Italian Literature*, p. 93; and editions of the *Cento Novelle Antiche* by G. Biagi or E. Sicardi, or translation by E. Storer, 1925.) In the Italian version Camelot is on the coast and the Lady makes her voyage by sea. Scalot is Malory's Astolat and the Lady corresponds to Malory's Elaine; but at this date, says a note by Tennyson, 'I do not think I had heard of Malory's Elaine'.

(The notes that follow refer to the lines as numbered in the 1842 version.)

ll. 19–27. The roses in the 1832 version have been rooted out. They lent an atmosphere of inappropriate prettiness.

ll. 25–6. A marked improvement on the older version about 'leaning on a velvet bed'—a pose extremely awkward for continuous weaving.

ll. 28–36. This stanza is specially worth comparing with the form of 1832, so striking is the superiority of 1842. In the later text the first part of the stanza begins the day, and is balanced by the later part which ends it. The reaper is no longer dwarfed and lost 'underneath' the barley. He hears no longer 'her', but, more mysteriously, 'a song'. We are rid of the incongruous comparison of the Lady to an 'angel'. 'Piling sheaves' fits the general trochaic rhythm (–◡) better than 'piling *the* sheaves', and eliminates an ugly monosyllable. And it is far truer for 'uplands' than for 'furrows' to be 'airy'.

ll. 39–41. The 1832 version made the curse fall, not if the Lady looked out, but if she *stopped weaving*. This blurs the essential symbolism of the poem, which depicts an introverted soul, refusing to turn from its fantasies to face outward reality. And though we are ready to suspend disbelief in a tale of magic, it is gratuitously absurd to represent the unfortunate heroine as weaving 24 hours a day.

l. 46. The older reading 'she lives with little joy or fear' is unhappy; the curse, if it is to mean anything, must clearly weigh on the Lady, and the reader, with a very definite sense of 'fear'.

l. 51. In 1832 it was not the 'river eddy' that whirled, but the Lady that whirled her 'mazy web'—not a very graceful vision, and a curious technique of weaving.

ll. 68, 86, 95, 104. *In 1832 the funerals and Sir Lancelot came up from* Camelot. It is far better that, as here, everything should be travelling down *towards* Camelot, as the river of life bears all things towards their doom. Besides, the Lady's own voyage to Camelot loses its point if she had last seen Sir Lancelot riding *away* from it.

ll. 70–2. These lines, according to Tennyson, give the key to the poem. In a word, the world of reality may be perilous, but the safer-seeming shadow-world of fantasy is loveless and dead. As Montrose finely expressed it:

> He either fears his fate too much
> Or his deserts are small,
> That dares not put it to the touch,
> To gain or lose it all.

l. 99. *still Shalott*: in 1832 'green Shalott'. But at night Shalott would not look green.

ll. 123–6. The 1842 text maintains its superiority. At such a moment it matters not whether the boat was deep or 'shallow'. And far better that the Lady's name should be on the 'prow', going proudly before her like a herald, than hidden away behind the 'stern'.

ll. 127–35. As before, the earlier version is too foppishly preoccupied with the Lady's attire.

ll. 138–9. Two lovely lines with no counterpart in 1832. The dying swans of 1832 are better away, for Tennyson was growing overfond of dying swans. They recur not only in *The Dying Swan* but in the *Morte d'Arthur*, where Arthur's barge is compared to one.

ll. 147–8. Here, and perhaps here alone, the 1832 text may claim to be superior. Many will agree with George Eliot in preferring 'And her smooth face sharpened slowly', with its vivid yet restrained hint of the changes in a dead face.

l. 159. We are well rid of the 'plankéd wharfage' of 1832.

ll. 163–71. This tragic close is a great advance on the would-be humour of the final stanza of 1832, which clashes hideously with the general tone of the poem and does indeed crack the magic mirror—as if the poet himself had suddenly lost belief in his own tale.

After this detailed comparison between Tennyson's work of

1832 and 1842, it is interesting to read Browning's view of the matter in a letter to Domett of July 13, 1842 (*R. Browning and A. Domett*, edited by F. G. Kenyon, 1906, pp. 40–1): 'I send with this Tennyson's new vol. and, alas, the old with it—that is, what he calls old. You will see, and groan! The alterations are insane. *Whatever* is touched is spoiled. There is some woeful mental infirmity in the man—he was months buried in correcting the press of the last volume, and in that time began spoiling the new poems (in proof) as hard as he could. . . . I have been with Moxon[1] this morning, who tells me that he is miserably thin-skinned, sensitive to criticism (foolish criticism), wishes to see no notices that contain the least possible depreciatory expressions—poor fellow! But how good when good he is—that noble *Locksley Hall*, for instance—and the *St. Simeon Stylites*—which I think perfect.' (One can see why Browning liked the grotesque realism of *St. Simeon*—far nearer than most of Tennyson to his own style. But it seems not impossible that these outraged laments over Tennyson's admirable revisions may owe some of their violence to an unconscious sense of guilt that his own work might often have gained by being revised a little more.)

PAGE 26. OENONE. The scenery was suggested by the Pyrenees, seen by Tennyson on his journey with Hallam to the Spanish frontier in 1830; and part of the poem was written in the valley of Cauteretz.

Oenone, daughter of the River Cebren in the Troad, was a nymph loved by Paris and forsaken by him for Helen. Beattie (1735–1803) wrote a *Judgment of Paris* (1765) which Tennyson may have read (there, as here, the three goddesses extol the value of the bribes they have to offer); but there was nothing in Beattie's work for Tennyson to envy—witness these two typical eighteenth-century stanzas from its 20 pages:

(1) (Opening of the poem.)

Far in the depth of Ida's inmost grove,
  A scene for love and solitude design'd,
Where flowery woodbines wild by Nature wove
  Form'd the lone bower, the Royal Swain reclin'd.

[1] Tennyson's publisher.

(2) (Venus on natural history.)

> Free let the feathery race indulge the song,
> Inhale the liberal beam, and melt in love:
> Free let the fleet hind bound the hills along
> And in pure streams the watery nations rove.

(Curious examples, among other things, of the strange passion of the eighteenth century for that not very exciting word 'the'.)

l. 1. *Ida*, 'mount of the many springs' as Homer calls it, is a range south of Troy, rising to close on 6,000 feet in its highest summit, Mount Gargarus.

The 1832 opening of the poem is again much inferior, being marred with affectations like 'glenriver', 'steepdown', 'tendriltwine', 'cedarshadowy' (all within the space of four lines); and with an ineffectual description of 'awful sculptures' on the citadel of Troy, where in any case they would have been too far from Ida to be visible.

l. 26. Cf. Theocritus vii. 22:

ἀνίκα δὴ καὶ σαῦρος ἐφ' αἱμασιαῖσι καθεύδει.

When even the lizard slumbers, upon the stones of the wall.

l. 27. *and the winds are dead*: a change made in 1884 from the 1842 version 'and the cicala sleeps'. The cicala tends to get livelier, the hotter it becomes—though Tennyson had 'read' that in *extreme* heat (e.g. at noon on Etna) the creatures consented to be quiet.

ll. 39–40. A reference to the legend that Apollo at Troy, like Amphion at Thebes, harped the stones of the wall into place. Cf. the poem 'Ilion, Ilion' in Tennyson's *Unpublished Early Poems* (ed. Charles Tennyson):

> Ilion, Ilion, dreamy Ilion, pillared Ilion, holy Ilion,
> City of Ilion, when wilt thou be melody-born?

l. 60. *foam-bow*: rainbow made by the spray of a waterfall.

ll. 71–4. This natural compliment to Oenone from her lover was not yet thought of in the 1832 version.

l. 74. *married brows*: eyebrows joined in one continuous line. Cf. Theocritus viii. 72.

l. 79. The gods came to the wedding of the Thessalian king Peleus and the sea-goddess Thetis, the future parents of Achilles. It was at this marriage-feast that Eris (Discord) threw her apple, as here described.

l. 94. With reference to the flamelike *shape*, as well as colour, of crocus-petals.

As described by Homer (*Iliad*, xiv. 347–9), a riot of mountain-flowers blooms each spring on Ida, when the melting snows recede.

l. 95. *amaracus*: marjoram.

l. 137. *o'erthwarted*: crossed by. Cf. 'athwart'.

ll. 170–1. Idalium and Paphos in Cyprus were seats of the worship of Aphrodite.

l. 220. *The Abominable*: Eris (Discord), daughter of Night.

ll. 249–51. *her child . . . father's eyes*: added in 1842, these words transform what had been a merely ornamental simile into a passionate personal cry. (In 1832 the paragraph ended at l. 249—'Ere it is born. I will not die alone'.)

l. 259. *Cassandra*: daughter of Priam, King of Troy. Apollo loved her and gave her the gift of prophecy; but when she refused him, since the gods could not take back their gifts, he added the curse that none should believe her.

PAGE 34. THE PALACE OF ART. This poem arose out of the remark made to Tennyson at Trinity by his fellow-undergraduate Trench, future Archbishop of Dublin: 'Tennyson, we cannot live in Art.' Here too 1842 saw a vast improvement on the version of 1832. Thus in 1832 the Palace corridors were (hideous to relate)—

> Roofed with thick plates of green and orange glass;

and the soul illuminated her evening revels with 'white streams of dazzling gas'! These splendours were further enhanced by oil-lamps in 'moons of purple glass'. It is unfair to the critics of 1833 to judge their judgments (as is sometimes done) by the enormously improved versions of 1842.

l. 30. *verge*: horizon.

l. 99. *St. Cecily*: supposed inventress of the organ, martyred A.D. 230.

l. 105. *Uther's son*: King Arthur.

l. 111. *Ausonian*: Italian. Numa Pompilius, King of Rome after Romulus, was counselled by the nymph Egeria, who at his death wept herself into a fountain.

l. 113. *engrail'd*: heraldic term, 'indented with curvilinear notches'.

l. 115. *Cama*: Hindu god of love.

l. 126. *Caucasian*: old anthropological term for Indo-European.

l. 137. *Ionian father*: Homer. An improvement on 'the bald blind Homer' of 1832.

l. 163. *large-brow'd Verulam*: suggested by the bust of Bacon in Trinity Library, Cambridge. Here again 1832 cannot compare with 1842:

> And in the sun-pierced Oriels' coloured flame
> Immortal Michael Angelo
> Looked down, bold Luther, large-browed Verulam,
> The King of those who know.

l. 164. *The first of those who know* refers to Bacon only. From Dante's description of Aristotle in *Inferno*, iv:

> Il maestro di color che sanno.

l. 171. *Memnon*: the colossal statue of Amenhotep III near Thebes in Egypt, identified by the Greeks with Memnon, son of Tithonus and Eos (the Dawn), who was slain by Achilles at Troy. In antiquity it used to emit a sort of metallic sound at sunrise, due perhaps to the warming of the air within it; but in the reign of Severus this ceased, possibly owing to repairs.

l. 186. *anadems*: diadems.

ll. 209–12. A great advance on 1832:

> I take possession of men's minds and deeds.
> I live in all things great and small.
> I sit apart holding no forms of creeds,
> But contemplating all.

l. 219. *Herod*: Herod Agrippa I (died A.D. 44), see Acts xii. 21–3.

l. 227. '*Mene, mene*': Daniel v. 25.

l. 242. *fretted*: worm-eaten.

PAGE 45. THE LOTOS-EATERS. See *Odyssey*, ix.

l. 11. *veils of thinnest lawn*: suggested by a waterfall at Gavarnie in the Pyrenees. Tennyson was dismayed to find subsequently that lawn was actually used to simulate waterfalls in the theatre.

l. 133. *moly*: a mysterious plant with milk-white flower and dark root given by Hermes to Odysseus (*Od.* x. 304–5) as an antidote to Circe's spells.

PAGE 51. MORTE D'ARTHUR. l. 4. *Lyonesse*: a legendary land between Cornwall and the Scilly Isles.

l. 31. *samite*: a rich silk material (*ἑξάμιτον*, 'six-thread').

l. 80. *lief*: loved.

l. 205. *Three Queens*: Morgan le Fay, Arthur's sister; the Queen of Northgalis; the Queen of the Waste Lands. (Tennyson played also with the somewhat dismal idea that they might stand for Faith, Hope, and Charity.)

ll. 260–4. *Od.* iv. 566–8; Lucretius, iii. 18–22.

PAGE 59. ULYSSES. The poem was largely inspired by grief for Hallam. Its idea is based not on Homer (who makes the companions of Odysseus perish to the last man), but on Dante, *Inferno*, xxvi.

Lord Houghton related that he decided Peel to grant Tennyson's pension by giving him *Ulysses* to read.

l. 10. *Hyades*: nymphs who nursed Dionysus and became a constellation in the Bull. Their rising with the sun marked in antiquity the beginning of a season of storms.

PAGE 61. TITHONUS. In the Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite* that goddess tells Anchises how Eos, the Dawn, loved Tithonus, brother of Priam, and persuaded Zeus to grant him immortality; but in her folly forgot to ask also for eternal youth.

l. 45. *tears*: with allusion to the dews of morning.

PAGE 63. LOCKSLEY HALL. l. 4. Tennyson meant this line as a nominative absolute—'while dreary gleams fly'. He did *not* mean 'Dreary gleams' to describe the wheeling flight of the curlews, with their bodies light beneath and dark above. But it is still permissible to wish that he *had* meant this; for the nominative absolute makes a clumsy tail to the sentence. The scenery according to FitzGerald belongs to the Mablethorpe district of Lincolnshire.

ll. 31–4. Tennyson thought this his finest simile. Fine as it is, tastes may differ.

l. 68. *crow*: used here by North English usage for 'rook'.

l. 76. Dante, *Inferno*, v. 121–3:

> Nessun maggior dolore
> Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
> Nella miseria.

Some will feel that there might be even bitterer sorrow in the

consciousness of never having had happiness at all. Compare Langland's suggestion that the poor who have never known joy are more wretched even than the fallen angels:

Angels that in helle now ben hadden Ioye some tyme.

l. 182. In 1830 Tennyson travelling by night on the first train from Liverpool to Manchester got the impression that the wheels ran in grooves, not on rails. Had it been a piece of natural history, he would doubtless have rectified his error.

PAGE 73. THE TWO VOICES. Written, originally with the title *Thoughts of a Suicide*, in the crisis after Hallam's death.

l. 192. *fold*: cloud.

l. 193. *oblique*: Tennyson wished this pronounced 'oblike', citing the change from 'obleege' to 'oblige'. But the analogy is unconvincing. In any case poets have no privilege to play with the pronunciation of their language. The same applies to Tennyson's other crotchets of pronunciation—'knowledge', 'knoll', 'shone', all with the long 'o' of 'know'. The reader is not likely to increase his enjoyment of Tennyson's poetry by doing his own ear such violence.

l. 257. Job xiv. 21.

l. 277. I.e. the simple evidence of the senses attributed supremacy to Death.

l. 278. *Omega*: the *final* letter of the Greek alphabet.

l. 348. I.e. *all* life cycles always round.

PAGE 90. A FAREWELL. Addressed to the brook at Somersby when the Tennysons left the Rectory for Epping in 1837.

PAGE 91. THE VISION OF SIN. A youth gives himself up to pleasure; he becomes an old cynic, in a revel of skeletons; the final scene symbolizes God, Law, Eternity.

PAGE 98. 'BREAK, BREAK, BREAK'. Written, with Hallam in mind, at 5 a.m. in a Lincolnshire lane.

PAGE 99. 'TEARS, IDLE TEARS'. Written in autumn at Tintern Abbey.

PAGE 100. 'COME DOWN, O MAID'. A favourite of Tennyson's. Written in Switzerland in 1846, mainly at Lauterbrunnen and Grindelwald.

PAGE 101. 'THE SPLENDOUR FALLS ON CASTLE WALLS'. Written after hearing the echoes of a bugle blown below the 'Eagle's Nest' at Killarney in 1848. For some modern readers the poem may have a slightly sentimental air; but, by the kindness of

Mr. Charles Tennyson, I have heard a reading of it by the poet himself, as recorded towards the end of his life on a most primitive phonograph; and it was delivered by the old man with as much grim ardour as if it had been *The Charge of the Light Brigade*.

PAGE 102. IN MEMORIAM. II. l. 14. *sick for*: craving for.

III. ll. 9–12. It has been suggested that the inverted commas round this stanza are an error. But it seems quite a reasonable view to put in the mouth of Sorrow.

VII. l. 1. *Dark house*: 67 Wimpole St.

XV. l. 11. I.e. that the ship bearing Hallam's body from Trieste to England is sailing over a sea like glass, whatever storms may rage in Lincolnshire. Cf. Job xxxvii. 18; Rev. iv. 6.

XIX. Written at Tintern Abbey.

XXVII. l. 12. *want-begotten*: due to lack of feeling.

ll. 15–16. Cf. Clough, *Peschiera* (written 1849):

> What voice did on my spirit fall,
> Peschiera, as thy bridge I crost?
> ''Tis better to have fought and lost
> Than never to have fought at all.'

See also Clough's *Alteram Partem* (1849). According to his son, Tennyson regretted that Clough should have 'imitated' these lines from him. The indebtedness of Clough seems confirmed by his use of the *In Memoriam* metre. In that case, however, Clough must have seen, or heard of, Tennyson's lines before the publication of *In Memoriam* in 1850.

XXXIX. Written in 1868, added to *In Memoriam* in 1872. Compare section II above. There was an unusual quantity of pollen on yews in the spring of 1868 and some has also found its way into the opening of *The Holy Grail* (published 1869).

l. 7. I.e. the male and female flowers.

LXIV. Composed while walking up and down the Strand and Fleet St.

CXV. l. 2. *quick*: hedge.

PAGE 119. TO E. L. Edward Lear (1812–88) is less remembered for his *Journal in Greece and Albania* (1851), *Journal of a Landscape Painter in Calabria* (1852), &c., than for having popularized the nonsense limerick by his *Book of Nonsense* (1846), *More Nonsense Rhymes* (1871), &c.

PAGE 120. THE DAISY. This recalls a tour made in 1851. Tennyson invented the metre and regarded it as a distant counterpart of the Alcaic. This resemblance is increased in the next poem, to F. D. Maurice, by the introduction of two dactyls at the beginning of each fourth line.

PAGE 123. TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE. Maurice (1805–72), professor of theology at King's College, London, from 1846, resigned owing to the storm over his *Theological Essays* (1853). He had stood godfather to Hallam Tennyson in 1852.

PAGE 128. MAUD. Part II, IV. The first version of this section (of which only the first three stanzas are given here) appeared in *The Tribute* (1837). Later Sir John Simeon begged Tennyson to weave a story round it: whence *Maud.*

PAGE 128. TRANSLATION OF THE ILIAD. Tennyson saw, as Arnold did not, that English hexameters are hopeless for a serious poem of any length (though they are possible, as used by Clough, for semi-burlesque). Genuine spondees are hard to introduce in English, especially in the final foot; consequently line after line ends, with maddening monotony, 'jiggledy jiggle'. On the other hand blank verse, though far preferable, cannot render the speed of Homer when he gallops: blank verse can walk majestically; it can be made to run; but gallop for more than a moment it cannot.

PAGE 129. THE NORTHERN FARMER. Founded on the dying words of a farm-bailiff as related by Tennyson's great-uncle—'God A'mighty little knows what He's about, a-takin' me. An' Squire'll be so mad an' all.'

l. 18. *buzzard-clock*: cockchafer.

l. 23. *'Siver*: howsoever, however.

l. 28. *stubb'd*: cleared (OE. stub, stump).

l. 30. *boggle*: bogle, spirit.

l. 31. *butter-bump*: bittern.

l. 32. *raäved an' rembled 'um out*: tore him up and threw him out.

l. 34. *'enemies*: anemones.

l. 40. *seeäd*: clover.

l. 62. *Huzzin'*: buzzing; *maäzin'*: bewildering.

PAGE 132. IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ. Tennyson returned here on his birthday (Aug. 6) in 1861, 31 years after his expedition with Hallam to the Pyrenees. He was with Clough and

his boys' tutor, Dakyns. When they came to the valley, Dakyns, knowing it was sacred ground, dropped behind and left Tennyson to walk on alone. 'Dakyns,' said the poet afterwards to Clough, 'isn't a fool.'

PAGE 133. 'FLOWER IN THE CRANNIED WALL.' The scene of this was near Haslemere.

PAGE 133. THE REVENGE. The first line of the poem lay on Tennyson's desk for two years: then suddenly he finished it in a day or two.

This famous action was fought on Sept. 10 (Aug. 31 old style), 1591. See *The Last Fight of the Revenge* by E. Goldsmid (Edinburgh, 1886), which gives the accounts of Raleigh (apparently Tennyson's main source), Hawkins, Linschoten, Bacon, and Monson, also Gervase Markham's feeble poem. The life of Grenville by A. L. Rowse summarizes in addition the contemporary Spanish official report. (See too Froude, 'England's Forgotten Worthies' in *Short Studies on Great Subjects*.)

Details are still disputed. But the action seems to have been something of a Balaclava charge—'magnificent, but not war'. Howard, lying in wait at Flores for the Spanish treasure fleet with six warships and six victuallers, had half his crews sick owing to the unusual heat. On the morning of Sept. 10 the pinnace *Moonshine*, sent by Cumberland from off Ferrol, arrived with warning of the approach of a fleet from Spain. That afternoon the English stood NE., probably from the north tip of Flores, to slip past the Spaniards, some 55–60 sail, approaching from SE. before an easterly wind. Grenville, as Vice-Admiral and because he had been delayed loading sick, brought up the rear. The *Revenge*, built in 1575, had been Drake's flagship against the Great Armada and, though not of the heaviest class, his ideal of what a warship should be; but she had proved a persistently unlucky ship. She was now too late to pass clear of the Spanish van. But Grenville refused to turn and escape westward, quixotically 'perswading his companie that he would passe through the two Squadrons, in despight of them'. Presumably with a better breeze he might have succeeded; as it was, the great galleons literally took the wind out of his sails. Hence the famous fifteen hours' battle of a ship of 450–500 tons, with perhaps 90 sick below and 170 (rather than 100) fit to fight, against an Armada of perhaps 50 galleons,

4 galleasses, 6 galleys, and 7,000 men. Of these 15 attacked and 4 were sunk. It has been claimed that the Spaniards lost 2,000 men, but their official account only admits a loss of 100 (there may well have been plenty of chance to pick up survivors). Of the 260 stated by Hawkins to have been in the *Revenge* about 100 were taken prisoner, on condition that the poor should be sent home to England, the well-to-do reasonably ransomed. These terms were kept. In the storm that followed some days later the Spaniards are said to have lost 85–100 sail out of 140 by then assembled.

III. Howard was far less remote from the battle than this suggests. Fire was opened at 5 p.m. between his squadron and the Spaniards. The *San Felipe* and *San Barnabe* even tried to board his flagship; but failed and could only give him a broadside at close range. Both ships then turned on the following *Revenge*.

VIII. Cf. Raleigh: 'But the great San Philip having receyved the lower tire of the Revenge, discharged with crossebarshot, shifted hir selfe with all diligence from hir sides, utterly misliking hir first entertainment.'

XIII. The Dutchman Van Linschoten alone gives (1596) Grenville's dying speech: 'Here die I *Richard Greenfield*, with a joyfull and quiet mind, for that I have ended my life as a true soldier ought to do, that hath fought for his countrey, Queene, religion, and honor, whereby my soule most joyfull departeth out of this bodie, and shall alwaies leave behinde it an everlasting fame of a valiant and true soldier, that hath done his dutie as he was bound to doe.' A final sentence was omitted, no doubt for reasons of discretion, in the English translation of 1598: 'But the others of my company have done as traitors and dogs, for which they shall be reproached all their lives and leave a shameful name for ever.' This has been usually applied to Howard: but, as Rowse suggests, it seems more probably aimed at those of his own ship's company who had insisted on surrender.

XIV. *devil or man?* Cf. Linschoten's account of gossip in Terceira: 'that so soone as they had throwne the dead bodie of the Viceadmirall Sir *Richard Greenfield* over borde, they verily thought that as he had a devilish faith and religion, and therefore the devils loved him, so he presently sunke into the bottome

of the sea, and downe in to Hell, where he raysed up all the devils to the revenge of his death.' (Grenville was buried on Sept. 13 or 14.)

PAGE 139. TO VIRGIL. Written at the request of the Mantuans for the nineteenth centenary of the poet's death at Brundusium in 19 B.C.

II. *Works and Days*: agricultural poem by Hesiod of Ascra, imitated by Virgil in the *Georgics*.

III. *Tityrus*: *Eclogues*, i. 1: 'Tityre, tu patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi.'

Poet-satyr: Silenus. In *Ecl.* vi he is bound, when drunk, by Chromis and Mnasyllus (which suggests that 'shepherd' should be 'shepherds') and made to sing as the price of his liberty.

V. *Pollio*: Consul 40 B.C.: to him is addressed *Ecl.* iv, the 'Messianic Eclogue', with its forecast of a Golden Age.

VI. *majestic in thy sadness*: cf. especially *Aen.* i. 462: 'Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt.'

VII. *Golden branch*: the magic Golden Bough which in *Aen.* vi Aeneas has to pluck before visiting the Underworld.

IX. *Sunder'd once*: an allusion to *Ecl.* i. 66: 'Et penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos.'

PAGE 143. TO E. FITZGERALD. Tennyson and his son had paid a last visit to the translator of Omar at Woodbridge in 1876.

ll. 11–12. Acts x. 11.

l. 15. *Pythagoras*, believing in transmigration, banned the eating of flesh.

l. 16. *Measure for Measure*, I. iv. 34: 'a thing ensky'd and sainted'.

l. 28. *Eshcol*: Numbers xiii. 23 (of the spies sent into Canaan): 'And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff.'

(Epilogue.) l. 32. FitzGerald died in his sleep, June 14, 1883.

PAGE 145. CROSSING THE BAR. Composed in October 1889 on crossing the Solent.

l. 3. *no moaning of the bar*: perhaps a recollection, or an unconscious memory, of Kingsley's *Three Fishers*: 'And the harbour bar be moaning.'

PAGE 153. *MEMOIR*. ll. 11–15. Renderings of Homer, *Iliad*, i. 219–20.